

Eurasianism and the Concept of Central Caucasus-Asia

The Current State of the Eurasianist Trend of the Russian Geopolitical School

Eurasianism as a geopolitical theory developed back in the 1920s, but it has even deeper historical roots in Russia.¹ The Eurasianist trend of the Russian geopolitical school helps to justify Russia's historically developed imperial ambitions² of dominating the center of the geographical continent, Eurasia. For the Eurasianists, Russia should either be a "Eurasian nation,"³ a "great nation," that is, "an empire," or nothing at all.⁴ For them "Russia is inconceivable without an empire."⁵ It comes as no surprise that despite their disparagement of Marxist dogmas, atheism, and materialism, Eurasianists welcomed the establishment of the Soviet system. The Soviet system significantly augmented Russia's power and territory,⁶ which made possible for them to propose ways for the Soviet Union to evolve⁷ into a Eurasian

¹ For example, G. Gloveli, "Geopoliticheskaia ekonomia v Rossii" [Geopolitical Economy in Russia], *Voprosy ekonomiki* [Economic Affairs], No. 11 (2000), pp. 46-63; Igor' Panarin, *Informatsionnaia voyna*, pp. 34-64.

² For example, Philip Longworth, *Russia's Empires. Their Rise and Fall: From Prehistory to Putin* (London: John Murray, 2005).

³ L.N. Gumilev, "Skazhu vam po sekretu, chto esli Rossiia budet spasena, to tol'ko kak evraziyskaia derzhava" [To Tell You a Secret, Russia Can Only Be Saved As a Eurasian Nation], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, p. 482; Gumilev, *Ritmy Evrazii*, p. 30.

⁴ A.G. Dugin, "Rossiia mozhет byt' ili velikoy ili nikakoy" [Russia Can Either Be Great or Nothing At All], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, p. 784.

⁵ A.G. Dugin, "Ekonomika: chetvertaia zona" [The Economy: The Fourth Zone], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, pp. 342-368.

⁶ For example, A. Dugin, "Petr Savitskiy ideolog Velikoy Evrazii" [Pyotr Savitskiy Ideologist of a Great Eurasia], *Finis Mundi*, No. 12, *Arktogeia filosofskiy portal* [Arktogeia Philosophical Portal], 2004, <<http://www.arcto.ru/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1110>>; A.I. Utkin, "Evraziyskaia tochka zreniia" [The Eurasist Viewpoint], *Evoliutsiia Evraziyskoy teorii i faktor ATP. Diskussionny Klub. Krugly stol* [Evolution of the Eurasist Theory and the APR Factor. Discussion Club. Round Table], No. 3 (2000), <<http://nnmoiseev.ru/stoo22.htm>>.

⁷ In this context, the Soviet Union is qualified as the Soviet Eurasian Empire (Hauner, "The Disintegration of the Soviet Eurasian Empire").

State.⁸ In the same spirit, the Eurasianists welcomed Putin's hard-line policy in Chechnya dubbed as "emergency geopolitical measures."⁹ Alexander Dugin, the main ideologist and leader of the international Eurasian movement,¹⁰ openly demonstrated the Eurasianists' commitment to the aggressive actions toward Georgia, too. In response to Georgia's desire to restore its territorial integrity, he called on the Russian military to punish her and storm the capital, Tbilisi.¹¹

It should be stressed that according to the geopolitical Heartland theory of the well-known British academic geopolitician Halford Mackinder,¹² the state that controls the Pivot Area, the so-called Heartland, which includes most of Russia and Central Asia, will dominate not only in geographic Eurasia, but throughout the world.¹³ This theory, which at the beginning of the 20th century claimed to be the backbone of Great Britain's foreign policy towards countries within the Heartland,¹⁴ is still pertinent today. In fact, it is

⁸ S.A. Arutiunov, "Rossiia mezhdou Zapadom i Vostokom" [Russia between the West and the East], *Evoliutsiia Evraziyskoy teorii i faktor ATP. Diskussionny Klub. Krugly stol* [Evolution of the Eurasist Theory and the APR Factor. Discussion Club. Round Table], No. 3, 2000, <<http://nnmoiseev.ru/stoo23.htm>>; A.G. Dugin, "Ekonomicheskie aspekty neoevraziystva" [The Economic Aspects of Neo-Eurasianism], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, p. 629.

⁹ A.G. Dugin, "Evraziyskiy federalizm" [Eurasian Federalism] in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, pp. 590-591, 593.

¹⁰ Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, pp. 107-144.

¹¹ Alexander Dugin, "Bez kompromissov—tanki na Tbilisi!" [No Compromises—Send the Tanks to Tbilisi!], *EVRAZIIA: infromatsionno-analiticheskiy portal* [EURASIA: information-analytical portal], August 10 (2008), <<http://www.evrazia.org/article.php?id=571>>; Alexander Dugin, "I pravy, i strana nasha" [We are Right and the Country is Ours], *EVRAZIIA: infromatsionno-analiticheskiy portal* [EURASIA: information-analytical portal], August 23 (2008), <<http://www.evrazia.org/article.php?id=608>>; Sergey Khurbatov, "Alexander Dugin: Eta voyna budet s Rossiey" [Alexander Dugin: This War Will Be With Russia], *Nakanune.Ru*, August 8 (2008), <<http://www.nakanune.ru/articles/13555>>.

¹² Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXIII., No. 4, April (1904), pp. 421-444; Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: a Study of the Politics of Reconstruction* (London: Constable, 1919).

¹³ For example, Nick Megoran and Sevara Sharapova, "Mackinder's "Heartland": A Help or Hindrance in Understanding Central Asia's International Relations?" *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34) (2005), p. 8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

becoming increasingly popular,¹⁵ and not only in the context of several contemporary geopolitical theories drawn up in the West.¹⁶ It is not surprising that Russia's imperial ambitions (ambitions of the largest state in the Heartland¹⁷) of acquiring the functions of a world center do not correlate with the Western states' desire to raise their influence in the Heartland.¹⁸ However this is entirely consistent with Mackinder's theory about the role of the state that controls the Heartland, as according to contemporary Eurasianists, in geographical terms, the Pivot Area and Russia are one and the same thing.¹⁹

The similarity between Mackinder's Heartland theory and the Eurasianist trend of the Russian geopolitical school lies in the fact that both help to justify imperial ambitions. The difference, on the other hand, is that while the first served the imperial ambitions of Great Britain²⁰ and, in the contemporary context, the West, the second serves Russia. In both cases, the interests of those countries which these imperial ambitions apply to are left out of the picture. It is this, in our opinion, that shows the one-sidedness and, consequently, the limitations of both geopolitical constructs – the Heartland theory and Eurasianism. These geopolitical constructs fully blend into a so-

¹⁵ Anita Sengupta, *Heartlands of Eurasia: The Geopolitics of Political Space* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009); Lasha Tchantouridze, "Eurasia, Geopolitics, and American Foreign Policy," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (53) (2008), pp. 11-12.

¹⁶ For example, Ekaterina Borisova, "Halford Mackinder's Ideas Today," *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34) (2005), pp. 21-23; Sevara Sharapova, "Mackinder's "Heartland" Theory and the Atlantic Community," *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34), 2005, pp. 103-116; Fabrizio Vielmini, "The Influence of Mackinder's Theory on Current U.S. Development in Eurasia: Problems and Perspectives," *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34) (2005), pp. 58-65.

¹⁷ It is not at all accidental that the essentially trivial statement by Vladimir Putin that Russia is a Euro-Asiatic country was very important for the neo-Eurasianists (Ilya Maksakov, "Evraziystvo na iuge Rossii: ubezhdeniia i somnieniia" [Eurasianism in the South of Russia: Convictions and Doubts], *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, June 8, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/politics/2001-06-08/3_south.html>).

¹⁸ For example, Utkin, "Evraziyskaia."

¹⁹ Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, p. 44.

²⁰ For example, Bernard Semmel, "Sir Halford Mackinder: Theorist of Imperialism," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1958), pp. 554-561.

called “imperial geopolitics” which explains somehow the relevance of elaborations on a so-called “democratic geopolitics” today.²¹

It is important to note that a purely Russian understanding of Eurasianism is slightly different from its Turkic-Muslim understanding.²² Moreover, the Turkic Muslims of Russia have a different understanding of Eurasianism than the people in Kazakhstan.²³ The Turkic-Muslim peoples of Russia believe they are the only ones who truly embody Eurasia, while Russia can only become a true Eurasian nation by recognizing and duly evaluating the Muslim world as a component of itself. In other words, for them, Russia should declare itself, at least partially, a Turkic and Muslim state. Turkic-Muslim Eurasianism is not a separatist creed; however, it is trying to claim a special place for Turkic Muslims in Eurasia which territorially coincides with the Russian state.²⁴

In Kazakhstan, for example, Eurasianism is the state ideology promulgated by President Nursultan Nazarbaev himself,²⁵ which contrasts markedly with the case of Russia, where staunch supporters of Eurasianism are not at the helm. Nursultan Nazarbaev’s approach to Eurasianism is pragmatic. In contrast to Eurasianism in Russia, it emphasizes the country’s European component, giving relatively little attention to Islam and the East. It also justifies in these terms the policy of national diversity in Kazakhstan.²⁶ It was likely the demographic situation in Kazakhstan that prompted Nazarbaev to embrace Eurasianism. Most of the population in the north of the country consists of Russian settlers, which requires that the state’s leader

²¹ Farkhad Tolipov, “Russia in Central Asia: Retreat, Retention, or Return?” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (47) (2007), p. 22.

²² Marlène Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii v postsovetskom prostranstve: novaia evraziyskaia ideologiya” [Re-Examination of the Empire in the Post-Soviet Expanse: A New Eurasian Ideology], *Vestnik Evrasii* [Bulletin of Eurasia], No. 1 (2000), <http://www.iicas.org/articles/KrSt_24_03_00.htm>; Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, pp. 145-170.

²³ Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii”; Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, pp. 171-187.

²⁴ Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii.”

²⁵ For more on Nursultan Nazarbaev’s role in the Eurasian movement, see Alexander Dugin, *Evrasiyskaia missiia Nursultana Nazarbaeva* [Nursultan Nazarbaev’s Eurasian Mission] (St. Petersburg: Evraziia, 2004).

²⁶ Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii”; Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism*, pp. 171-187.

pursues a balanced foreign and domestic policy.²⁷ It is also important to note that Nursultan Nazarbaev's foreign policy involves steps that are not exclusively pro-Eurasian. This can be observed first in Kazakhstan's support for intensifying cooperation and improving coordinated military cooperation among the Central Asian states; then in its encouragement of Azerbaijan's choice to transport oil through Turkey and not Russia and/or Iran, and, furthermore, in its help for an agreement on the public and transparent division of the continental shelf for the extraction of natural resources of the Caspian Sea among the littoral states.²⁸

Although, as mentioned above, supporters of Eurasianism are not in power in Russia, when compared to the Yeltsin period, Putin's entourage has from the very beginning been more complaisant toward contemporary Eurasianists.²⁹ As a result, the Russian political elite quickly began to elevate Eurasianism to the level of a mainstream ideology.³⁰ Some believe that President Putin limited himself to merely using the pseudo-philosophical rhetoric of the Eurasianists³¹ and that his government did not make use of the political recommendations of the contemporary Eurasianists.³² Yet, the events of recent years, where Russia has demonstrated increasing aggressiveness in the international arena, have raised some doubts about how true the above

²⁷ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. III.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

²⁹ Alan Ingram, "Alexander Dugin: Geopolitics and Neo-Fascism in Post-Soviet Russia," *Political Geography*, Vol. 20, Iss. 8 (2001), p. 1032.

³⁰ Ilan Berman, "Slouching Toward Eurasia?" *Perspective*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 2001, <<http://www.bu.edu./iscip/vol12/berman.html>>; Ilan Berman, "Putin's Problem: The War on Terrorism Gets in the Way of the Eurasian Dream," *National Review*, January 8, 2002, <<http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/comment-berman010802.shtml>>.

³¹ The description of the fall of the U.S.S.R. by President Putin in 2005 as a "geopolitical disaster" has almost become a classical reference (see, for example, George Friedman, "The Russo-Georgian War and the Balance of Power," *Stratfor*, August 12, 2008, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/russo_georgian_war_and_balance_power>; Dmitri Trenin, *Integratsiia i identichnost: Rossiia kak "noviy Zapad"* [Integration and Identity: Russia as the 'New West'] (Moscow: "Evropa" Publishers, 2006), p. 155, <<http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/books/9820trenin.pdf>>).

³² Matthew Schmidt, "Is Putin Pursuing a Policy of Eurasianism?" *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Winter, (2005), <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_q43996/is_200501/ai_n13640828/print>.

interpretation is.³³ The war on Georgia³⁴ is the most telling event where, along with Vladimir Putin, President Medvedev should also be considered the main culprit.³⁵ These actions are entirely consistent with the expansionist views of the contemporary Eurasianists.³⁶ But it would be much more correct to say that while welcoming the Eurasianist ideas, Putin cannot be considered a leader who is guided exclusively by Eurasianist arguments.³⁷ The reason for this is the belief that Eurasianism is not the only monolithic

³³ See, for example, Leon Aron, "Putin's Cold War. Confrontation with America Satisfies a Domestic Agenda," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 26, 2007, <<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110011040>>; Paul Kennedy, "Worried about Putin's Russia?: Read on," *International Herald*, August 20, 2007, <<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/08/20/opinion/edkennedy.php>>; Michael McFaul, "New Russia, New Threat. Working with the West is no Longer the Goal as the Kremlin Flexes its Muscle and Rethinks its Role in the World," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 2007, <<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/sunday/commentary/la-op-mcfaulzsep02,0,1062795.story?coll=la-sunday-commentary>>; Jay Winik, "Vladimir the Great? Putin's Inspiration Is Much Older Than the Cold War," *The Washington Post*, September 2, 2007, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/31/AR2007083101533.html>>.

³⁴ For example, Felix K. Chang, "Russia Resurgent: An Initial Look at Russian Military Performance in Georgia," *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, August 13, 2008, <<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200808.chang.russiaresurgentgeorgia.html>>; Cornell and Starr, eds., *The Guns of August 2008*; Svante E. Cornell, Johanna Popjanevski, and Niklas Nilsson, *Russia's War in Georgia: Causes and Implications for Georgia and the World*, Policy Paper (Washington, D.C. and Stockholm: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Policy Paper, August 2008), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/0808Georgia-PP.pdf>>; Pavel Felgengauer, "It Was No Spontaneous, But Planned War," *Novaya Gazeta*, August 18, 2008, <<http://en.novayagazeta.ru/data/2008/59/01.html>>; Yuliia Latynina, "200 km tankov. O rossiysko-gruzinskoy voyne" [200 km of Tanks. On the Russian-Georgian War], *Ezhednevniy zhurnal* [Weekly Journal], November 19, 2008, Part 1, <<http://www.ej.ru/?a=note&id=8579>>, Part 2, <<http://www.ej.ru/?a=note&id=8587>>, Part 3, <<http://www.ej.ru/?a=note&id=8589>>.

³⁵ For example, Ian Traynor, "Putin's Second War can have Only One Victor," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2008, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/aug/11/georgia.russia10>>.

³⁶ In contrast to these interpretations of contemporary Russian policy, some naïve (at best) Western experts regard the expansionist, neo-imperialist threat from Russia as one of the myths about this country (David Foglesong, Gordon M. Hahn, "Ten Myths About Russia Understanding and Dealing with Russia's Complexity and Ambiguity," *Centro Argentino de Estudios Internacionales* (2002), pp. 11-12, <<http://www.caei.com.ar/es/programas/cei/A02.pdf>>).

³⁷ Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Russia's Foreign Policy and Eurasianism," *Eurasia Insight*, *Eurasianet*, February 9, 2005, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eavo80205a.shtml>>.

paradigm in contemporary Russian policy.³⁸ The Russian-Georgian war and its consequences³⁹ provide justifiable reasons to believe that Putin's advent to power meant also the beginning of a neo-imperial era in Russia,⁴⁰ with the war itself being nothing but a step toward the restoration of the U.S.S.R.,⁴¹ at least in some new form.⁴² Nevertheless, some experts think that Putin's aim is not to restore the Soviet Union, but to restore Russia's influence in the post-Soviet expanse.⁴³ Whatever the case, the war in Georgia entirely fits the interests of present-day Russia,⁴⁴ for no country, apart from Nicaragua, supported Moscow's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.⁴⁵ Consequently, Moscow's desire to give Russia the status of an "independent pole" in a multipolar world and to raise its appeal for the post-Soviet countries⁴⁶ was not realized.

First during the Gorbachev and, later, the Yeltsin era the impression was that the Cold War had come to an end and that the new Russia had irreversibly chosen the track of cooperation with the civilized world, along with democratic changes and transition to a market economy. Yet the Russian aggression against Georgia in August 2008 made it clear that the end of the Cold War was not a reality but, rather, the West's dream, an illusion the

³⁸ David Kerr, "The New Eurasianism: The Rise of Geopolitics in Russia's Foreign Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 6 (1995), pp. 977-988.

³⁹ Vladimer Papava, "Russia: Being in the Kremlin Means Never Letting Go," *Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet*, November 5, 2008, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav110508a.shtml>>.

⁴⁰ Ronald D. Asmus, "How the West Botched Georgia," *The New Republic*, August 12, 2008, <<http://tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=9da1fd2d-1701-470b-b734-3fc365571e0d>>.

⁴¹ John O'Sullivan, "Is Russia Morphing Into Another USSR?" *Globe and Mail*, August 12, 2008, <http://www.rferl.org/content/OSullivan_in_Globe_and_Mail/1190884.html>.

⁴² Paul Goble, "What the Georgian Events Demonstrate," *Window on Eurasia*, August 10, 2008, <<http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com/2008/08/window-on-eurasia-what-georgian-events.html>>.

⁴³ Friedman, "The Russo-Georgian War."

⁴⁴ Svante E. Cornell, "The War that Russia Wants," *The Guardian*, August 8, 2008, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/aug/08/georgia.nato>>.

⁴⁵ Emil Pain, "Gruzino-rossiyskiy vooruzhennyi konflikt: ostraya forma otravleniia imperskimi illiuziiami" [The Georgian-Russian Conflict: Acute Form of Contamination by Imperial Illusions], *Vestnik Instituta Kennana v Rossii* [Bulletin of the Kennan Institute in Russia], Iss. 14 (2008), p. 39.

⁴⁶ Tomislava Penkova, "Russia's Attitude Towards the Post-Soviet Space after the War in Georgia," *ISPI Policy Brief*, Iss. 111, December (2008), <http://www.ispionline.it/it/documents/PB_111_2008.pdf>.

West simply mistook for reality.⁴⁷ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the collapsing U.S.S.R. and its successor, the newly independent Russia, were so weak in both political and economic terms that they became greatly dependent upon the West's economic assistance. The desire to obtain this assistance forced Moscow to turn to the West and Western values. At the same time, nostalgia for the lost empire grew increasingly strong in Russia.

Politicians⁴⁸ and analysts,⁴⁹ therefore, ask whether the world is standing on the verge of a new Cold War and, if yes, how can it be avoided. Such questions, for different reasons, were already urgent before Russia's war against Georgia.⁵⁰ Almost no one, however, asks whether the Cold War of the 20th century ever really ended,⁵¹ or whether it has been merely "frozen." Nobody envisages the possibility that we now may be witnessing a process of melting – that is, of a "frozen" Cold War.

Russia's military aggression against Georgia, the Russian occupation of the Georgian territories, Russia's disrespect for the cease-fire agreement signed by Presidents Sarkozy and Medvedev, and Moscow's unilateral recognition

⁴⁷ It must be noted that although it is generally accepted that the Cold War has ended, no one denies that the Cold War era has left numerous issues unanswered (Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (Armonk, M.E. Sharpe Donaldson and Noguee, 2005), p. 119).

⁴⁸ For example, Condoleezza Rice, "Speech at German Marshall Fund on U.S.-Russia Relations," U.S. Department of State, September 18, 2008, <<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2008/September/20080918155132eaifaso.4152033.html?CP.rss=true>>.

⁴⁹ For example, Fukuyama, "They Can Only Go So Far."

⁵⁰ For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, "How to Avoid a New Cold War," *Time*, June 7, 2007, <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1630544,00.html>>; Stephen F. Cohen, "The New American Cold War," *The Nation*, June 21, 2006, <<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060710/cohen>>; Thomas L. Friedman, "The New Cold War," *The New York Times*, May 14, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/14/opinion/14friedman.html?_r=1>; Daniel Johnson, "Putin's New Cold War," *The New York Sun*, February 7, 2008, <<http://www.nysun.com/opinion/putins-new-cold-war/70910/>>; Stephen Kotkin, "Myth of the New Cold War," *Prospect Magazine*, Iss. 145, April (2008), <<http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/pdfarticle.php?id=10094>>; Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces Both Russia and the West* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008); Mark MacKinnon, *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections, and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union* (New York: Carroll & Graf publishers, 2007).

⁵¹ This question was raised at the beginning of the 1990s and received an affirmative reply. Thomas W. Simons Jr., *The End of the Cold War?* (New York: St. Martin's Press Simons, 1990).

of Abkhazia and South Ossetia without any consultation with the world's leading G-7 nations, are all naturally reminiscent of the epoch of the Cold War.⁵²

To the extent that we see no change in the major actors on both sides of the Cold War (same with those in the last century) and in the reasons and driving forces of the conflict, as well as in the Kremlin's action style, we can conclude that what we are now seeing is not a new Cold War but, rather, the resumption of the old one. In other words, we are facing the resumption of that same situation which the West has mistakenly considered to be over. It appears now that it was just frozen and the frontline of this "melting" Cold War is becoming visible.⁵³ At best, the main challenge for the international community is elaborating effective means for the real – and not virtual as it was in the late 1980s and early 1990s – completion of the Cold War. Precisely for this reason, it is particularly important for the West to draw up new mechanisms of cooperation with Russia.⁵⁴ The Obama administration has initiated the politics of "reset" relations with Russia, which, unfortunately, is still inefficient, because of the Kremlin's continued intransigent behavior.⁵⁵

⁵² For example, Ronald D. Asmus and Richard Holbrooke, "Black Sea Watershed"; Bill Powell, "Cold War: The Sequel," *Time*, August 12, 2008, <<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1831859,00.html>>

⁵³ Alexander Jackson, "IA Forum Interview: Vladimer Papava," *International Affairs Forum*, August 14, 2008, <<http://ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternalDocument.cfm?ContentID=6377>>; Vladimer Papava, "The End of the Frozen Cold War?" *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 3 (1), Winter (2009), pp. 98-102, <http://www.cria-online.org/Journal/6/Done_%20End%20of%20the%20Frozen%20Cold%20War_Vladimer%20Papava.pdf>; Vladimer Papava, "The New Threats of the Old Cold War," *e-politik.de*, February 18, 2009, <<http://english.e-politik.de/3247>>.

⁵⁴ Anders Åslund and Andrew Kuchins, "Pressing the "Reset Button" on US-Russia Relations," *CSIS Policy Brief*, March (2009), <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/090405_policy_briefing_russia_balance.pdf>; Andrew Kuchins, "Time to Treat Russia as a Partner," *The Moscow Times*, September 22, 2008, <<http://www.moscowtimes.ru/article/1016/42/371114.htm>>; Andrew Kuchins, "Where Should U.S. Policy toward Russia Go from Here?" *CSIS Commentary*, September 8, 2008, <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080908_kuchins_russia.pdf>; Stephen Sestanovich, "What Has Moscow Done? Rebuilding U.S.-Russian Relations," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December (2008), <<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20081001faessay87602/stephen-sestanovich/what-has-moscow-done.html>>.

⁵⁵ Svante E. Cornell, "Why a Russian 'Reset' Won't Work," *Real Clear World*, April 3, 2009, <http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2009/04/why_a_russian_reset_wont_work.html>; James Marson, "Russia's Moves Raise Doubts About Obama's 'Reset',"

According to the “strict” judgment of the nature of Russia’s foreign policy, the ideas of contemporary Eurasianism emerged from three politically influential schools of geopolitical thought – the New Right, the Eurasian Communists, and the Democratic Statists – with the latter being of the greatest importance in official foreign policy after 1993.⁵⁶ Whatever the case, Putin himself had the complete support of the contemporary Eurasianists almost from the very beginning of his presidency.⁵⁷

Relying on the heritage of the first Eurasianists and reviving it from the end of the 1980s, *neo-Eurasianism* gradually became the Eurasia Universal Political Public Movement, the Eurasia Party,⁵⁸ and finally the international Eurasian movement.⁵⁹ It should be emphasized that numerous publications have accumulated on the subject of Eurasianism,⁶⁰ and the ideas of Eurasianism are becoming almost the main discourse in the post-Soviet expanse.⁶¹ The increasing popularity of these ideas beyond Eurasia-Russia also deserve mention.⁶²

There are several classifications of neo-Eurasianism. Marlène Laruelle divides neo-Eurasianism into three main trends.⁶³ The first is an extreme rightist trend characterized by the greatest expansionism; a second is one that places greater emphasis on culture and folklore, on a Slavic-Turkic alliance; and a third defends the concept of “empire” trying to prove that it is a special

Time, August 23, 2009, <<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1917392,00.html>>.

⁵⁶ Graham Smith, “The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 24, Iss. 4 (1999), pp. 481-494.

⁵⁷ Victor Yasmann, “The Rise of the Eurasists,” *The Eurasian Politician*, Iss. 4, August (2001), <<http://www.cc.jyu.fi/~aphamala/pe/issue4/yasmann.htm>>.

⁵⁸ A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva* [The Fundamental Principles of Eurasianism] (Moscow: “Arktogeia-Tsentr,” 2004), pp. 3-100.

⁵⁹ Alexander G. Dugin, *Eurasian Mission (Program Materials of International Eurasian Movement)* (Moscow: ROF “Evrazia,” 2005).

⁶⁰ See, for example, A.V. Antoshchenko and A.A. Kozhanova (eds.), *O Evrazii i evraziystakh (bibliograficheskiy ukazatel’)* [On Eurasia and the Eurasists (Bibliographic Index)] (Petrozavodsk: Petrozavodsk State University, 2000), <<http://petrsu.karelia.ru/Chairs/PreRev/BIBLRUS.rtf>>.

⁶¹ Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii.”

⁶² See, for example, Jean Parvulesco, *Vladimir Poutine et L’Eurasie* (Paris: Les Amis de la Culture Européenne, 2005).

⁶³ Laruelle, “Pereosmyslenie imperii.”

form of statehood that excludes the cult of nation, and politically promotes diversity in Eurasia.

According to another classification, neo-Eurasianism also consists of three trends.⁶⁴ A first trend is national ideocracy on an imperial continental scale; a second is a continental Russian-Iranian alliance; while the third is economic Eurasianism. The representatives of the first trend oppose liberal Westernism and Atlanticism, and pose themselves the task of creating an empire of Eurasian socialism. The second trend is based on a strategic partnership between Russia on one side and Iran and Iraq on the other, which as allies are opposed to Atlanticism and globalism, are skeptical of Europeanism, and also have little in common with Islamic socialism, European national-Bolshevism, and so on. The third trend concentrates on the idea of Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbaev, aimed at restoring economic cooperation among the former Soviet republics.⁶⁵

What are the main threats according to the Eurasianist trend of the Russian geopolitical school? Is it a system that has cardinally different ideas about the political and economic structure of a state, or is it simply aimed at building an empire at any cost? In order to answer these questions, it should be noted from the very beginning that the Eurasian model of structuring the state, public life, and the economy, not to mention so-called Eurasian values, differs greatly from the generally accepted models and values.⁶⁶ In addition, the question of Russia-Eurasia's integration into a single civilization has not been at all futile for the Eurasianists.⁶⁷

The theory of a Eurasian state is based on a construct essentially different from that of a law-based state. Building on the understanding of the people, the state, and society as integral natural entities, Eurasianism develops the theory of a "mandatory state" as an alternative to a "law-based state." It

⁶⁴ See, for example, Nartov and Nartov, *Geopolitika*, pp. 148-149.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁶⁶ According to the Eurasianists, the structure of the state, public life, and the economy should rely on the conciliation and communality of Russian society, which, as Emil Pain rightly notes, is only a myth (E.A. Pain, "Osobyi put Rossi": *inertsii bez traditsiy* [Russia's Special Way: Inertia Without Tradition], Preprint WP14/2008/01 (Moscow: Izdatel'skiy dom GU VshE [State University Higher School of Economics Publishing House], 2008), p. 18).

⁶⁷ See, for example, Utkin, "Evraziyskaia tochka zreniia."

replaces rights with duties, generally accepting the use of the former at best only with respect to those legal issues that are easier to regard from the viewpoint of rights.⁶⁸

It comes as no surprise that from the Eurasianists' viewpoint, a civil society helps to intensify separatist trends and hinders real unification of the peoples of Russia (that is, Eurasia). Rejecting the notion of a civil society, the Eurasianists offer "Eurasian centralism" instead as a combination of the strategic integration and diversity of the autonomous entities of Russia-Eurasia.⁶⁹

It is not hard to see that the Eurasianist vision of the relations between people, society, and the state proceeds from the need for a strong state that relies on a wide range of civil servants and on the preservation of patriarchal institutions.⁷⁰ The Eurasianists put special emphasis on the problem of considering federalism as part of the state structure.⁷¹ They are convinced that autonomy implies self-government and should exclude all attributes of statehood. In so doing, the size of autonomous entities may fluctuate from a few families to an entire nation. Based on the same logic, smaller autonomous entities may belong to larger ones. In terms of type, autonomous entities can be national, ethnic, theocratic, religious, cultural-historical, social-industrial, economic, linguistic, and communal. Unpopulated or scarcely populated territories, if they have no communities, may be declared federal lands. Autonomous entities are delegated the functions of courts, law-enforcement structures, public administration, and control. Within the Eurasian expanse there should be no concept of border. Instead there should be only a concept of "limit," a border without legal force and that is not to be fixed. Keeping in mind the uneven economic development in Russia-Eurasia,

⁶⁸ A.G. Dugin, "Teoriia evraziyskogo gosudarstva" [The Theory of the Eurasian State], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, pp. 525-528.

⁶⁹ A.G. Dugin, "Proekt "grazhdanskoe obshchestvo" kak ugroza rossiyskoy samobytnosti" [The "Civil Society" Project as a Threat to the Russian Identity] in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, pp. 604-605.

⁷⁰ Boris Orlov, "Neizbezhnost' evraziystva—neizbezhnost' tupika" [Inevitable Eurasianism—Inevitable Dead End], *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, May 12, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/polemics/2001-05-12/8_necessity.html>.

⁷¹ Alexander Dugin, *Proekt "Evraziia"* [The "Eurasia" Project] (Moscow: Eksmo, Yauza, 2004), pp. 208-215.

the Eurasianists presume the creation of “poles of development,” that is, of economic centers that have a general Eurasian status, as well as a privileged tax regime.⁷²

The Eurasianists believe that the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as Serbia, Mongolia, and others, should be integrated, according to Nursultan Nazarbaev’s terminology, into a “Eurasian Union”⁷³ (that is, into a “state-continent” – a Eurasian State) with a united economy, transportation arteries, united collective security system, and united system of representative structures.⁷⁴ Extending the Russian borders to include only Ukraine and Belarus is classified as Moderate, that is, Slavic Eurasianism; while extending the Russian borders to the borders of the former Soviet Union is considered Extreme, that is, Soviet Eurasianism.⁷⁵ There is also a fanciful step-by-step project aimed at forming a so-called union state of Eurasian Rus. The ambition was to integrate, from 2006 to 2014, not only the CIS countries, but also Albania, Macedonia, Mongolia, Serbia, Montenegro, and also give the special right of associated membership to Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, the Baltic countries, Poland, Syria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Rumania, Turkey, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the DPRK, and South Korea.⁷⁶

For the Eurasianists, the economy should be subordinated to the idea of the Eurasian State, Eurasian civilization, Eurasian culture.⁷⁷ So Eurasianists pay particular attention to the teachings of the so-called “hetero-orthodox” economists who regard the economy as a derivative of culture and for whom historical, cultural-civilizational, spatial, and national factors are of prime importance in determining the nature of the economy. All the economic theories of the so-called hetero-orthodox traditions (Eurasianists include such outstanding economists as Sismondi, List, Keynes, Schumpeter, Schmoller, Perroux, Gesell, and others among the authors of these traditions) have

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁷³ Dugin, *Evraziyskaia missiia Nursultana Nazarbaeva*, p. 86.

⁷⁴ Dugin, *Proekt “Evraziia,”* pp. 280-284.

⁷⁵ O’Loughlin and Talbot, “Where in the World is Russia,” pp. 37-44.

⁷⁶ Panarin, *Informatsionnaia vojna i geopolitika*, pp. 539-543.

⁷⁷ Dugin, “*Ekonomicheskie aspekty neoevraziystva,*” p. 627.

united into a bloc of so-called third-way economies.⁷⁸ They are opposed to economic orthodoxy – whether socialist or liberal-capitalist. For the Eurasianists the market and private property belong to the sphere of pragmatic permissibility and pragmatic benefit. Based on such a premise, they recognize a “society with a market” rather than a “market society.” For them, the market principle should not threaten the foundations of ideocracy, that is, those ideal principles that rule public and political life.⁷⁹ As a result, the task of the Eurasian economy is to preserve and develop all the economic systems reflecting the cultural-historical path of the individual nations living in the Eurasian State.⁸⁰

In other words, the multi-vector nature of Eurasianism should be formed on the basis of:⁸¹

- state control in strategic areas (that is, the land of Eurasia, its rivers, lakes, seas, minerals and their production and primary processing enterprises, armed forces, the military-industrial complex, the financial institution issuing Eurasian currency, pension funds, transportation routes, and the energy industry should be owned by the state);
- a free market in small and medium production, trade, and services;
- diverse forms of collective management (that is, cooperatives, joint-stock enterprises, and so on, permitted in industry, construction, banking, credit, and stock exchange spheres, medical services, education, culture, and so on).

The Eurasianists prefer the “principle of ownership” to the “principle of property,” when the owner should act on the basis of social responsibility and be oriented toward the public good.⁸² Hence, the owner is responsible to both society and the state for the use of his property.⁸³ In turn, the state should support national business and conduct a paternalistic policy, using

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 627.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 629.

⁸⁰ Dugin, *Proekt “Evraziia,”* p. 286.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

mechanisms of tariff and non-tariff protectionism.⁸⁴ The extension of the Russian Federation into the Eurasian State should be preceded by the application of the aforementioned paternalistic policy to the CIS countries, their integration into a customs union, and the formation of a single economic zone within the CIS borders.⁸⁵

According to this perspective, the economy of Russia-Eurasia formed on the above principles would create an independent so-called fourth zone that not only differs fundamentally from the other gigantic economic zones – American, European, and Pacific – but also opposes them.⁸⁶ The principled difference between the fourth zone and the others is also reflected in the post-Soviet state's problematic choice of its path – either toward Europe or toward Eurasia.⁸⁷

When looking at the main views of Eurasianists, a question arises: what is more important to them, those principles discussed above on the basis of which the Eurasian State should be built, or the restoration of a Russian empire at any price? This formulation is primarily provoked by the fact that, as noted above, despite their disparagement of Marxism, Eurasianists welcomed the establishment of a Soviet structure that extended Russian territory. While also disparaging liberal-capitalist orthodoxy, the current leaders of Eurasianism, although rather skeptical about Anatoli Chubais' idea of creating a so-called Liberal Empire⁸⁸ ended up welcoming this idea,⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

⁸⁶ Dugin, "Ekonomika: chetvertaia zona."

⁸⁷ See, for example, Yaroslav Zhalilo, "Ukraine: Eurasian Integration or European Choice?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (24) (2003), pp. 159-167.

⁸⁸ Anatoli Chubais, "Missia Rossii v XXI veke" [Russia's Mission in the 21st Century], *Nezavisimaia gazeta* [Independent Newspaper], October 1, 2003, <http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2003-10-01/1_mission.html>. Chubais' idea of a Liberal Empire was particularly popular in 1998-2005 (Simons *Eurasia's New Frontiers*, pp. 70-81). It must be stressed that the idea of a Liberal Empire per se is not Russian (see, for example, Yury Krupnov, "Pochemy liberal'naia imperia v Rossii ne poluchitsia?" [Why the Liberal Empire in Russia Will Fail?], *Vestnik analitiki* [Analytical Bulletin], No. 2 (20) (2005), pp. 38-56). It was first put forward as early as the second half of the 19th century in Great Britain (see, for example, H.C.G. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists. The Ideas and Politics of a Post-Gladstonian Élite* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)), it was developed at the end of the 20th century (for example, David Reiff, "A New Age of Liberal Imperialism?" *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (1999), pp. 1-10), and increasingly took on American hues (Theo Farrell, "Strategic Culture and American

according to which Russia could and should restore its economic influence⁹⁰ by means of economic expansion⁹¹ throughout the post-Soviet expanse. They

Empire,” *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XXV, No. 2 (2005), pp. 3-18). We agree with the opinion that the U.S.’s military activity in Afghanistan and Iraq, interpreted and conceived as a way to form an American “democratic empire” (Stanley Kurtz, “Democratic Imperialism,” *Policy Review*, Iss. 118, April/May (2003), pp. 3-20), helped to accelerate the formation of the Russian version of the Liberal Empire (Igor Torbakov, “Russian Policymakers Air Notion of “Liberal Empire” in Caucasus, Central Asia,” *Eurasia Insight*, October 27, 2003). A critical analysis of different versions of the contemporary American empire is quite widespread (for example, Alice H. Amsden, *Escape from Empire: The Developing World’s Journey Through Heaven and Hell* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007). Of great significance is also the interconnection between Energy Dependence and Political Independence in the Russian policy towards the post-Soviet space: an increase in the first seems to cause a decline in the second (Keith C. Smith, *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland, and Ukraine. A New Stealth Imperialism?* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 2004, pp. 5-8). It is no accident that, along with the formation of a Liberal Empire, the purposeful movement toward creating an Energy Empire is of particular importance to Russia (Fiona Hill, *Energy Empire: Oil, Gas and Russia’s Revival* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), <<http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/307.pdf>>). This is largely based on Putin’s myth of Russia as an “energy superpower”. As a result, Moscow’s energy policy is promoting the conception of New Economic Imperialism, which applies not only to the outside world, but also to Russia itself, to its domestic economy (Marshall I. Goldman, *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 172-176). It is worth regarding Russia’s energy strategy in the European vector in this context too (Janusz Bugajski, *Expanding Eurasia: Russia’s European Ambitions* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2008), pp. 73-80).

⁸⁹ Victor Yasmann, “Aleksandr Dugin Eurasia Party Founder and Chief Ideologue of the Russian Geopolitical School,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2003, <<http://www.rferl.org/specials/russianelection/bio/dugin.asp>>.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a Diplomacy for the Twenty-First Century* (London: The Free Press, 2002), p. 76.

⁹¹ Keith Crane, D.J. Peterson, and Olga Olikier, “Russian Investment in the Commonwealth of Independent States,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 6, 2005, pp. 404-444. According to its architects, a Liberal Empire should not be created through a forced armed occupation of the former Soviet republics, but through the possession of the main economic facilities located on their territory (by purchasing and developing assets). The real steps taken by the Russian leadership in this direction (for example, Vladimer Papava, Frederick Starr, “Russia’s Economic Imperialism,” *Project Syndicate*, 2006, <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/papava1>>) far from corresponded always to the generally accepted values of liberality (for example, Vladimer Papava, “Russia’s Illiberal ‘Liberal Empire’,” *Project Syndicate*, February 28, 2007, <<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/papava2/English>>). This is not surprising if we keep in mind the extremely undemocratic and non-liberal nature of Putin’s regime (for example, Anders Åslund, *Putin’s Decline and America’s Response*, Policy Brief, No. 41, August (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for

did this by actively describing this project of restoring the Russian empire as liberal Eurasianism.⁹²

It is worth noting that the ideas for building a Russia-Eurasia empire originate in the works of the first Eurasianists and were further developed by their contemporary followers, who call themselves neo-Eurasianists. Although both trends attribute to Russia the status of a great nation whose place in international relations goes back to geopolitics,⁹³ neo-Eurasianism is more aggressive⁹⁴ than the Eurasianism of the 1920s.

It is interesting to see how contemporary critics of neo-Eurasianism believe that its teachings share several characteristics. First, they believe that it is under the strong influence of Soviet-style Maxism-Leninism.⁹⁵ Second, they see it as a mixture of Marxism and nationalism.⁹⁶ Third, they view it as being on a par with Bolshevism and Fascism,⁹⁷ as well as Slavophilism, pan-Slavism, anti-Semitism, and Stalinism.⁹⁸ Fourth, they criticize it for falsifying Russian culture and history.⁹⁹

At present, Eurasianism has become the geopolitical theoretical basis for a contemporary Russian red-brown coalition uniting ultra-leftist and ultra-rightist politicians.¹⁰⁰

International Peace, 2005); Dmitri Trenin, *Reading Russia Right*. Policy Brief, No. 42, October (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005)).

⁹² Alexander Dugin, *Evraziyskaia missiia Nursultana Nazarbaeva*, pp. 99-103.

⁹³ Paradorn Rangsimaporn, "Interpretations of Eurasianism: Justifying Russia's Role in East Asia," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (2006), pp. 371-390.

⁹⁴ An example of the aggressive nature of the neo-Eurasianists is the attitude of their leader, Alexander Dugin, in relation to the war with Georgia and its occupation (for example, Dugin, "Bez kompromissov—tanki na Tbilisi!").

⁹⁵ Tchantouridze, "After Marxism-Leninism."

⁹⁶ Dmitry V. Shlapentokh, "Eurasianism: Past and Present," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1997), pp. 129-151.

⁹⁷ Ingram, "Alexander Dugin."

⁹⁸ Andreas Umland, *The Fascist Threat in Post-Soviet Russia* (1998), <<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/umland.pdf>>.

⁹⁹ Dmitri Oreshkin, "'Zolotoy milliard' ili 'Zolotaia Orda?'" [The "Golden Billion" or the "Golden Horde?"] *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, June 10, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2003-06-10/11_gold.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Clover, "Dreams of the Eurasian Heartland. The Reemergence of Geopolitics," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (1999), p. 9.

In order to implement the idea of forming a Eurasian State, Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbaev initiated the creation of a Customs Union in the CIS,¹⁰¹ between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. An important step in Eurasian integration was the creation, by the Customs Union member states, of an interstate organization called the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). It was conceived as the actual nucleus of the new Eurasian political formation. In January 2006, Uzbekistan joined the EurAsEC. The signing by Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus in 2003 of an agreement on the organization of a Single Economic Expanse (SEE) greatly intensified Eurasian integration. The experience of the first years showed that several contradictions existed among the integrating states, and those were caused primarily by the lack of correlation between their interests.¹⁰²

There are also projects for creating a Eurasian Economic Union and Eurasian Energy Community that encompass Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe and are aimed at turning Russia into an energy, transportation, and, ultimately, economic *hub* of Eurasia.¹⁰³

In contrast to the Eurasianists' optimism about the prospects for creating a Eurasian State, the most serious task for Russia is not to expand but to retain its integrity.¹⁰⁴ This is manifested in the problem of holding onto Siberia in the face of the demographic slump in Russia and the corresponding trends in China.¹⁰⁵

Recognizing Russia's goal of restoring the empire, the U.S. believes its main tasks to be the promotion of geopolitical pluralism in the region, to intensify the modernization of societies, and to decentralize the political systems on

¹⁰¹ Dugin, *Evraziyskaia missiia Nursultana Nazarbaeva*, p. 86.

¹⁰² See, for example, Rafael Ultanbaev, "Eurasian Economic Community: Thorny Path of Development," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (21) (2003), pp. 129-139; Rafael Ultanbaev, "Eurasian Economic Community in New Integration Conditions," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (40) (2006), pp. 31-40.

¹⁰³ Gordon M. Hahn, "The Rebirth of Eurasianism," *The Russia Journal*, No. 14, July 12-18 (2002), <<http://www.cdi.org/russia/215-14.cfm>>.

¹⁰⁴ Yu.V. Tikhonravov, "Khrestomatia ot geopolitiki k khronopolitike," (http://vasilievaa.narod.ru/gu/stat_rab/book/Geopolitika/Hrestomatia5.aspx.htm) in: Yu.V. Tikhonravov, *Nachala geopolitiki*, Ch. 5, <http://vasilievaa.narod.ru/gu/stat_rab/book/Geopolitika/Geopolitika.htm>.

¹⁰⁵ Brzezinski, *The Choice*, Ch. 3.

the basis of a market economy. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, in the future Russia could transform into a potential confederation composed of the European part of Russia, the Siberian Republic, and the Far Eastern Republic.¹⁰⁶ This recommendation is totally unacceptable not only for the Eurasianists, but also for the Russian national idea of creating an imperial nation that encompasses the former Soviet expanse and more. The scenario put forward by well-known Russian Eurasianist Igor Panarin of the disintegration of the U.S. into six parts, with Alaska being returned to Russia, can be classified as nothing other than moral revenge for Zbigniew Brzezinski's vision.¹⁰⁷

In contemporary interpretations of Eurasianism, in addition to neo-Eurasianism, so-called "pragmatic Eurasianism" and "intercivilizational Eurasianism" are singled out.¹⁰⁸ The first is used for the official needs of the Russian political leadership: to legitimize Russian interests in the West and in Asia at the same time justifying in this way the pursuance of a balanced international policy between these two vectors. The second is focused on the pragmatic use of Russia's unique geographic location as a bridge joining Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. It aims to emphasize Russia's intercivilizational function between the two continents. In our opinion, "intercivilizational Eurasianism" hardly deserves examination as an independent interpretation of Eurasianism; not only because of its limited spread,¹⁰⁹ but also because of its use in essentially justifying pragmatic Eurasianism.¹¹⁰ Moreover, its author, Mikhail Titarenko,¹¹¹ is clearly an advocate of neo-Eurasianism.¹¹²

According to a more detailed classification of Eurasianism in contemporary Russian geopolitical thought, the following five groups can be singled out:

¹⁰⁶ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 202.

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Osborn, "As if Things Weren't Bad Enough, Russian Professor Predicts End of U.S. In Moscow, Igor Panarin's Forecasts Are All the Rage; America 'Disintegrates' in 2010," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 2008, <http://online.wsj.com/article_email/SB123051100709638419-1MyQjAxMDI4MzZwMDUzMTAxWj.html#>.

¹⁰⁸ Rangsimaporn, "Interpretations of Eurasianism."

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹¹¹ M.L. Titarenko, *Rossiia litsom k Azii* [Russia Faces Asia] (Moscow: Respublika), 1998.

¹¹² Rangsimaporn, "Interpretations of Eurasianism," p. 383.

Expansionists, Civilizationists, Stabilizers, Geo-economists, and Westerners:¹¹³

- the Expansionists identify Atlanticism and free trade with the U.S. as the main threat to Russia. They see Russia as a culturally anti-Western state, as an empire constantly expanding territorially;
- the Civilizationists are contemporary pro-communist politicians and ideologists, who also regard Russia exclusively as an empire, but only within the borders of the former Soviet Union;
- the Stabilizers, instead of a traditional territorial empire, see Russia as having informal control over post-communist Eurasia. They believe that without Russia as a Great Power it will be impossible to preserve peace and stability in this region;
- the Geo-economists, who uphold Russia's Eurasian identity and believe that Russia should have economic and cultural influence over the Eurasian region. In their view, taking advantage of its location in the center of Eurasia, it should implement transnational economic projects with investments both from the West and from the Asian states;
- for representatives of the school of Russian Westernism, Russia is essentially a European country that should mainly associate itself with the West. They regard its role in Eurasia limited to establishing the standards of liberal democracy.

In our opinion, the representatives of the school of Russian Westernism can hardly be classified as Eurasianists. They support a strategy that will lead to Russia's gradual withdrawal from the former Soviet republics.¹¹⁴ A brilliant representative of this school, Dmitri Trenin, symbolically called one of his books, deliberately developing the ideas of contemporary Russian

¹¹³ Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Mastering Space in Eurasia: Russian Geopolitical Thinking after the Soviet Break-Up (Review Essay)," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (2003), <<http://www.bss.sfsu.edu/tsygankov/Research/RusEurasPap.htm>>.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Westernism, “*The End of Eurasia.*”¹¹⁵ The conception of the emergence of Russia as the new West is based on two factors: the country’s openness to the outside world and the development of Russian capitalism. These are slowly but dramatically changing Russian society, and as a result of this Russia could become a Western, but not European, country.¹¹⁶ It is obvious that these two factors cannot yet determine Russia’s possible Westernization. This was more acutely manifested in Russia’s military actions against Georgia in August 2008. It is understandable that Western experts are reluctant to concede that they were wrong in believing that the Westernization process that Russia started to undergo in the 1990s had, more or less, strong roots.¹¹⁷ The start of the Westernization process in Yeltsin’s Russia was primarily caused by the political and economic weakness of the Russian state at that time, which justified its need for Western political and financial help. Putin’s politically and economically stronger Russia, on the other hand, no longer had any reason to pretend to comply with Western values.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, the concept of the Westernization of Russia makes little sense in the light of Russia’s invasion of Georgia, which demonstrated to the West Russia’s disregard of Georgia’s pro-Western orientation, its rejection of the possibility of reducing Europe’s energy dependency on Russia, and its lack of respect for world order.¹¹⁹ At this point, it should be kept in mind that with respect to Europe, Eurasianism served two strategic goals for Moscow: turning Europe into an appendage of the Russian sphere of influence and weakening Euro-Atlanticism by harming Europe’s ties with the U.S.¹²⁰

It is interesting to note that the above-mentioned Expansionists qualify the Civilizationists (in other words, contemporary Russian communists and

¹¹⁵ Dmitri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002).

¹¹⁶ Trenin, *Integratsiia i identichnost.*

¹¹⁷ For example, Michael Hirsh, “Pushing Russia’s Buttons,” *Newsweek*, August 12, 2008, <<http://www.newsweek.com/id/152087>>.

¹¹⁸ For example, Asmus, “How the West Botched Georgia.”

¹¹⁹ Petersen, “Russia Invaded Georgia to Teach the West a Lesson.”

¹²⁰ Bugajski, *Expanding Eurasia*, p. 1.

their leader)¹²¹ as leftist-Eurasianists.¹²² The supporters of restoring the Kremlin's influence over the former Soviet republics by creating a liberal empire, on the other hand, are coined liberal Eurasianists. In all likelihood, the concepts of "leftist" and "rightist" in the traditionally Western European understanding do not present an adequate description of the contemporary Russian political spectrum.¹²³ And this fully correlates with the open concession of one of the Expansionists' leaders, stating that "...Eurasianism was and is neither rightist, leftist, liberal, or socialist. Eurasianists are willing to support the representatives of any ideological camp who defend the elements of statehood and other Eurasian values."¹²⁴

In conclusion, with respect to the Eurasian "disease," it is unlikely that Russia will be able to dominate the post-Soviet expanse. This is not only because other players involved in the region have much greater economic, informational, and military resources (although resources are not the most important thing in creating an empire) than Russia; but most importantly because the Russian elite, which traditionally suffers from national egoism,¹²⁵ cannot offer the former Soviet republics "anything other than pompous talk about its own grandeur, its historical mission, the messianic imperial calling of the Russian nation, and so on."¹²⁶

¹²¹ See, for example, G.A. Ziuganov, *Derzhava* [The Nation] (Moscow: Informpechat, 1994); G.A. Ziuganov, *Rossia—rodina moia: Ideologija gosudarstvennogo patriotizma* [Russia—My Homeland: The Ideology of State Patriotism] (Moscow: Informpechat, 1996); G.A. Ziuganov, *Geografiia pobedy: Osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki* [The Geography of Victory: Fundamental Principles of Russian Geopolitics] (Moscow, 1997), <<http://feelosophy.narod.ru/Zyuganov/Index.htm>>).

¹²² A.G. Dugin, "KPRF i evraziystvo" [The CPRF and Eurasianism], in A. Dugin, ed., *Osnovy Evraziystva*, p. 586.

¹²³ Frederick Matern, *The Discourse of Civilization in the Works of Russia's New Eurasists: Lev Gumilev and Alexander Panarin*, YCISS Post-Communist Studies Programme Research Paper Series, No. 002, February (2007), p. 31, <<http://www.yorku.ca/yciss/activities/documents/PCSPPaper002.pdf>>.

¹²⁴ Alexander Dugin, "Evraziystvo: ot filosofii k politike" [Eurasianism: from Philosophy to Politics], *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, May 30, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2001-05-30/8_philosophy.html>.

¹²⁵ Vladimir Milov, *Russia and the West. The Energy Factor* (Washington D.C.: CSIS, 2008), p. 18, <http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080731_milov_russia&west_web.pdf>.

¹²⁶ Andrei Piontikovskiy, "Pochemu Rossiia ne budet 'dominirovat' na postsovetskom prostranstve" [Why Russia Will Not Dominate in the Post-Soviet Expanse], *Russkiy*

The Central Caucasus: Main Geopolitical Problems and Eurasianism

The Central Caucasus region (often referred to as South Caucasus) is located between the Black, Caspian, and Azov seas, that is, on the border between Europe and Asia.¹²⁷ The contemporary geopolitical interpretation of the term “the Caucasus” dates to when Russia conquered the region.¹²⁸ Russia’s presence coined the terms “the Trans-Caucasus”¹²⁹ or “Transcaucasia”¹³⁰ alluding to the region beyond the main Caucasian mountain range if viewed from Russia and “the North Caucasus,” referring to the territory to the north of the mountain range. The Russian tradition dominated the international practice of identifying the region.

The entire territory of the North Caucasus (which consists of foothills and the mountain areas) comprises part of the Russian Federation. The foothills comprise the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, the Astrakhan and Rostov regions, and the Republic of Kalmykia. The mountain area is made up of the republics of Adigeya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia-Alania, and Chechnia.

The southern limits of the Caucasus were always identified by the Russian Empire’s southern state border in the Caucasus.¹³¹ The border change was amply illustrated by the case of Kars in the late 19th century. When the Russian Empire detached it by force from the Ottoman Empire, Kars came to be known as part of the Caucasus. Later, when Russia lost Kars, Ardahan, and Beyazid, the Russian political and historical documents stopped referring

Globus, March, No. 3 (2005), <<http://www.russian-globe.com/N37/Piontkovsky.PochemuRossiaNebudetDominirovat.htm>>.

¹²⁷ Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, p. 203.

¹²⁸ Nicholas S. Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia’s Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Austin Jersild, *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002).

¹²⁹ For example, Thomas V. Gamkrelidze, “‘Transcaucasia’ or ‘South Caucasus’? Towards a More Exact Geopolitical Nomenclature,” in V. Keshelava, ed., *Postcommunist Democratic Changes and Geopolitics in South Caucasus*, Acts of the Conference, October 17-18, 1997 (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1998), pp. 40-42.

¹³⁰ For example, Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. xiii.

¹³¹ Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays*, p. 10; Ismailov and Papava, “New Concept for the Caucasus;” Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Problems*, pp. 8-9.

to them as parts of the Caucasus. At the same time, when in November 1918 these regions proclaimed their independence and formed the Southwestern Caucasian (Kars) Democratic Republic,¹³² the name clearly indicated its Caucasian affiliation. This tradition of identifying the southern borders of the Caucasus survived in the Soviet period. The three Union republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia were described as Trans-Caucasian.

Early in the 1990s, when the Soviet Union disappeared and the three republics regained their independence, the term “Trans-Caucasus” was replaced by the more correct term “the South Caucasus.”¹³³ Russia alone continued using the old term.¹³⁴

Few academics stop to ponder significantly on the fact that the term “the South Caucasus” (as well as “the Trans-Caucasus”) reflects the purely Russian geopolitical approach to the region.¹³⁵ The terms “the Northern Caucasus” and “the Southern Caucasus” perpetuate the new, and old, Russian borders in the region.

According to Ismailov,¹³⁶ the Caucasus consists not only of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and the Russian Federation entities enumerated above. It also covers the northeastern Turkish areas (the provinces or *il* of Agri,

¹³² Aidyn Gajiev, *Iz istorii obrazovania i padenia Iugo-Zapadnoi Kavkazskoy (Karskoy) demokraticeskoy respubliki* [From the History of the Formation and Collapse of the Southwestern Caucasian (Kars) Democratic Republic] (Baku: Elm Publishers, 1992); Aidyn Gajiev, *Demokraticheskie respubliki Iugo-Zapadnogo Kavkaza (Karskaia i Araz-Tiurkskaia respubliki)* [The Democratic Republics of the Southwestern Caucasus (Kars and Araz-Turkic Republics)] (Baku: Nurlan Publishers, 2004); Shevket Tagieva, *Demokraticheskie respubliki Iugo-Vostochnogo Kavkaza (Azadistan i Gilianskaia Sovetskaia Respublika)* [The Democratic Republics of the Southeastern Caucasus (Azadistan and the Gilan Soviet Republic)] (Baku: Kavkaz Publishers, 2005).

¹³³ For example, Gamkrelidze, “‘Transcaucasia’ or ‘South Caucasus’?”

¹³⁴ For example, K.S. Gajiev, *Geopolitika Kavkaza* [Geopolitics of the Caucasus] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia Publishers, 2003); V.A. Mikhailov, ed., *Geopolitika* [Geopolitics] (Moscow: RAGS Press, 2007), pp. 205-213; A.V. Vozzhenikov, ed., *Regional’naia bezopasnost* [Regional Security] (Moscow: RAGS Press, 2006), pp. 158-160.

¹³⁵ Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays*, p. 11; Ismailov and Papava, “New Concept for the Caucasus”; Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Problems*, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Ismailov, “O geopoliticheskikh predposylkakh”; Ismailov and Kengerli, “Integratsia Kavkaza”; Ismailov and Kengerli, “O kategorii Kavkaz”; Eldar Ismailov and Zia Kengerli, “The Caucasus in the Globalizing World: A New Integration Model,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (20), 2003, pp. 135-144.

Ardahan, Artvin, Van, Igdyr, and Kars) and the northwestern parts of Iran (the provinces or *ostanha* of Eastern Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Gilan, Zanjan, Qazvin, Hamadan, and Western Azerbaijan). This division is based on the fact that the Turkish and Iranian regions have been populated by Caucasian peoples from time immemorial. For many centuries prior to the Russian conquests they belonged, together with the other Caucasian peoples, to the same ethnocultural and socioeconomic area. This means that these areas can be described as Caucasian on the same grounds that the Northern Caucasus of Russia is. Geographically, the mentioned regions of Turkey and Iran (as well as Armenia, which is described as a Caucasian state) are found at the same distance from the Greater Caucasus range and partly fill the space of the Smaller Caucasus range.

The above suggests that the Caucasian region consists not of two (the Northern and Southern Caucasus) parts, as the international academic community commonly believes, but of three parts: the Central Caucasus (made up of three independent states – Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia); the Northern Caucasus (made up of the Russian Federation’s autonomous units bordering on the Caucasus); and the Southern Caucasus, which covers the Turkish provinces bordering on Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia (the Southwestern Caucasus), and northwestern *ostanha* of Iran (the southeastern Caucasus).

If we proceed from the specific features of the region’s history, Ismailov’s conception fully reflects the Caucasian current geopolitical realities.¹³⁷ The region has developed into a meeting place for all sorts of geopolitical and economic interests,¹³⁸ while the Central Caucasus accumulates the entire range of regional problems.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Roin Metreveli, *The Caucasian Civilization in the Context of Globalization* (Stockholm: CA&CC Press, 2009).

¹³⁸ For example, Revaz Gachechiladze, “Geopolitics in the South Caucasus: Local and External Players,” *Geopolitics*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2002), pp. 113-138; Roin Metreveli, “Kavkaz na rubezhe tysiachletiy” [The Caucasus at the Turn of the Millennium] *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 4 (2001), pp. 81-86; Kenneth S. Yalowitz and Svante Cornell, “The Critical but Perilous Caucasus,” *Orbis, A Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2004), pp. 105-116.

¹³⁹ For example, Elkhan Nuriyev, *The South Caucasus at the Crossroads: Conflicts, Caspian Oil and Great Power Politics* (Berlin: LIT, 2007).

Based on the present-day state of each individual Central Caucasian country and their interrelations in particular,¹⁴⁰ the integration prospects in the Caucasus¹⁴¹ remain rather provisional in nature. Believing that integration in the Caucasus (and in any part of them) is nothing more than a pipe dream, since there has never been any political or cultural integrity in its history,¹⁴² would mean accepting that social processes are historically determined, even though such an approach has repeatedly been proven unsound by history.¹⁴³ Even the most extreme position, which presumes the complete disunity of the Caucasian peoples throughout their many centuries of history, in no way excludes the possibility of the countries and peoples of the region finding close or common interests today in the contemporary globalizing world. Furthermore, regarding the Central Caucasus, one must recognize the existence of three conflicts¹⁴⁴ or, to be more precise, occupied entities on its

¹⁴⁰ It should be admitted that even between Azerbaijan and Georgia, the regional interests of which largely coincide, there is far from full mutual understanding, the conflict regions being a graphic case in point (for example, Cory D. Welt, "Making the Caucasus Whole Again: A Cooperation Approach to Restoring the Domestic Status Quo," in *Caucasus Regional Security for the 21st Century*. Materials of International Conference (March 13-14, 1999, Tbilisi, Georgia) (Tbilisi: CIS and Peaceful Caucasus State Affairs Bureau and ICCN, 1999), pp. 97-101).

¹⁴¹ Ismailov, "O geopoliticheskikh predposylkakh"; Ismailov and Kengerli, "Integratsia Kavkaza"; Ismailov and Kengerli, "O kategroii Kavkaz"; Ismailov and Kengerli, "The Caucasus in the Globalizing World"; Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Essays*, pp. 7-9; Ismailov and Papava, "A New Concept for the Caucasus"; Ismailov and Papava, *The Central Caucasus: Problems*, pp. 6-8.

¹⁴² Nino Chikovani, "A United Caucasus: Reality Rooted in the Past or High-Flown Political Illusions?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (35) (2005), pp. 45-54.

¹⁴³ For example, Mariam Lordkipanidze, "K voprosu 'Kavkazskogo edinogo doma'" [On the Question of a "United Caucasian Home"], *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1998), pp. 163-169; Roin Metreveli, "On the Problem of War and Peace in the Caucasus," *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1998), pp. 170-182.

¹⁴⁴ For example, Oksana Antonenko, "Frozen Uncertainty: Russia and the Conflict over Abkhazia," in Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, eds., *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005), pp. 205-269; Gary K. Bertsch et al., eds., *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in The Caucasus and Central Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Julian Birch, "The Georgian/South Ossetian Territorial and Boundary Dispute," in John F.R. Wright, Suzanne Goldenberg, and Richard Schofield, eds., *Transcaucasian Boundaries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 151-189; Vicken Cheterian, *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Ethnic Conflict and the New Geopolitics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Levon Chorbajian, Patrick Donabedian and Claude Mutafian, *The Caucasian Knot. The History and Geo-politics of Nagorno-Karabakh* (London: Zed Press, 1994); Bruno Coppieters, *Federalism and Conflict in The Caucasus* (London: Royal Institute of

territory – Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and South Ossetia – which undermine the political and economic stability of the entire Central Caucasus. The situation worsened after Russia invaded Georgia in August 2008 and recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The problem of instability in the Central Caucasus is also compounded by the fact that the conflict territories themselves are becoming a bastion of terrorism and refuge for criminals engaged in drug trafficking and the drug trade, as well as zones for money laundering, kidnapping, and human trafficking.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the idea of achieving unity in the Central Caucasus (and in the Caucasus as a whole) can be considered an ideal the residents of this region should really be striving for.¹⁴⁶

The international relations of the Central Caucasian countries are largely determined by historical roots. These roots influence significantly the

International Affairs, 2001); Svante E. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers. A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001); Svante E. Cornell, "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective," *World Politics*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (2002), pp. 245-276; Tamara Dragadze, "Ethnic Conflict as Political Smokescreen: The Caucasus Region," in Håkan Wiberg and Christian P. Scherrer, *Ethnicity and Intra-State Conflict* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 262-279; Shireen Hunter, *The Transcaucasus in Transition: Nation-Building and Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, 1994); Ivlian Khaindrava, "Karabakh and Abkhazia: The Dynamics of Non-Settlement," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (13) (2002), pp. 80-91; Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (2001), pp. 524-552; Dov Lynch, *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States. Unresolved Conflicts and De Facto States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004); Edgar O'Ballance, *Wars in the Caucasus, 1990-1995* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Christopher Panico and Jemera Rone, *Azerbaijan: Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1994); Vladimir Socor, "Frozen Conflicts: A Challenge to Euro-Atlantic Interests," in Ronald D. Asmus, Konstantin Dimitrov and Joerg Forbrig, eds., *A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region* (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004), pp. 127-137; Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden. Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Alexei Zverev, "Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994," in Bruno Coppieters, ed., *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: VUB University Press, 1996), pp. 13-71.

¹⁴⁵ Alla Yaz'kova, "Iuzhniy Kavkaz: uravnenie so mnogimi neizvestnymi" [Southern Caucasus: the Equation With Many an Unknown], *Vestnik analitiki* [Analytical Herald], No. 2 (20) (2005), pp. 57-58.

¹⁴⁶ Gajiev, *Geopolitika Kavkaza*, p. 92.

formation of the main foreign policy trends in these countries.¹⁴⁷ Azerbaijan and to a greater extent Georgia are oriented in their international relations toward the West, while Armenia has its sights set on Russia. Nevertheless, after Russia raised the price of gas it delivered to Armenia in April 2006, and closed the Verkhniy Lars checkpoint on the Russian-Georgian border (Armenia's only road connection with Russia), even the most pro-Russian politicians questioned the reliability of Russia's policy towards its most devoted partners, in this particular case Armenia.¹⁴⁸

Of the Central Caucasian countries, Azerbaijan has a clear comparative advantage: it is rich in hydrocarbon resources¹⁴⁹ and has a convenient geographic location, which promotes its use as a transport hub.¹⁵⁰ Because of the special geographic features of the Central Caucasus, the use of

¹⁴⁷ For example, Rouben Paul Adalian, "Armenia's Foreign Policy: Defining Priorities and Coping with Conflict," in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and The New States of Eurasia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 309-339; Leila Alieva, "The Institutions, Orientations, and Conduct of Foreign Policy in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan," in Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and The New States of Eurasia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 286-308; Richard G. Hovannisian, "Historical Memory and Foreign Relations: The Armenian Perspective," in S. Frederick Starr, ed., *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 237-276; Shireen T. Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States," in Gary K. Bertsch et al., eds., *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in The Caucasus and Central Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 25-47; Stephen Jones, "The Role of Cultural Paradigms in Georgian Foreign Policy," *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (2003), pp. 83-110; Ghia Nodia, "The Georgian Perception of the West," in Bruno Coppieters, Alexei Zverev, and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *Commonwealth and Independence in Post-Soviet Eurasia* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), pp. 12-43.

¹⁴⁸ Stepan Grigoryan, "Yuzhniy Kavkaz i mezhdunarodnoe soobshchestvo. Mesto Armenii v sovremennom mire" [The Southern Caucasus and the World Community. Armenia's Place in the Contemporary World], *Evropa, zhurnal pol'skogo instituta mezhdunarodnykh del* [Europe, Journal of the Polish Institute of International Affairs], Vol. 7, No. 3 (2007), pp. 98-99.

¹⁴⁹ For example, Ilkham Aliev, *Kaspiiskaia neft' Azerbaidzhana* [Caspian Oil of Azerbaijan] (Moscow: Izvestia Publishers, 2003).

¹⁵⁰ Stanley Escudero, "Visions of Baku. Future Hub of the Caspian," *Azerbaijan International*, No. 9.3 (2001), <http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/93_folder/93_articles/93_stanley_escudero.html>; Stanley Escudero, "Hub for the 21st Century. Azerbaijan's Future Role in the Caspian Basin," *Azerbaijan International*, No. 10.2 (2002), <http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/ai102_folder/102_articles/102_caspian_hub_escudero.html>.

Azerbaijan's transport potential largely depends on other countries in the region, namely, Georgia and Armenia. Georgia's main comparative advantage is its geographic location on the restored Great Silk Road – the central corridor joining Europe and Asia.¹⁵¹ This also determines the international economic function of this Central Caucasian country.¹⁵² Georgia has the potential to become a major transport link between Russia and Armenia, and on to Iran. Armenia is also characterized by its potential transport function both in the West-East (Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan) and the North-South directions (Russia-Georgia-Armenia-Iran).¹⁵³ The West-South (Georgia-Armenia-Iran) transportation corridor that links the Black Sea with the Persian Gulf is particularly important for Armenia, just as it is for Georgia.¹⁵⁴ The question is to what extent do the international relations of the Central Caucasian countries promote the use of their comparative advantages?¹⁵⁵

The problem of oil and gas in contemporary world economics and politics is so significant that it also largely determines the attitude of many states toward the Central Caucasus. So, it is not surprising that Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon resources and their transportation routes, routes of immense geostrategic importance,¹⁵⁶ have generated from the very beginning positive

¹⁵¹ Eduard Shevardnadze, *Great Silk Route. TRACECA-PETRA. Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia. The Eurasian Common Market. Political and Economic Aspects* (Tbilisi: Georgian Transport System, 1999).

¹⁵² Vladimer Papava, "On the Special Features of Georgia's International Economic Function," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (14) (2002), pp. 143-147.

¹⁵³ For example, Alexander Mukhin, Vladimir Mesamed, "The North-South International Transportation Corridor: Problems and Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (25) (2004), pp. 123-126.

¹⁵⁴ In Armenia's official circles this corridor is considered part of the North-South corridor (ARKA, "Yerevan-Batumi Transport Corridor may be Commissioned in Two Years," ARKA News Agency, October 6, 2008, <<http://www.arka.am/eng/transport/2008/10/06/11466.html>>), although from the geographic viewpoint it would be much more accurate to classify it as West-South.

¹⁵⁵ For example, Rozeta Asatiani, "Issues of Economic Development of the Caucasus," *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 1, 1998, pp. 34-42; Vladimer Papava, "Comparative Advantages of the Central Caucasian Countries: Potential, Realized, and Missed Opportunities," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 1 (1), 2006, pp. 87-96.

¹⁵⁶ For example, Svante E. Cornell, Mamuka Tsereteli, Vladimir Socor, "Geostrategic Implications of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline," in S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell, eds., *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West* (Washington: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2005), pp. 17-38.

and negative effects for both this country and the entire region.¹⁵⁷ The positive effect is largely associated with the interest of Western countries in having as many alternative sources of oil and gas as possible. For such reasons, from day one, they have been extremely interested in developing Azerbaijani energy resources and creating alternative pipelines for their transportation. This, in turn, made possible a significant inflow of foreign direct investments into both Azerbaijan and other Caucasian states (Georgia and Turkey) where pipelines run. On the other hand, the negative effects seem mainly to derive from the involvement of regional rivals in the production and transportation of oil and gas. Russia and Iran have tried from the very beginning, with all the means at their disposal, to take control over the operation and particularly the transportation of Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon resources. In other words, the Caspian energy resources can not only be of benefit to the Central Caucasus but can also create a threat for the countries of this region as a consequence of Russia's concern about the West's growing influence on the region, something that arguably endangers its national security and runs counter to its interests.¹⁵⁸

Logically, the territorial proximity of the three conflict zones in the Caucasus – Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and South Ossetia – to the pipelines used to transport Azerbaijani oil and gas to the West should have been a factor deterring their construction, for security reasons. Still they were built because the West's interest in obtaining energy resources independent of Russia is so high that even the threats emanating from the conflict zones could not stop it.¹⁵⁹

Not only did the Russian side not want to develop a transportation corridor through Georgia or build pipelines on its territory, but it was also willing to

¹⁵⁷ For example, Sarah L. O'Hara, "Great Game or Grubby Game? The Struggle for Control of the Caspian," *Geopolitics*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2004), pp. 138-160

¹⁵⁸ Alexander Rondeli, "Pipelines and Security Dynamics in the Caucasus," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2002), pp. 13-17.

¹⁵⁹ Nikolai Sokov, "The South Caucasus Corridor After the Russian-Georgian War," *Transformations in the Black Sea Region*, A PONARS Eurasia Workshop, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 49 (2008), <https://gushare.georgetown.edu/Eurasiststrategy/Memos/2008/Transformations%20in%20the%20Black%20Sea%20Region_PO_NARS%20Eurasia.pdf>.

go so far as to prevent the implementation of such projects.¹⁶⁰ This evaluation of the Russian position with respect to the transportation of Caspian energy resources through Georgia was confirmed during the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008. Russian aviation bombed the pipelines that pass through Georgia¹⁶¹ which are located far from South Ossetia, the protection of which was supposedly the reason for the invasion. This cast doubt not only on the security of the transportation corridor via which pipelines pass through Georgian territory,¹⁶² but also increased the danger of Azerbaijan losing its economic independence.¹⁶³ Fortunately, it did not take long to restore confidence in transporting energy resources through Georgia.¹⁶⁴ The fact that Moscow was unable to realize its goal of establishing control over these pipelines by military means,¹⁶⁵ and that it could not fully monopolize the transportation routes of energy resources from the former Soviet Union to the West, prompted Americans and Europeans to step up their efforts even

¹⁶⁰ Steve LeVin, *The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and Fortune on the Caspian Sea* (New York: Random House, 2007); Alexander Rondeli, "Pipelines and Security Dynamics in the Caucasus"; Mamuka Tsereteli, "Beyond Georgia: Russia's Strategic Interests in Eurasia," *CACI Analyst*, June 11, 2008, <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4879>>.

¹⁶¹ For example, Jackson, "IA Forum Interview: Vladimer Papava."

¹⁶² Stephen F. Jones, "Clash in the Caucasus: Georgia, Russia, and the Fate of South Ossetia," *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective*, Vol. 2, Iss. 2 (2008), <<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/origins/article.cfm?articleid=20>>; Jad Mouawad, "Conflict Narrows Oil Options for West," *The New York Times*, August 13, 2008, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/14/world/europe/14oil.html>>; John Roberts, "Georgia Falls Victim to Pipeline Politics," *BBC News*, August 12, 2008, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7557049.stm>>. It should be noted that one of the goals of the Russian aggression was to cast doubt over the security of the pipelines passing through Georgia (Pierre Hassner, "One Cold War Among Many?" *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (2008) p. 250).

¹⁶³ Svante E. Cornell, "War in Georgia, Jitters All Around," *Current History*, Vol. 107, Iss. 711, October (2008), p. 312, <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/2007/0810CH.pdf>>; Fariz Ismailzade, "The Georgian-Russian Conflict through the Eyes of Baku," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 5, No. 154, August 12 (2008), <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33881>.

¹⁶⁴ Vladimir Socor, "Business Confidence Returning to the South Caucasus Transport Corridor," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, *The Jamestown Foundation*, Vol. 5, No. 186, September 29 (2008), <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33978>.

¹⁶⁵ Ariel Cohen and Lajos F. Szaszdi, "Russia's Drive for Global Economic Power: A Challenge for the Obama Administration," *The Heritage Foundation*, Backgrounder No. 2235 (2009), <<http://www.heritage.org/research/RussiaandEurasia/bg2235.cfm>>.

more to find ways to develop alternative routes for transporting oil and gas by circumventing Russia.¹⁶⁶ Accordingly, Ankara, Brussels, and Washington are particularly interested in enhancing the security of the existing pipeline system in Azerbaijan and Georgia.¹⁶⁷ Kazakhstan, is also very much interested in the security of the transportation corridor passing through Azerbaijan and Georgia, despite its close relations with Russia.¹⁶⁸ One way or another the Caucasian energy corridor is one of the main problems of the new U.S. administration.¹⁶⁹ At the same time, many states interested in diversifying the pipeline network have also stepped up their efforts in this area.¹⁷⁰

Another initiative to intensify economic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as draw Turkey into this process, is putting the Kars-Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Baku rail system into operation.¹⁷¹

In this context, joint actions between Azerbaijan and Georgia at the international level are acquiring special significance. They are primarily using the GUAM framework which unites countries that have basically common interests in preserving territorial integrity – Georgia, Ukraine,

¹⁶⁶ Ivan Krastev, “Russia and the Georgia War: the Great-Power Trap,” *Open Democracy News Analysis*, August 31, 2008, <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/russia-and-the-georgia-war-the-great-power-trap>>.

¹⁶⁷ Jon. E. Chicky, *The Russian-Georgian War: Political and Military Implications for U.S. Policy*, Policy Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, February 2009), p. 12, <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0902Chicky.pdf>>.

¹⁶⁸ Nargis Kassenova, “Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus Corridor in the Wake of the Georgia-Russia War,” *EUCAM, EU-Central Asia Monitoring Policy Brief*, No. 3, January 29 (2009), <http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1786>.

¹⁶⁹ Svante E. Cornell, “Pipeline Power. The War in Georgia and the Future of the Caucasian Energy Corridor,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2009), <<http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/scornell/GJIA-2009.pdf>>.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Goble, “Nabucco After Budapest: Old Problems, New Challenges and a Changed Role for Azerbaijan,” *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, Vol. I, No. 3, February 1 (2009), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/164/20090329011708234.html>>.

¹⁷¹ For example, Samuel Lussac, “The Baku-Tbilisi- Kars Railroad And Its Geopolitical Implications for the South Caucasus,” *Caucasian Review on International Affairs*, Vol. 2 (4) (2008), pp. 34-46, <<http://cria-online.org/Journal/5/THE%20BAKU-TBILISI-KARS%20RAILROAD.pdf>>; Taleh Ziyadov, “Officials Meet to Discuss South Caucasus Rail System,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 2, No. 232, December 14 (2005), <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=31218>.

Azerbaijan, and Moldova.¹⁷² At present, GUAM's future,¹⁷³ in which Azerbaijan and Georgia act as a "Caucasian tandem,"¹⁷⁴ largely depends on the amplification of the West's support for such a framework of cooperation.¹⁷⁵

Of particular importance is the relationship between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Its ethnic, cultural, and linguistic kinship with Turkey has generated unity in many international issues. Naturally, this had also a role to play in determining the oil and gas transportation routes. Despite the fact that the shortest route linking Azerbaijan to Turkey passes through Armenia and is potentially the best transportation route from the economic viewpoint, the strained relations between these countries and Armenia led to the rejection of that option. Azerbaijan's negative attitude toward use of Armenian territory as a transportation corridor reflects unequivocally the effects of three main events: the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh; the occupation by Armenian armed forces of Azerbaijani territories beyond this conflict zone; and the disruption of Azerbaijan's rail communication with its autonomous exclave, Nakhichevan. Turkey, in turn, supported Azerbaijan by joining the embargo of the transportation routes to Armenia.

Armenia also has its complaints against Turkey with respect to the latter's refusal to recognize the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as "genocide." Moreover, since Armenians frequently identify Azerbaijanis with Turks, Armenians also believe that Azerbaijanis were involved in this

¹⁷² For example, Valery Chechelashvili, "Organization for Democracy and Economic Development—GUAM: Reality, Possibilities, and Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3-4 (51-52) (2008), pp. 8-14; Nazim Muzaffarli (Imanov), "Political-Economic Complementarity and Compatibility Between GUAM Member States," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3-4 (51-52) (2008), pp. 14-34

¹⁷³ Paul Goble, "GUAM after Georgia: More Important than Ever or Soon to Die?" *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, Vol. I, No. 16, September 15 (2008), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/155/20090328034444257.html>>.

¹⁷⁴ Vladimer Papava, "On the Role of the 'Caucasian Tandem' in GUAM," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3-4 (51-52) (2008), pp. 47-55.

¹⁷⁵ Tedo Japaridze, "Does GUAM have a Future? A Personal View," *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, Vol. I, No. 16, September 15 (2008), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/155/20090328034800283.html>>.

alleged genocide.¹⁷⁶ This is a graphic example of how the conflict relations that have developed between Armenia and these two countries have prevented Armenia from using its comparative advantage as the shortest route linking Azerbaijan to Turkey.¹⁷⁷

In the summer of 2008, after Russia launched its military attack on Georgia, Turkey revived its efforts to devise and implement the Caucasus Stability Pact,¹⁷⁸ also known as the Caucasus Alliance, the Caucasus Stability Forum, or the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform. This idea was born in as early as 2000, although it was not duly approved at that time.¹⁷⁹ It is still debatable as a platform, since it presumes drawing Russia (but not the West) into the processes aimed at ensuring stability in the Caucasus. Such a vision can hardly be evaluated as productive after the war against Georgia, Moscow's unilateral recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Kremlin's plans for Abkhazia and South Ossetia's possible integration with Russia.¹⁸⁰

At this point, Turkey and Russia continue to pursue different goals in the region. Ankara is interested in strengthening its role in the region, while Moscow is trying its best to use ever newer ways of applying pressure on Georgia.¹⁸¹ It is worth noting that from the economic point of view, instability in Georgia threatens Turkey more than the violation of Georgia's

¹⁷⁶ Hunter, "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasian States."

¹⁷⁷ For example, Bülent Aras and George Foster, "Turkey: Looking for Light at the End of Caspian Pipeline," in Michael P. Croissant and Bülent Aras, eds., *Oil and Geopolitics of the Caspian Sea Region* (Westport: Praeger, 1999), p. 236; Aram Harutyunyan, "Armenia as a Factor of Balance in The Southern Caucasus Region," in Anja H. Ebnöther and Gustav E. Gustenau, eds., *Security Sector Governance in Southern Caucasus—Challenges and Visions. Study Groups Regional Stability in Southern Caucasus Security Sector Reform* (Vienna: National Defense Academy, 2004), pp. 166-178.

¹⁷⁸ Oxford Analytica, "Turkey/Caucasus: Ankara Seeks Regional Stability Pact," *Oxford Analytica*, September 4, 2008, <<http://www.oxan.com/display.aspx?ItemID=DB145306>>.

¹⁷⁹ Hasan Kanbolat, "What is Caucasian Stability and Cooperation? What can Turkey do in the Caucasus?" *Today's Zaman*, August 19, 2008, <<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=150578>>.

¹⁸⁰ Allison, "Russia Resurgent?" pp. 1160-1161.

¹⁸¹ Paul Goble, "Turkey Returns to a Transformed Transcaucasus," *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, Vol. I, No. 18, October 15 (2008), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/157/20090328072243629.html>>.

territorial integrity.¹⁸² This fact could be a certain starting point for finding common ground on harmonizing Turkey's and Russia's ideas about the Caucasus, especially after Moscow recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Still, the differences between Turkey and Russia with respect to the Caspian energy resource transportation projects through Georgia and Turkey are substantial. Not only are the differences great but the interests of the other regional countries and the world powers are not very conducive. In this context, Turkey's initiative to implement the Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform looks, for now, not very optimistic.¹⁸³

That said, Turkish-Russian cooperation in establishing and maintaining stability in the Caucasus may help Armenia join the regional transportation corridor projects it has been isolated from. The question is what price Armenia would have to pay for such involvement. Yerevan would have to stop supporting the existing regime in Nagorno-Karabakh, withdraw its genocide recognition policy toward Turkey, and renounce its territorial claims on Turkey. With such cost, it appears very doubtful that Armenia would have any chance of joining the regional transportation projects in the near future.¹⁸⁴ That is why the agreement to establish diplomatic relations and open the borders, signed by the presidents of Turkey and Armenia in the beginning of October 2009 but not implemented at the time of writing, is far from changing this reality.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Mitat Çelikpala, "The Latest Developments in the Caucasus, the Struggle for Global Hegemony and Turkey," ASAM, October 9, 2008, <<http://www.asam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.asp?ID=2891&kat2=2>>.

¹⁸³ Shamsudin Mamaev, "Turtsiia pristupaet k 'aktivnomu stoianiiu' na Kavkaze" [Turkey is Beginning to Take an 'Active Stance' in the Caucasus], *Politicheskii zhurnal* [Political Journal], No. 10 (187), September 30 (2008), <<http://www.politjournal.ru/index.php?POLITSID=778ffdc756a47c92a40696e325b8727f&action=Articles&dirid=40&tek=8240&issue=221>>.

¹⁸⁴ Karine Ter-Sahakyan, "Armenia should Make it Clear what the USA, Russia, Turkey and Even the EU Promise Her for 'Model Behaviour'," *PanARMENIAN Network*, October 4, 2008, <<http://www.panarmenian.net/details/eng/?nid=935>>.

¹⁸⁵ For example, Ahto Lobjakas, "Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement Leaves Many Questions Unanswered," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, October 18, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/content/TurkishArmenian_Rapprochement_Leaves_Many_Questions_Unanswered/1854722.html>; Matt Robinson and Ibon Villeda, "Turkey-

It is particularly important to stress that Moscow is not simply interested in isolating Armenia from the regional transportation projects.¹⁸⁶ It is promoting, moreover, in every way possible, the “Kaliningradization” of Armenia,¹⁸⁷ that is, implementing the State Under Siege concept.¹⁸⁸ When most large-scale enterprises are under the control of Russian capital, the attempts to create the necessary economic foundations for Armenia to break free of Moscow can basically be described as virtual.¹⁸⁹ The Armenian economy has essentially been entirely absorbed by Russia’s Liberal Empire.¹⁹⁰

The absence of official, including economic, relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan in no way exclude the existence of illegal trade relations (although in relatively small amounts). They are carried out via transit through Georgia. Despite the demands of the Azerbaijani side to prohibit the shipment of goods from Azerbaijan to Armenia through Georgia, the Georgian side, referring to the fact that Georgia and Armenia are members of the WTO, does not always fulfill these demands. This is also creating certain difficulties in Azerbaijani-Georgian relations.¹⁹¹

It should be pointed out that Russia not only took Armenia’s side in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict from the very beginning, but also rendered it military assistance.¹⁹² Due to its direct and open support for the separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, not to mention the direct war, Russia set itself also against Georgia. On this account, it is normal that one of the vectors of Moscow’s subversive activity in the post-Soviet expanse

Armenia Rapprochement Far from Guaranteed,” *The Daily Star*, October 13, 2009, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=107456>

¹⁸⁶ Gaidz Minassian, “Armenia, a Russian Outpost in the Caucasus?” *Russie.Nei.Visions*, No. 27, February 15, 2008, p. 9, <http://www.ifri.org/files/Russie/ifri_RNV_minassian_Armenie_Russie_ANG_fevr2008.pdf>.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ For example, Marianna Grigoryan, “Armenia: New Projects a Stab at Independence from Moscow?” *Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet*, October 17, 2008, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101708.shtml>>.

¹⁹⁰ Minassian, “Armenia, a Russian Outpost in the Caucasus?” p. 9.

¹⁹¹ Malkhaz Alkhazashvili, “Armenia-Azerbaijan: Trade Relations via Georgia,” *The Messenger*, January 24, No. 015 (1035), 2006, p. 3.

¹⁹² For example, A.I. Utkin, *Amerikanskaia strategiya dlia XXI veka* [American Strategy for the 21st Century] (Moscow: Logos Publishers, 2000), p. 110.

points to putting pressure on Georgia and Azerbaijan in order to destabilize the situation in these countries.¹⁹³

Therefore, the military-political union between Armenia and Russia has the features of a strategic partnership. Interestingly, according to some Armenian experts, Russia's war against Georgia made military cooperation with Russia even more important for Armenia.¹⁹⁴ Recognizing that it fulfills Russia's avant-garde defense function in the Central Caucasus, Armenia earned the status of Russia's outpost in the Caucasus, not an entirely flattering image for a sovereign state.¹⁹⁵ Since Russia obviously has the advantage in bilateral relations, Armenia is gradually being downgraded from partner to vassal.¹⁹⁶ And this stands to reason if we keep in mind that Moscow sees only vassals or enemies at its borders.¹⁹⁷

Exclusion of the Armenian oil and gas transportation route from Azerbaijan to the West helped increase the expediency of using the Georgian route,¹⁹⁸ which was in fact the one implemented. Geopolitically, Georgia occupies a key position in the Central Caucasus, especially considering the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgia has to perform the function of the region's link, that is, a regional hub in the Caucasus.¹⁹⁹ Telling is also the fact

¹⁹³ Brzezinski, *The Geostrategic Triad*, p. 62.

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, Emil Danielyan, "Georgian Transit Ban Hinders Russian Military Presence in Armenia," *Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet*, October 10, 2008, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101008a.shtml>>.

¹⁹⁵ For example, Fraser Cameron and Jarek M. Domański, *Russian Foreign Policy with Special Reference to its Western Neighbours*, EPC (European Policy Centre) Issue Paper, No. 37, 2005, <http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/354600757_EPC%20Issue%20Paper%2037%20Russian%20Foreign%20Policy.pdf>; Tigran Liloyan, "Armenia—Russia's Outpost in South Caucasus—Duma Speaker," *ArmenianDiaspora.com*, December 15, 2004, <<http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/archive/16794.html>>.

¹⁹⁶ Minassian, "Armenia, a Russian Outpost in the Caucasus?" p. 4, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Krastev, "Russia and the Georgia War."

¹⁹⁸ For example, Michael P. Croissant, "Georgia: Bridge or Barrier for Caspian Oil?" in Michael P. Croissant and Bülent Aras, eds., *Oil and Geopolitics of the Caspian Sea Region* (Westport: Praeger, 1999), pp. 229-247.

¹⁹⁹ Marat Terterov, ed., *Doing Business with Georgia* (London: GMB Publishing Limited), 2001, pp. 3-8 <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=CEdbQ_-Yvq4C&dq='marat+terterov+georgia'&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=awUpC3qGHy&sig=cKJDemr2ezJfEI7r5Jvk4QQtVuo&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPP1,M1>. It must be noted that the Caucasus as a whole is regarded as a link between the West and the East (Bahram Amir Ahmadian, "Caucasus: Geopolitical

that almost immediately after Georgia gained its state independence, it made a strategic pro-Western choice.²⁰⁰

This helped give birth to the idea of transporting Caspian oil to the West and building the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus Gas Pipeline. With the purpose of finding a direct link that did not cross either Russia or Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey essentially formed a single team with significant support from the U.S.²⁰¹ This was fully in line with the U.S.'s main goals in the region: isolation of Iran, prevention of the restoration of Russia's monopoly position in the region, support for Turkey in augmenting its influence in the region, and support of American companies in making investments in the region.²⁰²

Over the past few years, the EU's attention toward the countries of the Black Sea and Caspian region has increased.²⁰³ Furthermore, the EU's and U.S.'s

Buffer Region (A New Concept for Development)," *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1998), p. 24).

²⁰⁰ For example, Alexander Rondeli, "The Choice of Independent Georgia," in Gennady Chufrin, ed., *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 195-211.

²⁰¹ Jan H. Kalicki, "Caspian Energy at the Crossroads," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 5, 2001, p. 122; Sergej Mahnovski, "Natural Resources and Potential Conflict in the Caspian Sea Region," in Olga Oliker and Thomas S. Szayna, eds., *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Implications for the U.S. Army* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), pp. 116-117.

²⁰² For example, Friedemann Müller, "Energy Development and Transport Network Cooperation in Central Asia and the South Caucasus," in Renata Dwan and Oleksandr Pavliuk, eds., *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia. Subregional Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), p. 189.

²⁰³ For example, Commission of the European Communities, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Eastern Partnership*. SEC (2008) 2974. Brussels, December 3, 2008, <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0823:FIN:EN:PDF>>; Heather Grabbe, "Towards a More Ambitious EU Policy for the Black Sea Region," in Ronald D. Asmus, Konstantin Dimitrov and Joerg Forbrig, eds., *A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region* (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004), pp. 106-115; Borut Grgic and Alexandros Petersen, "Escaping Gazprom's Embrace," *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, Spring, No. 14 (2008), <<http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2008/14/grgic&petersen.php>> ; Borut Grgic and Alexandros Petersen, "Europe's Caucasian Moment," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 5, 2008, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121788609019011381.html?mod=opinion_main_commentaries> ; Dov Lynch, "Security Sector Governance in The South Caucasus—Towards an EU Strategy," in Anja H. Ebnöther and Gustav E. Gustenau, eds., *Security Sector Governance in Southern Caucasus—Challenges and Visions. Study Groups Regional Stability in Southern Caucasus*

interests in the region have gradually been converging.²⁰⁴ The problem of the EU and U.S. joining forces in the Caucasus became more urgent after the Russian-Georgian war.²⁰⁵ It must be emphasized that the Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) and Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe (INOGATE) projects are most in tune with the European view on the development of the Central Caucasus.²⁰⁶ In addition, the EU can consider and use the Black Sea Region pipeline system as a significant component of its enlargement strategy. In this respect, Georgia and Azerbaijan are extremely important as candidates for membership in the European and trans-Atlantic structures.²⁰⁷

It is no accident that the U.S.'s Caspian policy, aimed at preventing the restoration of Russia's monopoly position in the region, is perceived as a policy aimed against Russia itself. Nevertheless, the U.S.'s official position, on the other hand, depicts the Caspian's energy resources as an arena for potential cooperation with Russia.²⁰⁸ Harmonizing the pipeline network is

Security Sector Reform (Vienna: National Defense Academy, 2004), <<http://www.bmlv.gv.at/wissen-forschung/publikationen/publikation.php?id=122>>; Tigran Mkrtchyan, Tabib Huseynov, and Kakha Gogolashvili, *The European Union and the South Caucasus. Three Perspectives on the Future of the European Project from the Caucasus. Europe in Dialogue 2009/01* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009).

²⁰⁴ Svante E. Cornell and Frederick Starr, *The Caucasus: A Challenge for Europe*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, June 2006), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0606Caucasus.pdf>>.

²⁰⁵ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou and Yannis Tsantoulis, "Looking Beyond the Georgian Crisis: The EU in Search of an Enhanced Role in the Black Sea Region," *International Centre for Black Sea Studies Policy Brief*, No. 8, October (2008), <http://icbss.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=84&Itemid=101>.

²⁰⁶ For example, Alexander Rondeli, "The South Caucasus: Pipeline Politics and Regional Economic Interests," in *The South Caucasus: Promoting Values Through Cooperation*, Seminar Report Series No. 20, Helsinki, May 12-15, 2004 (Rome: NATO Defense College, Academic Research Branch, 2004), p. 52.

²⁰⁷ Zeyno Baran, "Developing a Euro-Atlantic Strategy Towards Black Sea Energy: The Example of the Caspian," in Ronald D. Asmus, Konstantin Dimitrov, and Joerg Forbrig, eds., *A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region* (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2004), p. 120.

²⁰⁸ For example, F. Stephen Larrabee, "The Russian Factor in Western Strategy Toward the Black Sea Region," in *A New Euro-Atlantic Strategy for the Black Sea Region*, pp. 147-156; Steven R. Mann, "Caspian Futures," in Jan H. Kalicki and Eugene K. Lawson, eds., *Russian-Eurasian Renaissance? U.S. Trade and Investment in Russia and Eurasia* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003), pp. 152-153.

the *sine qua non* of maximizing positive effects both for the energy resource exporter and importer countries and for the transit states. However, this will only be realized when principles of mutual complementariness and the awareness for cushioning risks of these existing resource transportation routes prevail over the attempts to find alternatives to these routes.²⁰⁹

Implementing principles of cooperation and partnership among the countries of the region could ensure that their interests are taken into account. Unfortunately, understanding these principles and pursuing them in practice is more difficult for the Russian side.²¹⁰ Russia, being guided by a so-called “energy egoism,” a component of the traditional Russian nationalist view of the world,²¹¹ is trying in every way possible to dominate the Caspian basin.²¹² According to Russian experts, Iran and Armenia are Russia’s strategic partners in their opposition to building the Europe-Caucasus-Asia corridor.²¹³ In addition to this, both Russian²¹⁴ and Iranian²¹⁵ experts emphasize that some

²⁰⁹ Vladimer Papava and Michael Tokmazishvili, “Pipeline Harmonization Instead of Alternative Pipelines: Why the Pipeline ‘Cold War’ Needs to End,” *Azerbaijan in the World*, Vol. I, No. 10, June 15 (2008), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/150/20090327030535315.html>>.

²¹⁰ For example, Vladimer Papava, “Strategic Economic Partnership in Caucasus,” *Caucasica. The Journal of Caucasian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1998), pp. 189-197; Vladimer Papava and Nino Gogatadze, “Prospects for Foreign Investments and Strategic Economic Partnership in the Caucasus,” *Problems of Economic Transition*, Vol. 41, No. 5 (1998), pp. 79-88; Natalia V. Zubarevich and Yuri E. Fedorov, “Russian-Southern Economic Interaction: Partners or Competitors?” in Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov, and Ghia Nodia, eds., *Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 119-144.

²¹¹ Milov, *Russia and the West*, p. 18.

²¹² For example, Sergei Blagov, “Russia: Moscow Seeks Improved Ties with Caspian Basin Neighbors,” *Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet*, October 9, 2008, <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/rp100808a.shtml>>.

²¹³ For example, V.S. Zagashvili, “Neft’, transportnaia politika, interesy Rossii” [Oil, Transportation Policy, Russia’s Interests], in R.M. Avakov and A.G. Lisov, eds., *Rossia i Zakavkazie: realii nezavisimosti i novoe partnerstvo* [Russia and the Transcaucasus: Realities of Independence and New Partnership] (Moscow: Finstatinform Publishers, 2000), p. 188.

²¹⁴ For example, Gajiev, *Geopolitika Kavkaza*, pp. 432, 434-439; D.B. Malysheva, “Turtsia i Iran: Zakavkazie—ob’ekt starogo sopernichestva” [Turkey and Iran: the Transcaucasus—a Target of Old Rivalry], in *Rossia i Zakavkazie: realii nezavisimosti i novoe partnerstvo*, pp. 63-74.

²¹⁵ For example, Abbas Maleki, “Does the Caspian Remain Important to All Actors?” *Amu Darya. The Iranian Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 16 & 17 (2003/2004), pp. 47-76.

of Russia's and Iran's interests in the region coincide considerably,²¹⁶ especially with respect to the Caspian's energy resources, among other things. On top of that, Russian experts think Russia is waging an energy war against several of the former Soviet republics, Georgia and Azerbaijan being cases in point.²¹⁷

When talking about the Russian policy in the Central Caucasus,²¹⁸ it is impossible to ignore the contemporary Eurasianist view of an Eurasianist-style organization of the entire Caucasus²¹⁹ and Russia's strategic partners in the region. The so-called New Geopolitical Order in the Caucasus, for example, rejects formations such as "nation-states" and proposes the creation of a Caucasian Federation that unites both the Russian Northern Caucasus and Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.²²⁰ With such a move, Abkhazia would have to be directly tied to Russia, Ossetia would have to be incorporated,²²¹ and Moscow would have to establish direct relations with Nagorno-Karabakh in order to give it the so-called status of a point of balance in the entire Caucasian geopolitical system.²²² Armenia, "Russia's traditional and reliable ally in the Caucasus," and Iran are considered Russia's strategic partners in implementing this model of the Eurasianist-style organization in the Caucasus.²²³

²¹⁶ For example, Svante E. Cornell, "Iran and the Caucasus: The Triumph of Pragmatism over Ideology," *Global Dialogue*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2001), pp. 85-88; Robert O. Freedman, "Russia and Iran: A Tactical Alliance," *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (1997), pp. 93-109.

²¹⁷ S.B. Druzhilovskiy, "K voprosu ob alternativnoy strategii Rossiyskoy Federatsii v sfere energeticheskoi politiki" [On the Question of the Russian Federation's Alternative Strategy in Energy Policy], in N.P. Shmelev, V.A. Guseynov, and A.A. Yaz'kova, eds., *Sredizemnomor'e—Chernomor'e—Kaspiy: mezhdru Bol'shoy Evropoy i Bol'shoy Blizhnim Vostokom* [The Mediterranean—Black Sea—Caspian: Between Greater Europe and the Greater Middle East] (Moscow: Izdatel'skiy dom "Granitsa," 2006), p. 80.

²¹⁸ For example, Alla Yaz'kova, "Russia and Independent Caucasian States," *The Caucasus & Globalization*, Vol. 3, Iss. 1 (2009), pp. 22-29.

²¹⁹ Farkhad Aliev, "The Caucasus Through the Eurasian Prism," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (31) (2005), pp. 91-99.

²²⁰ Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, pp. 351-352.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 353.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

Clearly, Russia's contemporary policy in the Central Caucasus is not being built on an understanding that it would be more advantageous for Russia to deal with united, integral, and stable countries in the Central Caucasus.²²⁴ Its policy essentially coincides with the Eurasianist approach toward conflict regions and strategic partners.

As a matter of fact, the Eurasianists' attitude toward the Caucasian peoples has always been not simply predatory but to some extent degrading. For example, one of the first Russian Eurasianists, Nikolai Trubetskoi, among all of the Central Caucasian nationalities points to the Azerbaijanis (whom he refers to as Azerbaijani Tatars) as the nationality with the most persistent Rusophobic sentiments, but on the other hand he considers their separation from Russia impermissible due to the economic importance of the territories where they live – the Baku oil, silk industry, and cotton plantations.²²⁵ He considers just as intolerable giving Georgia political independence, again due to Baku oil.²²⁶ Although he classifies the Armenians as being of Russian orientation, he disparagingly describes them as a parasite nation and slaves subjected to universal antipathy.²²⁷

Unfortunately, the Eurasianist trend of the Russian geopolitical school has always looked at the Central Caucasus exclusively through the prism of Russia's imperial ambitions. However, the future of the Central Caucasian countries largely depends on settlement of the conflicts in the region and an essential change in the approach of the Caucasian neighbors toward these countries. They should perceive Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia not so much as targets of their spheres of influence but as partners in regional economic (among other) projects.

Central Asia and Greater Central Asia: Main Geopolitical Problems and Eurasianism

Alexander von Humboldt identified Central Asia as a geographic region in the mid-19th century. According to UNESCO, it comprises the five former

²²⁴ Gajiev, *Geopolitika Kavkaza*, p. 295.

²²⁵ Nikolai Trubetskoi, *Nasledie Chingiskhana* [Genghis Khan's Legacy] (Moscow: Eksmo, 2007), p. 565.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 564-565.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 564.

Soviet republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), Mongolia, Afghanistan, Western China, and several parts of India, Pakistan, and Iran.²²⁸

Geopolitical studies of Central Asia became particularly topical in the post-Soviet period when the region acquired five new independent states previously parts of the Soviet Union.²²⁹ Even with the political and economic heterogeneity of this region, it has also already become a geopolitical entity.²³⁰

Some geopolitical studies still follow the Soviet tradition. They interpret Central Asia as being limited to five former Soviet republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.²³¹ This nevertheless leaves out Afghanistan, Mongolia, and the adjacent areas of the countries enumerated above, which are historically and geographically deeply interconnected.²³²

As mentioned above, in Soviet times the region was called *Sredniaia Azia* (Middle Asia); it included Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and

²²⁸ M.S. Asimov, "Description of the Project," in *UNESCO History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (2001), <http://www.unesco.org/culture/asia/html_eng/projet.htm>.

²²⁹ See, for example, Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, eds., *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borderlands* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Peter Ferdinand, ed., *The New States of Central Asia and Their Neighbours* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1994); Graham E. Fuller, "The Emergence of Central Asia," *Foreign Policy*, No. 78, Spring (1990), pp. 49-67; Mohiaddin Mesbahi, ed., *Central Asia and The Caucasus after the Soviet Union* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994).

²³⁰ Michael W. Cotter, "The New Face of Central Asia," *Caucasian Review on International Affairs*, Vol. 2 (2) (2008), pp. 1-5, <http://www.cria-online.org/Journal/3/New_face_of_Central_Asia_by_Michael_Cotter_done.pdf>.

²³¹ For example, Rajan Menon, "Introduction: Central Asia in the Twenty-First Century," in Eugene Rumer, Dmitri Trenin, and Huasheng Zhao, *Central Asia: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 3.

²³² See, for example, Eden Naby, "The Emerging Central Asia: Ethnic and Religious Factions," in Mohiaddin Mesbahi, ed., *Central Asia and The Caucasus after the Soviet Union* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 35-36. Some authors include Azerbaijan in Central Asia (Malcolm Dowling and Ganeshan Wignaraja, *Central Asia's Economy: Mapping Future Prospects to 2015*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, July 2006), p. 10, <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0607Wignaraja.pdf>>), but this is hardly consistent since the country geographically and economically forms part of another region, the Caucasus.

Uzbekistan, and left out Kazakhstan.²³³ Western economists mostly use the term “Central Asia,” while some Russian authors have not yet dropped the old term “Middle Asia,”²³⁴ which in distinction from the past includes also Kazakhstan. The so-called Kazakhstani view of this problem suggests, due to the threats from the south, rejecting the externally-imposed term “Central Asia,” and returning to the term used in Soviet times “Kazakhstan and Middle Asia.”²³⁵ This is unfortunate, since this approach towards Kazakhstan is reminiscent of the Soviet past, but it is by no means dominant in Kazakhstani thinking.

Another term, Greater Central Asia, is more or less of recent coinage. In the early 1990s, the term described Central and Southwestern Asia and South Asia.²³⁶ Later the term was given a more exact geopolitical specification and was applied to the five former Soviet republics and Afghanistan,²³⁷ including also the Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region.²³⁸

The above (sometimes contradictory) interpretations of the term “Central Asia” demonstrate that there is no agreement on this issue.²³⁹

The political regimes established in the newly independent Central Asian states are all authoritarian to one extent or other.²⁴⁰ To be even more precise,

²³³ For example, Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, p. 179.

²³⁴ For example, Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, pp. 353-359.

²³⁵ S. Akimbekov, “Tupik liberalizma. Kakuiu strategiiu izbrat Kazakhstanu?” [Liberalism Has Hit a Dead End. What Strategy Should Kazakhstan Choose?], *TsentrAzia*, November 4, 2005, <<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php4?st=1131088440>>.

²³⁶ Robert L. Canfield, “Restructuring in Greater Central Asia: Changing Political Configurations,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 32, No. 10 (1992), p. 875.

²³⁷ Starr, “A Greater Central Asia Partnership,” p. 16; Starr, “A Partnership for Central Asia,” S. Frederick Starr, *In Defense of Greater Central Asia*, Policy Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, September 2008), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/0809GCA.pdf>>. For more on Professor S. Frederick Starr’s pioneering role in drawing up the conception of Greater Central Asia, see, for example, Gulsana Tulepbergenova, “The Greater Central Asia Project: Present State and Evolution,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (55) (2009), pp. 79-81.

²³⁸ Robert Guang Tian, “Xinjiang and its Role in Greater Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (55) (2009), pp. 85-94.

²³⁹ For example, Lewis and Wigen, *The Myth of Continents*, p. 179.

²⁴⁰ R.N. Zhanguzhin, *Novye nezavisimye gosudarstva Tsentral’noy Azii v sisteme mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy* [The New Independent States of Central Asia in

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are semi-authoritarian states, while authoritarian, if not dictatorial, regimes have been established in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.²⁴¹ Unfortunately, some earlier liberal reforms did not lead Kyrgyzstan to avoid authoritarianism, which returned with a vengeance in the late 2000s.

In addition to the democratization of the state structure²⁴² one of the most urgent problems of the region is the threat of religious-political extremism.²⁴³ The situation in the region is also aggravated by the fact that non-delineated border areas between these states have produced controversy, and have also become sites of border conflicts.²⁴⁴ The problem of drug trafficking is also very urgent in the region.²⁴⁵ The problem of rational water usage not only occupies the first place among regional economic and environmental problems,²⁴⁶ but represents also a source of conflict in the region.²⁴⁷

International Affairs] (Kiev: Institut mirovoy ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnosheniy NAN Ukrainy, 2005), p. 54.

²⁴¹ Alexander Warkotsch, "Normative Suasion and Political Change in Central Asia," *Caucasian Review on International Affairs*, Vol. 2 (4) (2008), p. 62, <<http://cria-online.org/Journal/5/NORMATIVE%20SUASION.pdf>>.

²⁴² For example, Farkhad Tolipov, "Central Asia: Universal Democracy, National Democracy, or Enlightened Authoritarianism?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (44) (2007), pp. 7-17.

²⁴³ For example, Marian Abisheva and Timur Shaymergenov, "Religious-Political Extremism in Central Asia: Why and how it is Spreading," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (42) (2006), pp. 42-54; Davlat Nazirov, "Political Islam in Central Asia: Its Sources and Development Stages," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22) (2003), pp. 154-162.

²⁴⁴ For example, Nabi Ziadullaev, "Central Asia in a Globalizing World: Current Trends and Prospects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (42) (2006), pp. 125-133.

²⁴⁵ For example, Kairat Osmonaliev, *Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia: Legal and Political Dimensions*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, January 2005), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/Silkroadpapers/Osmonaliev.pdf>>; Irina Zhmuida and Marina Morozova, "The Golden Crescent and Central Asia: Heroin Expansion," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16) (2002), pp. 50-55.

²⁴⁶ For example, Serik Primbetov, "Integration Prospects in Central Asia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (42) (2006), pp. 115-125; Oleg Sidorov, "Central Asia's Water Resources as a Cause of Regional Conflicts," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (23) (2003), pp. 157-162; Max Spoor and Anatoly Krutov, "The 'Power of Water' in a Divided Central Asia," in Mehdi Parvizi Amineh and Henk Houweling, eds., *Central Eurasia in Global Politics: Conflict, Security and Development* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 279-300.

²⁴⁷ Sidorov, "Central Asia's Water Resources."

The region is attracting the attention of foreign investors in the energy sphere, given the large supplies of oil and gas in three states (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).²⁴⁸ However, their authoritarian regimes with presidential rule,²⁴⁹ a high level of corruption,²⁵⁰ an unsophisticated tax system, underdeveloped banking system, non-protection of property rights, and several other institutional problems, are all having a negative effect on the investment climate.²⁵¹

While the three Central Asian countries mentioned above have oil and gas supplies, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have large hydro-resources.²⁵² This provides them with a real opportunity to form a common electric power market in the region.²⁵³

Despite the fact that rivalry over leadership in the region is still going on between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan,²⁵⁴ it was these countries that, after

²⁴⁸ For example, Vladimir Babak, "The Oil and Gas Sector in Kazakhstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (40) (2006), pp. 41-54; Sergey Kamenev, "Turkmenistan: Energy Policy and Energy Projects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22) (2003), pp. 117-125; Murat Kenisarin, "The Energy Sector of Uzbekistan: Present State and Problems," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (26) (2004), pp. 124-137.

²⁴⁹ For example, Azhdar Kurtov, "Presidential Elections in Central Asia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (18) (2002), pp. 25-31.

²⁵⁰ For example, Erica Marat, *The State-Crime Nexus in Central Asia: State Weakness, Organized Crime, and Corruption in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*, Silk Road Paper, (Washington: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, October 2006), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/o6ioEMarat.pdf>>.

²⁵¹ S. Frederick Starr, "The Investment Climate in Central Asia and the Caucasus," in Kalicki and Lawson, eds., *Russian-Eurasian Renaissance? U.S. Trade and Investment in Russia and Eurasia*, pp. 73-91.

²⁵² For example, Azhdar Kurtov, "Central Asia Deals with its Water Problems: A View from Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (30) (2004), pp. 111-119; Aziz Niyazi, "Tajikistan: Its Hydropower Resources and the Problems of their Use," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22) (2003), pp. 109-117; Georgi Petrov, "Tajikistan's Hydropower Resources," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21) (2003), pp. 153-161; Gennadi Petrov, "Tajikistan's Energy Projects: Past, Present, and Future," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (29) (2004), pp. 93-103.

²⁵³ For example, Gulmira Kurganbaeva, "The Fundamental Conceptional Principles of Economic Integration in the Central Asian Countries," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (29) (2004), pp. 156-160.

²⁵⁴ For example, Nabi Ziadullaev, "Central Asia in a Globalizing World." Some experts believe that there is no rivalry in the region between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. They regard it a false stereotype, since the latter, after signing an alliance treaty with Russia in October 2005, voluntarily conceded leadership to Kazakhstan (Farkhad Tolipov, "Central Asia is a Region of Five Stans," *Central Asia and the*

signing the Agreement on Intensifying Economic Integration between them in 1993, initiated economic integration in Central Asia between 1994 and 2000.²⁵⁵ In 1994, these countries signed the Treaty on a Single Economic Area. Soon after, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined it.²⁵⁶ In 1998, these states formed a regional organization called the Central Asian Economic Cooperation (CAEC). In 2002 this was transformed into the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO).²⁵⁷ As noted above, these states, along with Belarus and Russia, are members of the EurAsEC. They are also CIS members. These four Central Asian states, along with Russia, belong also to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) initiated by China, which is engaged in ensuring peace, stability, and security in Central Asia; combating terrorism, separatism, and the illicit circulation of drugs and arms; regulating illegal migration; and developing economic, scientific and technical, educational, and cultural cooperation.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, all these international organizations and agreements are unable to overcome many of the obstacles hindering economic integration among the Central Asian countries. This is primarily due to the fact that the region's countries have not learned to make concessions to one another.²⁵⁹

Caucasus, No. 2 (38) (2006), p. 24). Regardless of this fact, Kazakhstan is objectively performing the function of regional leader (Richard Weitz, *Kazakhstan and the New International Politics of Eurasia*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, July 2008), <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/Silkroadpapers/o8o7Weitz.pdf>>).

²⁵⁵ For example, Primbetov, "Integration Prospects in Central Asia."

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ See, for example, Natalia Ushakova, "Central Asian Cooperation: Toward Transformation," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21) (2003), pp. 12-128.

²⁵⁸ For example, Pan Guang, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Context of International Antiterrorist Campaign," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21) (2003), pp. 48-54; Xing Guangcheng, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Fight Against Terrorism, Extremism, and Separatism," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16) (2002), pp. 12-19; Timur Shaimergenov and Gulnar Tusupbaeva, "The Role of the SCO in Forming the Central Asian Security Environment: Geopolitical Aspects," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (38) (2006), pp. 7-17; Nabi Ziadullaev, "Central Asia in a Globalizing World."

²⁵⁹ Talaybek Koychumanov, "Economic Interests of Central Asian States: Identification Problems," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21) (2003), pp. 140-145.

Turkmenistan, one of the world's most closed²⁶⁰ and undemocratic²⁶¹ states, has essentially distanced itself from the integration processes going on in Central Asia.²⁶² It has excluded itself and, referring to the country's neutral status (enforced by a special resolution of the U.N. General Assembly in December 1995), Turkmenistan has refused to participate in any multilateral alliances, blocs, or organizations.²⁶³ At the same time it should be noted that, in the 1990s, the false impression was created that its neutral status was supposedly enhancing Turkmenistan's cooperation with international and regional organizations.²⁶⁴

Afghanistan's role in Greater Central Asia grew particularly after the beginning of the antiterrorist campaign in the country.²⁶⁵ This was also reflected in the drawing up and implementation of international projects regarding this state and the whole of Greater Central Asia.²⁶⁶

The current interpretations of Mackinder's Heartland concept offer different assessments of the role and significance of Central Asia. For example, in counterbalance to the contemporary Russian Eurasianists, who, as mentioned above, believe that the Pivot Area and Russia are geographically one and the same thing, some experts from Central Asia accord Central Asia the status of Pivot Area. On the other hand, they consider Kyrgyzstan to be the heart, that

²⁶⁰ For example, Timur Dadabaev, "Living Conditions, Intra-Societal Trust, and Public Concerns in Post-Socialist Turkmenistan," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (40) (2006), pp. 122-132.

²⁶¹ For example, Azhdar Kurtov, "Elections in the Turkmenistan Power System," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (38) (2006), pp. 99-105.

²⁶² Murad Esenov, "Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy and its Impact on the Regional Security System," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (7), 2001, pp. 50-57

²⁶³ Sergey Kamenev, "Turkmenistan's Foreign Policy," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16) (2002), pp. 75-85.

²⁶⁴ Ertan Efegil, Ayse Mine Olcay and Hüseyin Kızılk, "Cooperation Between Turkmenistan and International and Regional Organizations," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (2000), pp. 87-99.

²⁶⁵ Murat Laumulin, "Central Asia After 11 September," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16) (2002), pp. 29-38; Saodat Olimova and Muzaffar Olimov, "Antiterrorist Campaign in Afghanistan and its Impact on Central Asian Neighbors," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (16) (2002), pp. 38-45.

²⁶⁶ For example, S. Frederick Starr, *U.S. Afghanistan Policy: It's Working* (Washington, D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University-SAIS, 2004), <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/docs/publications/OLD/Afghan_Starr_2004_Total.pdf> ; Starr, "A Greater Central Asia Partnership."

is, the Heartland, of this territory. Still, they do not deny Kazakhstan's and Uzbekistan's affiliation with it as well.²⁶⁷ There is also a slightly different interpretation of Central Asia's location in the Heartland. According to this perspective, Middle Asia in its Soviet understanding is the extreme southern joint "inserted" into the Heartland.²⁶⁸ Some experts think that one reason for these revisions is the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan. As a result of the operation, Central Asia is seen as a region that in the future will not be covered by the Heartland or Rimland as a subordinate entity but, because of its strategic importance, will represent itself *in* the Heartland and Rimland.²⁶⁹

The Central Asian countries have no direct access to the world oceans, and the influence this has on their economic development is a topic of great interest. Jeffrey Sachs, who believes that in the conditions of globalization economic prosperity could become a universal value, is nevertheless skeptical about the opportunities of the Central Asian states due to the existing geographic obstacles hindering the transportation of freight.²⁷⁰ This view of the problem fits perfectly into the contemporary interpretation of the influence of geography on economic development under conditions of globalization.²⁷¹ Based on the study results, according to which shipping freight by land one additional kilometer is equal in cost to shipping the same freight by sea seven additional kilometers, it is concluded that those states located far from the coast encounter immense economic difficulties.²⁷² This does not mean that Central Asia is a dead end in the globalizing world. The

²⁶⁷ For example, Sayragul Matikeeva, "Mackinder's Legacy: Was it a Prophecy?" *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34) (2005), p. 25.

²⁶⁸ Ambrish Dhaka, "Mackinder's Heartland and the Location of the Geopolitical Tetrahedron," *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34) (2005), p. 57.

²⁶⁹ Farkhad Tolipov, "Are the Heartland and Rimland Changing in the Wake of the Operation in Afghanistan?" *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (23) (2003), pp. 99-106.

²⁷⁰ Jeffrey Sachs, "The Limits of Convergence: Nature, Nurture and Growth," *The Economist*, 14 June (1997), pp. 19-22.

²⁷¹ Robert D. Kaplan, "The Revenge of Geography," *Foreign Policy*, May/June (2009), <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4862>; Paul Krugman, *Geography and Trade* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).

²⁷² Ricardo Hausmann, "Prisoners of Geography," *Foreign Policy*, No. 122 (2001), p. 46.

region, which embodies the Great Silk Road, is a crossroads of world routes from essentially every corner of the earth.²⁷³

Despite the mentioned geographic difficulties, the economic prospects for the development of the Central Asian countries should in no way be seen as gloomy. The U.S.'s primary interest in the region is to ensure the world community's unhindered financial and economic access to it.²⁷⁴

According to the contemporary Russian Eurasianists, "Middle" (to use the Eurasianists' term, while "Central" is the generally accepted term) Asia is a geopolitical space that leads the Heartland to the Indian Ocean.²⁷⁵ By including Central Kazakhstan in the "Russian East," the Eurasianists are primarily planning Kazakhstan's integration into a continental bloc with Russia.²⁷⁶ Further, in their opinion, any influence from Atlantic Turkey on the region must be curbed using Russia's main ally, Iran, as a result of which the region must be "stretched" between the Russians and the Persians.²⁷⁷ In so doing, the territories of all the countries of "Soviet" Middle Asia must be re-examined in order to make sure that territories, economic cycles, and so on, do not include the Turkic area.²⁷⁸ The stakes for success in establishing a so-called new Eurasian order in Middle Asia are placed on Tajikistan, for the Tajiks are ethnically close to the Iranians and Afghans, and the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan should not be regarded as a strict line.²⁷⁹ It is worth noting here how such an Eurasianist model for "refashioning" Central Asia comes exclusively from Russia's imperial ambitions and, as a rule, in no way reflects the interests of the states and peoples of this region.

In the Russian public opinion, Central Asia is regarded as an amalgamation of Islamicism, terrorism, and mafia, although relying on the Eurasianist

²⁷³ Levent Hekimoglu, "Whither "Heartland"? Central Asia, Geography and Globalization," *Central Asia and The Caucasus*, No. 4 (34), 2005, p. 76.

²⁷⁴ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 148.

²⁷⁵ Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, p. 353.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

world outlook, the Russian political elite considers this region to be Russia's necessary heavy burden.²⁸⁰

We cannot help but agree with the rational assessment regarding Russia's weak economic, military, or even moral opportunities to draw the Central Asian countries into the Eurasian empire. This is usually not taken into account by Russian Eurasianists.²⁸¹ Essentially, over the past twenty years, despite all of Moscow's efforts,²⁸² the Central Asian countries have learned, exclusively based on their own interests, to maneuver, to one extent or other, between different countries that are competing among themselves to realize their own interests.²⁸³

The Kazakh Eurasianists match their Russian colleagues: they insist that Kazakhstan is a Eurasian state which has nothing to do with Central Asia except for bordering on it.²⁸⁴ It should be said in all justice that a small part of Kazakhstan (Western Kazakhstan) geographically belongs to Eastern Europe;²⁸⁵ however, Kazakhstan's historical roots are intertwined with the roots of its Central Asian neighbors.²⁸⁶ Its regime, which is based on the incumbent president remaining in office as long as possible, does not differ much from the regimes of the other Central Asian republics.²⁸⁷ This means

²⁸⁰ Marlène Laruelle, *Russia's Central Asia Policy and the Role of Russian Nationalism*, Silk Road Paper (Washington, D.C./Stockholm: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, April 2008), <<http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/srp/o8/mlo8russiacentral.pdf>>.

²⁸¹ Boris Rumer, "The Search for Stability in Central Asia," in Boris Rumer, ed., *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 49-50.

²⁸² For example, Stéphane Lefebvre and Roger N. McDermott, "Russia and the Intelligence Services of Central Asia," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2008), pp. 251-301.

²⁸³ Martin C. Spechler and Dina R. Spechler, "Is Russia Winning in Central Asia?" *CACI Analyst*, October 29 (2008), <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4972>>.

²⁸⁴ Dariga Nazarbaeva, "Spetsifika i perspektivy politicheskogo razvitiya Kazakhstana" [Specifics and Prospects of Kazakhstan's Political Development], *Mezhdunarodnyi institut sovremennoy politiki* [International Institute of Contemporary Politics], December 3 (2003), <<http://www.iimp.kz/Lists/articles/DispForm.aspx?ID=766>>.

²⁸⁵ For example, Georgy Khachiev, "Central Asia: Portrait Against the Background of the World Economy," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (38) (2006), p. 117; R.N. Zhanguzhin, *Novye nezavisimyye gosudarstva Tsentral'noy Azii*, p. 18.

²⁸⁶ For example, S. Frederick Starr, "Rediscovering Central Asia," *Wilson Quarterly*, Summer, 2009, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=wq.essay&essay_id=545818>; Farkhad Tolipov, "Central Asia is a Region of Five Stans," op. cit. p. 22.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

that Kazakhstan belongs to Central Asia. If detached from Central Asia as a Eurasian state, Kazakhstan will lose its independence and will be swallowed by Russia.²⁸⁸

It is interesting to note that although Tolipov regards the very idea of Eurasianism, including Kazakhstan's Eurasianism, a myth and a geopolitical provocation²⁸⁹ and criticizes the arguments in favor of separating Kazakhstan from Central Asia and recognizing it as a Eurasian state, he does not entirely exclude the possibility that Central Asia (including Kazakhstan) will return to Eurasia (where it was when it belonged to the Soviet Union) after realizing its geopolitical self-identification.²⁹⁰ Here the question is whether the Central Asian countries would want, even in the future, to give up their actual independence in favor of Russia; and whether integration into Eurasia is possible if it, using the above terminology, is actually based on a "myth" or even more on "geopolitical provocation."

While sharing this critical attitude toward the ideas of Eurasianism, so far most of the Central Asian countries have not grasped the meaning of their independence or pondered on their future. These are problems that have not yet been resolved.

Central Caucaso-Asia – A New Geopolitical Conception

After examining the correlation between the geographic and geopolitical interpretations of Eurasia, we conclude that the borders of this continent have been contracted by Russian Eurasianists in their geopolitical attempt to justify Russia's imperial intentions in Eurasia.

As for Central Eurasia, it was mentioned earlier that geographic Central Eurasia, as the central region of the Eurasian continent, essentially encompasses geographic Central Asia entirely, while Central Europe (as it is defined above) is not included in it. It was also emphasized above that based on the reasoning that geographic Eurasia, as a continent, consists of two parts of the world – Europe and Asia – geographic Central Eurasia, along with Central Asia, should naturally also include Central Europe, as well as the

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Central Caucasus that joins them. Consequently, any interpretation of Central Eurasia that differs from this logical substantiation of the region, whether we like it or not, is a tribute to the tradition formed by Russian Eurasianism.

At the same time, academic circles, as well as other forces, are presently showing a great interest in studying the problems of the three Central Caucasian countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) and the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) within the same context.²⁹¹ The vast region represented by these eight states is now called Central Eurasia.²⁹² The same term is also applied to the above eight countries and Afghanistan.²⁹³ As mentioned above, together with the five Central Asian states, Afghanistan belongs to Greater Central Asia.

There is an even wider interpretation of Central Eurasia, which includes the Black Sea, Caucasian, Caspian, and Central Asian regions.²⁹⁴ This approach to the term “Central Eurasia” results in overlapping the regions mentioned above.

²⁹¹ For example, Bertsch et al., eds., *Crossroads and Conflict*; Olga Oliner and Thomas S. Szayna, eds., *Faultlines of Conflict in Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Implications for the U.S. Army* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003); Farian Sabahi and Daniel Warner, eds., *The OSCE and the Multiple Challenges of Transition. The Caucasus and Central Asia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

²⁹² For example, Amineh and Houweling, “Introduction: The Crisis in IR-Theory,” pp. 2-3; Fairbanks et al., *Strategic Assessment of Central Eurasia*, p. vii; Meyer, *The Dust of Empire*, p. 206; Guo Xuetao, “The Energy Security in Central Eurasia: the Geopolitical Implications to China’s Energy Strategy,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2006, p. 117, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/CEF/Quarterly/November_2006/Guo.pdf>. Identifying this region with Russia (Vakhtang Maisaia, *The Caucasus-Caspian Regional and Energy Security Agendas—Past, Contemporary and Future Geopolitics: View from Georgia* (Brussels-Tbilisi, Tbiliselebi, 2007), p. 16) can clearly be excluded from the generally accepted interpretations of Central Eurasia. Such an interpretation of this region should of course be recognized as erroneous, for if Russia is the same thing as Central Eurasia, the whereabouts of Northern Eurasia remains unclear.

²⁹³ Eldar Ismailov, Murad Esenov, “Central Eurasia in the New Geopolitical and Geo-Economic Dimensions,” in *Central Eurasia 2005 (Analytical Annual)* (Luleå: CA&CC Press, 2005).

²⁹⁴ For example, Parvin Darabadi, “Central Eurasia: Globalization and Geopolitical Evolution,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (39) (2006), p. 9.

The current use of the term “Central Eurasia” not only fails to describe the region geographically, but is also another vehicle of the Russian imperial tradition, based on the idea that Russia is Eurasia. If we proceed from this interpretation, we have to ask ourselves what geographic name should be given to the region that unites the eight states and what do they have in common? It seems like a geopolitical approach can answer these questions.

Today these eight states (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) are seen as parts of much wider regions that include other countries as well. These are the “Eurasian Balkans”²⁹⁵ and/or the “Greater Middle East.”²⁹⁶

Based on the fact that all of the eight countries examined became members of the CIS right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it comes as no surprise that they are regarded in the context of this institutionally formed organization. According to many experts, the CIS, as a marginal organization,²⁹⁷ has experienced certain integration difficulties almost since the very day it was formed.²⁹⁸ These difficulties are the result of the attempts

²⁹⁵ Brzezinski *The Grand Chessboard*.

²⁹⁶ Geoffrey Kemp and Robert E. Harkavy, *Strategic Geography and the Changing Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1997).

²⁹⁷ Anders Åslund and Andrew Kuchins, *The Russia Balance Sheet* (Washington, D.C.: Peterson Institute for International Economics, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), pp. 121-122.

²⁹⁸ For example, R.S. Grinberg, et al., *10 let Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv: illiuzii, razocharovania, nadezhdy* [Ten Years of the Commonwealth of Independent States: Illusions, Disappointments, Hopes] (Moscow: Institute of International Economic and Political Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2001); L.P. Kozik and P.A. Kokhno, *SNG: realii i perspektivy* [The CIS: Realities and Prospects] (Moscow: Iuridicheskii mir VK Publishing House, 2001); V.A. Shul’ga, ed., *Ekonomika SNG: 10 let reformirovania i integratsionnogo razvitiia* [The CIS Economy: Ten Years of Reform and Integration Development] (Moscow: Finstatinform Publishers, 2001); N.N. Shumskiy, *Sotrudnichestvo nezavisimykh gosudarstv: problemy i perspektivy razvitiia* [Cooperation of the Independent States: Development Problems and Prospects] (Minsk: Tekhnoprint Publishers, 2001); Nikolai Shumskiy, “Ekonomicheskaiia integratsia gosudarstv Sodruzhestva: vozmozhnosti i perspektivy” [Economic Integration of the Commonwealth States: Possibilities and Prospects] *Voprosy ekonomiki* [Economic Affairs], No. 6 (2003), pp. 122-134; Nikolai Shumskiy, “Obshchee ekonomicheskoe prostranstvo gosudarstv Sodruzhestva: optimal’nyi format” [Common Economic Space of the Commonwealth States: Optimal Format], *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* [World Economy and International Relations], No. 2 (2004), pp. 91-97.

to limit integration to the CIS framework just to the closer industrial cooperation similar to the one within the Soviet Union.²⁹⁹ The Russian-Georgian war and Moscow's unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states cast doubts on this organization's existence, since it formally recognizes the inviolability of the borders of its member states.³⁰⁰ After the beginning of the Russian aggression, Georgia announced its withdrawal from the CIS,³⁰¹ which in addition to other difficulties, placed the future of the CIS in even greater doubt.³⁰²

The academic community is freely using the term "the Caspian region," by which different combinations of sub-regions are meant in different publications. This term can hardly be used to denote the region composed of the eight republics enumerated above. Logic suggests that the term should be applied to the five coastal states – Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan.³⁰³ The interpretations of the term, however, are numerous. One of them, for example, implies the western part of Central Asia, southern Russia, the Northern and Central Caucasus, as well as Northern Iran.³⁰⁴ Other authors apply the term to the five Caspian states and to Armenia,

²⁹⁹ For example, Bruno Coppieters, "The Failure of Regionalism in Eurasia and the Western Ascendancy over Russia's Near Abroad," in Bruno Coppieters, Alexei Zverev, and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *Commonwealth and Independence in Post-Soviet Eurasia* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1998), pp. 194-197; Martha Brill Olcott, Anders Åslund and Sherman W. Garnett, *Getting it Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

³⁰⁰ Allison, "Russia Resurgent?" p. 1161.

³⁰¹ Civil Georgia, "Georgia Quits CIS," *Civil.Ge*, August 12, 2008, <<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19064&search=CIS>>; Civil Georgia, "Parliament Supports Quitting CIS," *Civil.Ge*, August 14, 2008, <<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19143&search=CIS>>.

³⁰² Stephen Blank, "Russia Pressures CIS Members to Approve its Policies," *CACI Analyst*, October 1 (2008), <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4949>>; Joanna Lillis, "Kyrgyzstan: Lack of Results Again Raises Questions about the Future of the CIS," *Eurasia Insight. Eurasianet*, October 14 (2008), <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101408a.shtml>>.

³⁰³ For example, V.I. Salygin and A.V. Safarian, *Sovremennye mezhdunarodnye ekonomicheskie otnosheniya v Kaspiyskom regione* [Contemporary International Economic Relations in the Caspian Region] (Moscow: MGIMO-Universitet Press, 2005).

³⁰⁴ Parvin Darabadi, *Geoistoria Kaspiiskogo regiona i geopolitika sovremennosti* [Geohistory of the Caspian Region and Contemporary Geopolitics] (Baku: Elm Publishers, 2002), p. 6; Parvin Darabadi, "The Caspian Region in Contemporary Geopolitics," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (21) (2003), p. 66.

Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and partly Afghanistan, Pakistan, and even the Middle East.³⁰⁵ According to the previous interpretation, the region covers a small part of Central Asia and stretches beyond the territories of the eight countries. According to the latter interpretation, the region comprises the above eight states and also many other states, to say nothing of regions, which is not completely justified. Including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, as well as the corresponding parts of Iran and Russia in the “Caspian Basin region” can be considered a little more propitious,³⁰⁶ although including Armenia and Georgia in this region can hardly be justified. And if we agree with this approach and admit that these two countries, which do not have direct access to the Caspian Sea, do indeed belong to this region, the question seems to be why Iran and Russia should be only partially included into the group of countries of the “Caspian Basin region?”

The term “the Caspian region” does not accurately describe the region comprising the eight states enumerated above. The term “the Caucasian-Caspian region” can likewise not be accepted as a definition of the eight republics. Those who use it imply that it covers the entire Caucasus, yet fail to specify the degree to which the Central Asian region is included in it.³⁰⁷ What is more, they tend to write the “Caucasian-Caspian and Central Asian regions,”³⁰⁸ which seems to emphasize that Central Asia is outside the Caucasian-Caspian region. In the wider and thus vaguer interpretation, the Caucasian-Caspian region implies the entire basin of the Caspian Sea, the western provinces of Central Asia, the Northern Caucasus, the eastern regions of Turkey and northern regions of Iran, and part of the Black Sea

³⁰⁵ Brent Sasley, “The Intersection of Geography and Resources: Geopolitics in the Caspian Sea Basin,” in Lasha Tchantouridze, ed., *Geopolitics: Global Problems and Regional Concerns* (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 2004), p. 194.

³⁰⁶ Weitz, *Kazakhstan and the New International Politics of Eurasia*, p. 9.

³⁰⁷ Igor Dobaev and Alexander Dugin, “Geopolitical Transformations in the Caucasian-Caspian Region,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 5 (35) (2005), p. 75.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

basin.³⁰⁹ In other cases a more or less precise definition of the term “Caucasian-Caspian region” is not given at all.³¹⁰

It seems that the term “the Caucasian-Central Asian geopolitical region”³¹¹ is much more precise. Even though it covers certain territories outside the eight countries, as discussed above, the Caucasus is not limited to Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

If we proceed from the notion that the eight republics discussed here form two sub-regions—the Central Caucasus and Central Asia—the larger region, which simultaneously includes both sub-regions, can be called the *Central Caucaso-Asia*,³¹² or *Central Caucasia*:³¹³ *this preserves the term “Central” as the key determinant for both regions, while the new term “Caucaso-Asia” is derived from two related terms “Caucasus” and “Asia.”* In Russian the term “Caucaso-Asia” is “Kavkaziya,”³¹⁴ but formation of this word in English is rather problematic, since “Caucasia” is a synonym for the word “Caucasus.” So we suggest using the term “Caucaso-Asia” in English. The region can also be called *Central Caucaso-Asia*. If the term is applied to nine countries (the original eight and Afghanistan), the region should be called *Greater Central Caucaso-Asia*.

We should not forget that Central Caucaso-Asia as a single region is not integrated because it has no political or cultural homogeneity.³¹⁵ But at the

³⁰⁹ Igor’ Muradian, *Regional’naia politika SShA i Velikobritanii: Turtsiia—Iran—Iuzhniy Kavkaz—Chernoie more*, [The Regional Policy of the U.S. and Great Britain: Turkey—Iran—the Southern Caucasus—the Black Sea] (Yerevan: Antares, 2008), p. 241.

³¹⁰ For example, Maisaia, *The Caucasus-Caspian Regional and Energy Security Agendas*.

³¹¹ Vladimir Maksimenko, “Central Asia and the Caucasus: Geopolitical Entity Explained,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (2000), p. 56.

³¹² Papava, “Tsentral’naia Kavkazia,” p. 47; Papava, “‘Central Caucasia’ Instead of ‘Central Eurasia,’” pp. 38-39; Vladimer Papava, “Central Caucaso-Asia: Toward a Redefinition of Post-Soviet Central Eurasia,” *Azerbaijan in the World. The Electronic Publication of Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy*, Vol. I, No. 17, October 1 (2008), <<http://www.ada.edu.az/biweekly/issues/156/20090328041927833.html>>.

³¹³ Papava, “Tsentral’naia Kavkazia,” p. 47; Papava, “‘Central Caucasia’ Instead of ‘Central Eurasia,’” pp. 38-39.

³¹⁴ Papava, “Tsentral’naia Kavkazia,” p. 47.

³¹⁵ Weisbrode, *Central Eurasia*, p. 13.

same time, its component parts have much in common, which makes it possible to regard them as a single region.³¹⁶

All the countries of Central Caucaso-Asia began their post-Soviet lives under more or less identical conditions: without the very much needed institutions of statehood, with a fairly low level of political culture, and a command economy. These three conditions were not merely interconnected: the future of the reforms in these countries depended on their interconnection. Indeed, the absence of the institutions of statehood, for example, made it hard to develop a political culture and that, in turn, prevented democratization. On the other hand, the absence of institutions of statehood made it much harder to move into a market economy,³¹⁷ and also slowed down the advance toward democracy. These problems were reflected, to different extents, in the political and economic transformations in the Central Caucaso-Asian countries. All these countries, with the exception of Kazakhstan, demonstrated a reverse relationship between rich hydrocarbon reserves and the pace of market reforms: the reserves obviously failed to stimulate economic reform.³¹⁸ In addition, as during Soviet times, the economy of the Central Caucaso-Asia countries is politicized.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Ismailov and Esenov, "Central Eurasia in the New Geopolitical and Geo-Economic Dimensions," pp. 11-43; Nazim Muzaffarli (Imanov), *Reyting Azerbaydzhana v mezhdunarodnykh stravnitel'nykh issledovaniakh* [Azerbaijan's Rating in International Comparative Analyses] (Baku: "Kavkaz," 2006).

³¹⁷ For example, Leszek Balcerowicz, *Socialism, Capitalism, Transformation* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), p. 146; Vladimer Papava, "Georgian Economy: From 'Shock Therapy' to 'Social Promotion'," *Communist Economies & Economic Transformation*, Vol. 8, No. 8 (1996), p. 252; Vladimer Papava, *Necroeconomics: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Capitalism* (New York: iUniverse, 2005), p. 13; Vladimer Papava, "On the Theory of Post-Communist Economic Transition to Market," *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 32, No. 1/2 (2005), p. 78; V. Papava and T. Beridze, *Ocherki politicheskoi ekonomii postkommunisticheskogo kapitalizma: opyt Gruzii* [Essays on the Political Economy of Post-Communist Capitalism: The Georgian Experience] (Moscow: Delo i servis Publishers, 2005), pp. 68-69.

³¹⁸ Anders Åslund, "Eventual Success of Market Reform," in Kalicki and Lawson, eds., *Russian-Eurasian Renaissance? U.S. Trade and Investment in Russia and Eurasia*, pp. 405-428.

³¹⁹ Simons Jr., *Eurasia's New Frontiers*, p. 7.

Central Caspaso-Asia, to say nothing of Greater Central Caspaso-Asia, has several conflict sub-regions in its territory.³²⁰ This affects, to various degrees, the pace of economic progress in some of the countries. It also prevents the local countries from using local resources to move together in the desired direction. It is important to note that Russia is involved both militarily and politically in all the regional conflicts in the post-Soviet expanse.³²¹

The region's rich hydrocarbon resources³²² attract investments³²³ and tempt regional and world powers to politically dominate this sector.³²⁴ Today, when energy policy is blending with the foreign policy of these powers, this is not merely understandable, but also inevitable.³²⁵ At the same time, the Russian factor³²⁶ is still very strong in the Central Asian countries' energy policies. It seems that this part of the Soviet heritage cannot be eliminated soon.

The Central Caucasus and Central Asia are *mutually complementary*, which means that they can use their resources together. While the West is interested in Central Asian oil and gas, the Central Caucasus not only wants to move its own oil and gas to the West, but also wants to use the transportation corridor for energy and other commodities that connects the

³²⁰ For example, Sergey Lounev, "Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: Geopolitical Value for Russia," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 3 (39) (2006), p. 15; Weisbrode, *Central Eurasia*.

³²¹ Simons Jr., *Eurasia's New Frontiers*, p. 477.

³²² Aliev, *Kaspiiskaia neft' Azerbaidzhana*; Bernard A. Gelb, "Caspian Oil and Gas: Production and Prospects," *Current Politics and Economics of the Caucasus Region*, Vol. 1, No. 2/3 (2008), pp. 325-332; Bernard A. Gelb and Terry Rayon Twyman, *The Caspian Sea region and Energy Resources* (New York: Novinka Books, 2004); David G. Victor, Amy M. Jaffe, and Mark H. Hayes, eds., *Natural Gas and Geopolitics: From 1970 to 2040* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³²³ For example, Starr, "The Investment Climate in Central Asia and the Caucasus."

³²⁴ For example, Jeffrey Mankoff, *Eurasian Energy Security* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2009); Makni (Muhammad Aslam Khan Niazi), *The New Great Game: Oil and Gas Politics in Central Eurasia* (New York: Raider Publishing International, 2008).

³²⁵ For example, Hill, *Energy Empire*; Kalicki and Goldwyn, eds., *Energy and Security*; Eva Rakel, "Paradigms of Iranian Policy in Central Eurasia and Beyond," in Mehdi Parvizi Amineh and Henk Houweling, eds., *Central Eurasia in Global Politics: Conflict, Security and Development* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 235-257; Daniel Sherman, "Caspian Oil and a New Energy Politics," *Freezerbox Magazine*, May 25, 2000, <<http://www.freezerbox.com/archive/article.php?id=55>>.

³²⁶ For example, Igor Tomberg, "Energy Policy in the Countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 4 (22) (2003), pp. 71-81.

East and the West.³²⁷ This means that the Central Caucasus can serve as a bridge between Central Asia, a geopolitically closed region, and the West.³²⁸

It should be said in this context that, according to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Azerbaijan is the most important geopolitical pivot in the geographic continent of Eurasia.³²⁹ The “geopolitical pivot” status³³⁰ is determined by the country’s geographic location and its potential vulnerability to what the “active geostrategic players” might undertake in relation to it. The “active geostrategic players” are the states strong and determined enough to spread their rule beyond their limits.³³¹

By describing Azerbaijan as the “cork in the bottle” filled with the riches of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, Brzezinski stresses that: “The independence of the Central Asian states can be rendered nearly meaningless if Azerbaijan becomes fully subordinated to Moscow’s control.”³³² Kazakhstan is another of America’s target countries in Central Caucaso-Asia, which is amply illustrated by the Americans’ intention to maximize their investments there.³³³

The idea of post-Soviet state independence and its strengthening, as the linchpin of state interests for the Central Caucaso-Asian states, rule out their

³²⁷ For example, Howard Chase, “Future Prospects of Caucasian Energy and Transportation Corridor. The Role of Caucasian Energy Corridor in European Energy Security,” *Georgian Economic Trends*, No. 3 (2002), pp. 85-87; Kalicki, “Caspian Energy at the Crossroads;” Jan H. Kalicki and Jonathan Elkind, “Eurasian Transportation Futures,” in Jan Kalicki and David L. Goldwyn, eds., *Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), pp. 149-174; Rustam Makhmudov, “The Problem of Exporting Energy Resources from Central Asia,” in Boris Rumer and Lau Sim Yee, eds., *Central Asia and South Caucasus Affairs: 2002* (Tokyo: Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2002), pp. 163-188; Müller, “Energy Development;” John Roberts, “Energy Reserves, Pipeline Routs and the Legal Regime in the Caspian Sea,” in Gennady Chufrin, ed., *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 33-68; S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell, “The Politics of Pipelines: Bringing Caspian Energy to Markets,” *SAISPHERE* (2005), pp. 57-61.

³²⁸ Janatkhan Eyvazov, *Bezopasnost’ Kavkaza i stabil’nost razvitia Azerbaidzhanskoi Respubliki* [Caucasian Security and Stability in the Development of the Azerbaijan Republic] (Baku: Nurlan Publishers, 2004), p. 132.

³²⁹ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 41.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Ibid.* p. 40.

³³² *Ibid.* pp. 46-47, 129.

³³³ Utkin, *Amerikanskaia strategija dlia XXI veka*, p. 105.

acceptance not only of Eurasianism, but also of the Heartland theory. They both assert their subordination to the imperial schemes of Russia and the West.

The leaders of those Central Caucasio-Asian countries who are seeking a tighter grip on power rather than stronger and developed state sovereignty, to say nothing of democratization, human rights, and a market economy, are prepared to embrace any theory (or rather pseudo-theory) to camouflage their true intentions or justify them.

It would be naive to expect the world and regional powers to step aside and leave Central Caucasio-Asia alone. Reality dictates that these countries should carefully match their national interests with their choice of world and regional powers as partners.

Eurasianism clearly preaches Russia's revival as an empire, but even more moderate ideas now current in Russia do not exclude the "soft" alternative of imposing its interests on at least some of the local states, irrespective of their national interests. According to some Russian analysts, only Georgia could be said to be lost for Russia.³³⁴ The same author has argued that "the economic importance of Armenia and Georgia for Russia is minimal," even though "Armenia is Russia's objective partner."³³⁵ In Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, Russia has economic interests in the production and transportation of hydrocarbons, while stronger integration processes are contemplated in relation to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.³³⁶

The United States, on the other hand, is guided by objective considerations:³³⁷ first, being far removed from the region, it knows it cannot dominate over it, and second, it is powerful enough on a global scale not to become involved in unnecessary complications in this vast area of Central Caucasio-Asia. From this it follows that the United States prefers a situation in which none of the countries dominates Central Caucasio-Asia and the

³³⁴ Lounev, "Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus," p. 24.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

³³⁷ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 148.

world community is allowed to have free financial and economic access to the region.³³⁸

The events of September 11, 2001, taught the United States how to prevent the threat of new terrorist acts in Central Caucaso-Asia and make victory in the War on Terror possible.³³⁹ American interests in the region, thus, are not limited to energy issues.³⁴⁰ This means that it will seek to help the former Soviet republics overcome what remained of the Soviet economic system and promote the market economy and private sector as a solid foundation for economic growth and the rule of law. This will also help them cope with social and ecological problems and profit from their energy resources and ramified export mainlines.³⁴¹ After Russia's invasion of Georgia, the most urgent problem for the U.S. is supporting the development of the democratic processes in the region.³⁴²

Some Russian experts admit that Moscow prefers to use the arguments about its historical, psychological, and other ties with former Soviet republic, while the United States rejects in principle any theories along the lines of "soft" or "limited" sovereignty of these republics.³⁴³ The Americans are convinced that Russia would profit from richer and more stable neighbors.³⁴⁴

Some Central Asian experts have offered interesting assessments. According to them "Moscow's orientation toward 'stagnation' and the unlimited support of the people in power is depriving it, and has already deprived it, of promising and potential allies among those who tend toward modernization and change"; whereas America's policy in the region promotes democracy.³⁴⁵

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ For example, Toby T. Gati and Tapio L. Christiansen, "The Political Dynamic," in Kalicki and Lawson, eds., *Russian-Eurasian Renaissance? U.S. Trade and Investment in Russia and Eurasia*, pp. 447-459.

³⁴⁰ For example, Amy Jaffe, "US Policy Towards the Caspian Region: Can the Wish-List be Realized?" in Gennady Chuftrin, *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 136-150.

³⁴¹ Mann, "Caspian Futures."

³⁴² Adrian A. Basora and Jean F. Boone, "The Georgia Crisis and Continuing Democratic Erosion in Europe/Eurasia," *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, October, 2008, <<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/200810.basoraboone.georgiacrisis.html>>.

³⁴³ For example, Utkin, *Amerikanskaia strategija dlia XXI veka*, p. 108.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

³⁴⁵ For example, Tolipov, "Russia in Central Asia," p. 24.

The above suggests that America is not seeking integration with any of the regional countries. In these terms its policy completely corresponds to the local countries' national interests: strengthening and developing state sovereignty, deepening democratization, and enhancing the market economy.

The term "Central Caucaso-Asia" does not merely specify the region's geographic identity. It is a conceptual idea that regards the interests of strengthening the local countries' state sovereignty. In principle, it contradicts the spirit and idea of Eurasianism.

Again, even though it is accepted that the key strategic interests of the Central Asian countries "can be described as independence, democracy, and integration,"³⁴⁶ possible reintegration into Eurasia-Russia (to which Central Asia belonged as part of the Soviet Union) is not excluded.³⁴⁷ Taking into account the Eurasianists' assertion that Moscow claims domination over this Eurasia, the above arguments do not exclude (even in the relatively distant future) the possibility that the Central Asian countries will join Eurasia-Russia. It is equally interesting that some experts from Central Asian states are not alien to nostalgic reminiscences about the Soviet Union. They openly regret its disintegration.³⁴⁸ The pro-Western vector, on the other hand, is much better suited to the interests of stronger sovereignty, deeper democratization, and promotion of the principles of a market economy, since they are commonly recognized Western principles.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁴⁸ For example, Aziz Niyazi, "The South of the CIS: Fundamental Problems of Development," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 6 (24) (2003), p. 150; Tolipov, "Russia in Central Asia," pp. 19-20.