



Russian Geopolitics in the Twenty First Century: Foreign Policy, Nationalism, and the Role of Neo-Eurasianism in the Emerging World Order

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Abstract

Russia's Neo-Eurasianism challenges the existing hierarchy in the international order with wider implications for the United States as the leading Atlanticist opposition. Ranging from its Cultural Exceptionalism and messianic identity to the comprehensive geopolitical discourse, Neo-Eurasianism encourages Putin's Russia towards a renewed mission of the Eurasian Integration. This is evident by Russia's emerging alliances, its adventures against Georgia and Ukraine, and the restructuring of regional institutions. The Fourth Political Theory as an alternative to the discarded Liberalism as the dead-end of modernity, its geopolitical model peddles Russia towards geopolitical settlement across Eurasia to emerge as the dominant Eurasian pole. Such settlements in Eastern Europe, the Persian Gulf and East Asia is complemented by the weakening American commitment to the three geopolitical hotspots which results not only in America's global retreat but also in a world with no global centre of gravity. The research paper examines the relevance of Dugin's geopolitical model in the contemporary geopolitical environment across Eurasia. It addresses the geopolitical discourse and limitations of Eurasianism, Russia's New Nationalism its changing geopolitical behaviour across the Eurasian supercontinent. It also highlights the consequences of Neo-Eurasianism for the Atlanticist pre-eminence across Eurasia, and its impact over the nature of the emerging world order.

Key Words: Cultural Exceptionalism, Dugin, Neo-Eurasianism, Atlanticist

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Introduction

Russia, despite being an economic midget, envisions robust geopolitical ambitions under its Neo-Eurasianism ideology, to embrace its civilizational exceptionalism with a distinct role as a resurgent great power. With longer detour since its emergence as a strand of New Russian Nationalism in 1920s, the theory of Eurasianism replenished Russian geopolitics first, by Lev Gumilev in 1960s and then by Alexander Dugin in 1990s.¹ Dugin, a radical far-right nationalist, allegedly informs Russia's post-Cold War strategy and hence its opposition under the Primakov Doctrine to the 'Atlanticist' domination and the US-led Liberal World Order. Such an approach is evident by Russia's behaviour under Vladimir Putin, especially after 2012 as the President of the Russian Federation.

Vladimir Putin reflected Gumilev's ideas and outlined the geopolitical vision of Post-Soviet Russia in his annual address to the Federal Assembly in December 2012 at the St. George Hall in Kremlin saying that; "I would like all of us to /understand clearly that the coming years will be decisive. Who will take the lead and who will remain on the periphery and inevitably lose their independence will depend not only on the economic potential but primarily on the will of each nation, on its inner energy that Lev Gumilev termed *Passionarnost*: the ability to move forward and embrace change."²

Neo-Eurasianism, without evaluating its success as a structured movement, its discourse, political utilization and demonstration of Russia's 'national specificity', and the 'organic nature of its empire' frames the ideology as imperialistic nationalism to project 'Russia's Manifest Destiny'.³ Nevertheless, the Post-Cold War Eurasianists including Alexander Dugin, Alexander Panarin and Alexander Prokhanov embrace Lev Gumilev's ideas with shared rejection of the West and to organize multi-ethnic Russian society in a world with civilizational co-existence.⁴ Calling Russia a Eurasian power, Neo-Eurasianism rejects the liberal universalism as the inevitable

¹ Charles Clover, "Lev Gumilev: Passion, Putin and Power", *Financial Times*, March 11, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/ede1e5c6-e0c5-11e5-8d9b-e88a2a889797>

² Michel Eltchaninoff, *Inside the Mind of Vladimir Putin* (London: Hurts & Company, 2015) 65.

³ Marlène Laruelle, "The Two Faces of Contemporary Eurasianism: An Imperial Version of Russian Nationalism", *Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 32, no 1 (March 2016): 115-136.

⁴ Nadezhda Arbatova, "Three Faces of Russia's Neo-Eurasianism", *Global Politics and Strategy* 61, no. 6, 2019): 8.

enterprise of progress but rather believes in cultural exceptionalism with multiple versions of modernity. Such nationalistic historical obsession of Eurasianism is shared by the contemporary Russian political elite including V. Putin who acknowledges that; “To link historical eras and get back to understanding the simple truth that Russia did not begin in 1917, or even in 1991, but rather, that [we] have a common, continuous history spanning over one thousand years, and we must rely on it to find inner strength and purpose in our national development.”⁵

Eurasian Heartland, as popularized first by Halford Mackinder, finds devotees in the Russian Intelligentsia; thereby giving a re-surge to the geopolitical restructuring of the ‘world island’. Dugin’s geopolitical discourse reflects Haushofer’s *Lebensraum*, Hitler’s ‘intellectual godfather’, to revive *Raumsinn* where Russia after a geopolitical settlement in Eurasia will confront the ‘Atlanticist Power’ as the common enemy. This geopolitical project proposes Kremlin to escape the tug of war between monotonous Western liberalism and Soviet communism as the discarded doctrines to embrace Dugin’s *Fourth Political Theory* as the prerequisite for a Russian-led geopolitically unified Eurasian bloc identified by civilizational co-existence. The Fourth political Theory develops a new philosophical age as the constitution of the ‘discarded, toppled and humiliated’ ideas during the construction of postmodernity, which in Alexander Sekatsky’s terms emerges out of the “metaphysics of debris”.⁶ This not only provides Russia with necessary geopolitical pre-requisites to emerge as a great power but also draws the picture of a world with multiple versions of modernity or in Kupchan’s words as the ‘No One’s World’.

Besides speech acts and political gestures, Russia’s contemporary behaviour in Eurasia gives a favourable picture of its assertive role; evident by Russia’s growing ties with Beijing, Berlin, Tokyo and Tehran; military adventure over Georgia in 2008; annexation of Crimea in 2014; and finally, the restructuring of regional institutions as part of its *Ostpolitik*.

On the other hand, the US is on gradual decline in its major geopolitical hotspots including Eastern Europe with the rise of the Far-Right’s political groups and animosity with Germany, East Asia with an ambiguous commitment to protect its allies and finally, in the Persian Gulf given the

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Alexander Dugin, *The Fourth Political Theory* (London: Arktos Media Ltd, 2012), 17.

transactional turn to its relationship with Arab allies and Maximum Pressure approach towards Iran. However, despite the gradual weakening of US influence and even in case of its anticipated global retreat, Russia is unlikely to revive its stature as the global power in the emerging geopolitical order. Even for its regional assertion and roll back of the US from the Eurasian supercontinent, Russia requires a geopolitical understanding with China to offset the Atlanticist domination.

Therefore, the paper is divided into five parts with part one giving a detailed explanation of Russia's civilizational exceptionalism. The second part explains the New Russian Nationalism and its role from domestic politics to contemporary Russian foreign policy. The third part builds contextual analysis for the geopolitical manifestation of Eurasianism and nature of its geographical determinism. The fourth part highlights the degree of influence of Eurasianism found in contemporary Russian geopolitical behaviour and its implications for the US-led liberal world order. Finally, capitalizing on the analytical outcomes of the discussion, the paper sets out to draw the nature of the emerging world order consistent with Dugin's geopolitical model of multiple versions of modernity.

Neo-Eurasianism and Russia's Cultural Exceptionalism

Neo-Eurasianism in the Post-Cold War era defines Russia's existence not only as a large territorial state but a distinct and unique civilization with its own exceptional values and political system. Drifting balance and fault lines in liberal world order with the "oligarchic concentration of power and wealth", continuous to threaten the concept 'Liberal universalism' in favour of the 'cultural exceptionalism'.⁷ Amidst historical puzzle of Russian identity as European or Asian, Neo-Eurasianism takes Russia as the messianic 'third way' while rejecting bifurcated explanation that Russia falls either on the European periphery or has inclusive Asian history.⁸ Peter Savitsky, an aristocrat and inspirational geopolitical figure for Dugin, believes that Russia "is understood not as a nation state, but as a special type of civilization, established on the basis of several factors—Slavic-Aryan

⁷ Adrian Pabst, "China, Russia and the Return of Civilizational State", *New Statesman America*, May 8, 2019. <https://www.newstatesman.com/2019/05/china-russia-and-return-civilisational-state>

⁸ Sarah Dixon Klump, "Russian Eurasianism; An Ideology of an Empire", *Wilson Center*, May 4, 2009. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/russian-eurasianism-ideology-empire>

Culture, Turkic nomadism, and the Orthodox tradition.”⁹ New-Eurasianism shares Gumilev’s view about the influence of the ‘Mongol-Tatar Yoke’ over the political and moral behavior of *Kievan Rus* and even calls it the ‘instance of divine mercy’ for the Russian civilization. Even Vladimir Putin in his speech at the *Valdai International Discussion Club* called Russia a “civilizational state ... a project for the preservation of the identity of peoples [and] of historical Eurasia in the new century”.¹⁰

For a civilization, Dugin believes that there is no general pattern of development and progress but each civilization has an “intrinsic right to evolve according to its own logic”.¹¹ While rejecting both Fukuyama’s ‘lack of alternative’ to the established liberal order and Huntington’s ‘conflict-laden’ theorization of the West and Non-Western civilization, the Eurasianists’ pluralistic version of modernity rejects liberal order as the inevitable enterprise of human progress and development.¹²

Dugin believes that Russia, being a unique civilization, holds an “inner cultural core” that explains its history and frames distinct geopolitical objectives.¹³ It is the sum of ‘ideocratic’ states where people’s ambitions to achieve major goals against the transcended narrow interests’ forms unique collective identity in favour of larger geostrategic imperatives. Dugin defines Russia a “special geopolitical formation ... where justice is more important than freedom and collective is more important than the individual.”¹⁴

⁹ Alexander Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics* (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), Section Translated by Grant S. Fellows, 2018. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2516&context=etd>

¹⁰ Vladimir Putin Meets with Members the Valdai International Discussion Club: Transcript of the Speech and the Meeting”, *Valdai International Discussion Club*, September 20, 2013. https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/vladimir_putin_meets_with_members_the_valdai_international_discussion_club_transcript_of_the_speech_/?sphrase_id=701234

¹¹ Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (London: Arktos Media Ltd, 2015) 18.

¹² Angelous Mouzakitis, “Modernity and the iDea of Progress”, *Frontiers in Sociology*, March 20, 2017. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2017.00003/full>

¹³ Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Alexander Dugin’s View of Russian History; Collapse and Survival”, *Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe* 25, no. 3 (2017): 331-343.

¹⁴ Fred Weir, “Moscow’s moves in Georgia track a script by right-wing prophet”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 20, 2008. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2008/0920/p01s01-woeu.html>

Acknowledging Huntington's definition of civilization as the broader cultural community, Neo-Eurasianism believes in civilizations as the major driver of international politics. To Alexander Dugin, who defines the material dimension of civilization, such civilizational geopolitics is shaped by historical events as well as the material geographical conditions of the concerned geography. He defines the major sea powers, UK and the United States as the 'Atlanticist' *Thalassocracy* while Russia, as *Tellulocracy* for its huge land power capabilities.¹⁵ Such cultural and civilizational obsession coupled with hostile ambitions brings the Eurasian region in geopolitical and strategic rivalry with nations of the opposite cultural pole i.e. the Atlanticist powers.¹⁶

Degeneration as a process follows after such cultural cores are challenged, as witnessed by collapse of the Soviet Union which, to Dugin, is essential for the "rejuvenation" of the Russian civilization and cultural resurrection. Now, Neo-Eurasianism provides context for such rejuvenation under the aegis of the Russian resurgence as the great power and civilization over the Eurasian Landmass. Its political and ideological discourse continues to influence the Post-Cold War Russian political elite with a nationalistically inspired foreign policy.

Interplay of Nationalist Forces in Kremlin and Foreign Policy

Following Vladimir Putin's re-entry to Kremlin as Russian President in 2012, the country has outlined its "sophisticated and well-resourced" campaign to regain its global influence in world politics.¹⁷ In the aftermath of the Cold War, Russia's future in world politics is the consequence of a competition among three different schools of thought; Liberal Westernists, which seek reconciliation with the West to develop an international environment to boost domestic economic development; Fundamentalist Nationalists are the 'unreformed communists', inspired by the Eurasian geopolitical school of thought and calls for a 'third way' in politics to re-establish the Russian empire by rejecting the US-led order; Pragmatic Nationalists takes a

¹⁵ Kristina Melin, "A New Russian Idea?: New Eurasianist Ideas in the Russian Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly 2014-2016", *Uppsala Universitet*, Accessed on March 9, 2020. <https://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1084876/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Paul Stronski, Richard Sokorsky, "The Return of Global Russia: An Analytical Framework", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 14, 2017. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/12/14/return-of-global-russia-analytical-frame-work-pub-75003>

balanced approach and preserves peaceful co-existence with the West while equally uphold the principles of Russian nationalism.¹⁸

After 1993, with Yeltsin-led failed efforts of Westernization, Russia's foreign policy was influenced by the Fundamentalist Nationalists who chalked out blueprints for Russia's rejuvenation. Russia's weak institutionalism that lacks coherent pattern of relationship among actors, forces and conditions shape Kremlin's foreign policy decisions.

In this respect, two important variables shape Russia's foreign policy options i.e. one is ideology and the other is expansion. Northedge argues in the *Foreign Policies of Major Powers* that "there are the cold warriors who detect in Soviet foreign policy a combination of ideological expansionism and traditional Russian imperialism in a relentless quest for world domination."¹⁹ Cumulatively, Putin's foreign policy is configured; to strengthen Russia and its political setup; to create a productive economic model and achieve unprecedented growth, and to establish Russia as a powerful player in world politics.

Putin's existing unprecedented grip on power in Russia and weakening political opposition tapes him as heading the 'nationalist authoritarian government'. The constitutional changes proposed in January 2020 allow Vladimir Putin to control the State Council, Security Council and *Siloviki* (the Russian political establishment), without even holding office as the President after 2024. Cultivation of nationalist elements in Russian political establishment to wield maximum political control is the key to accommodate desirable political objectives. In fact, nationalistic-alliances and ideological fervour, fundamental to Putin's political power and imperial ambitions, are rooted in his political ascendance happened in late 1990s.

Russian Parliament, comprising the Federation Council and Duma, weighs secondary to the 'super presidential regime' established under the 1993 constitution by President Boris Yeltsin to boost his power vis-à-vis the Parliament. The pro-western President Yeltsin opposed legislations by the Parliament which challenged his foreign policy position on the 'near

¹⁸ Arshad Mehmood, "Resurgence of Russian in World Politics Options for Pakistan", *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2. (2013): 79-89.

¹⁹ F.S Northedge (Ed), *The Foreign Policies of the Powers* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1968), 69.

abroad' and defining Russian identity and national interests. However, Putin's coming to power in 2000 rather flattened the diverging wedge between executive and the legislature. The political unity combined with rise of pragmatic Russian nationalism under the President Vladimir Putin, espoused the 'Red-Brown' nationalism; thereby earning Putin's Unified Russia political support from the 'Red-Brown Alliance' in the State Duma.²⁰ Hence in 2000 elections, Putin's Unified Russia, together with its allies Liberal Democratic Party and *Rodina* or 'Red-Brown' alliance, secured 68 per cent majority and provided Putin the leverage over legislations to his will in the State *Duma*.²¹

In his first two terms, 2000-2004 and 2004-2008, Putin has emerged as the 'New Russian Tsar' with drastic marginalization of oligarchs, controlled media and major industries, while neutralizing political opposition as the manifestation of 'managed-democracy' essential for what he himself terms as the 'backward' Russian population.²² Moscow increasingly positioned itself as a power whose legitimacy derived from alternative, illiberal political ideas, some of which clearly originate from the far-right."²³ Moreover, Russia's Duma has a special Committee on Geopolitical Affairs whose chairman Alexey Mitrofanov argues that "Today, the United States of America is the major enemy of our country. All our actions and dealings with America from now on should be undertaken with this in mind."²⁴

Russia in the post-Cold War world struggled to fight for its identity, economy and security identified as the features of Russia's external approach. Kremlin's journey since 1991 includes capitalization on anti-establishment sentiments in Europe and the United States, fill global vacuum created by populist slogans such as the "America First" by Donald Trump, and finally its reliance over the "inexpensive, diplomatic, military,

²⁰ Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine?Crimea?Russia?: Triangle of Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, Ibidem Press, 2007) 77-78.

²¹ Ibid

²² Gal Beckerman, "The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin, by Steven Lee Myers", *The New York Times*, November 2, 2015. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/books/review/the-new-tsar-the-rise-and-reign-of-vladimir-putin-by-steven-lee-myers.html?_r=0

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Daniels W. Michaels, "Examining Stalin's 1941 Plan to Attack Germany", *Institute for Historical Review*, accessed on April 30, 2020.

intelligence, cyber, trade energy, and financial tools to wield influence and expand its global footprint.”²⁵

Neo-Eurasianism and its Geopolitical Discourse

Russian foreign policy approach is inspired by Halford Mackinder’s geopolitics which describes the Eurasian Heartland, as the “global seat of land power”.²⁶ Predicting Russia as Great Britain’s strategic rival five decades before even the Cold War began; Mackinder described the perpetuating nature of fated conflict between land and sea powers. In fact, Kremlin’s geopolitics have traditionally remained subject to security dilemmas near abroad, especially after the humiliating defeat from Japan in 1905 and US’ prominence over the Eurasian region following the Cold War.²⁷

Dugin advocates Houshofer’s “New Eurasian Order”, under the umbrella of “joint civilizational effort of two continental powers – Russia and Germany” to offset influence of the Sea Powers from around the World Island.²⁸ In this, Dugin undermines Houshofer’s genocidal geopolitics driven by racist ideology i.e. Lebensraum, in favour of his broader geopolitical manifestation. And why not, for it provides basis for Dugin’s desire to revive *Raumsinn* i.e. Russian version of Lebensraum. He advocates Houshofer’s theory of large states but taking geographical rather than racial principles for his geographical determinism. This diversion, he explains by quoting Jean Francois Thiriart, is fundamental to Hitler’s failure in Europe for “he tried to make Europe German. Instead, he should have tried to make it European.”²⁹ Dugin terms Houshofer’s plan of German Lebensraum was meant to ‘organize eastern lands, not to colonise them’. But to him, the collision between Hitler’s ethnic affinity for Anglo-Saxon

²⁵ Paul Stronski, Richard Sokorsky, *The Return of Global Russia: ...*

²⁶ Charles Clover, “The Unlikely Origins of Russia’s Manifest Destiny”, *Foreign Policy*, July 27, 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/geopolitics-russia-mackinder-eurasia-heartland-dugin-ukraine-eurasianism-manifest-destiny-putin/>

²⁷ David Kerr, “The New Eurasianism: The Rise of Geopolitics in Russian Foreign Policy”, *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 6 (September 1995): 977-988, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/152839.pdf>

²⁸ Aleksandr Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics* (Moscow: Arctogaia, 1997), Section translated by Grant S. Fellows, 2018.

²⁹ Charles Clover, “The Unlikely Origins of Russia’s Manifest Destiny”, *Foreign Policy*, July 27, 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/geopolitics-russia-mackinder-eurasia-heartland-dugin-ukraine-eurasianism-manifest-destiny-putin/>

states as natural allies and Slavophobic racial bias rather than his geopolitical optimism missed him the opportunity to establish the 'Continental Bloc'. For this reason, Dugin suggests that Russia should not build a Russian Empire but a Eurasian one. But, what Haushofer's *Lebensraum* could not achieve for Berlin; will Dugin's *Raumsinn* achieve the same for Moscow?

This requires critical assessment of Dugin geopolitical model and its relevance to Russia's contemporary geopolitical behaviour, Eurasian political allegiances and most importantly, Kremlin's political will and its overall power capabilities.

Dugin's Geopolitical Model

Neo-Eurasianism of Alexander Dugin proposes a multi-polar geopolitical setup with Russia as the leading Eurasian power. To Dugin, since the unipolar liberal order and monopoly of western civilization impedes growth of other historically rich and pragmatically feasible civilizational values; therefore, a 'multipolar' and 'pluralistic' version of alternative geopolitical set up is necessary to defend diverse civilizational co-existence against the monotonic liberal order.³⁰ Such pluralistic geopolitical setup vindicates traditional concept of nation-state in favour of an "integrated civilizational structure" or in Carl Schmitt's terms *grossraum* or 'Great Spaces' that are held in unity by the "geo-economic belts".³¹

Dugin identifies four Geographical zones which include the Anglo-American Zone, the Euro-African Zone, Pacific-Far East Zone and finally, the Pan-Eurasian Zone. The zones are divided into multiple Great Spaces such as the Anglo-American Zone includes three great spaces i.e. North, Central and South American Large Spaces. The Euro-African zone is divided into European, Arab-Islamic and Trans-Saharan Large Spaces. The Pacific-Far East zone includes the Chinese, Japanese and the New Pacific Large Spaces. Finally, the focus of the research Pan-Eurasian zone embodies Russian-Eurasian, Islamic Continental and Hindu Large Spaces. These geographical zones are identified by civilizational uniformity where Russia, after necessary geopolitical settlements, will win over appropriate alliances to balance against the Atlanticist Sea Powers of the Anglo-American Zone.

³⁰ Kristina Melin, *A New Russian Idea?: New Eurasianist Ideas in ...*, P. 18.

³¹ Alexander Dugin, *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism* (London: Arktos, 2014) 19-20.

Such alliances will be sought with Berlin in the European Great Space, Tokyo in the Japanese Great Space and with Tehran in the Islamic Continental Great Space, all sharing the Atlanticist powers as the common enemy.

Moscow-Berlin Alliance

Central to Houshofer's 'continental bloc', Dugin proposes a Grand Alliance between Russia and Germany. Apart from dividing sphere of influences between the two borders without any 'sanitary cordon', Germany should be returned the Kaliningrad Oblast (Eastern Prussia);³² most of protestant and catholic states with exception of the 'unstable' Finland. In return, Russia-Eurasian sphere dominates Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, "north of the Balkan Peninsula from Serbia to Bulgaria" as part of the Russian South.³³ Moreover, all the former Soviet Union states in Europe, except Estonia, Ukraine (except its western parts), like Belarus are to become Russian-Eurasian sphere.

Moscow-Tokyo Alliance

The Moscow-Tokyo alliance offers Japan the disputed Kuril Islands, just as the Kaliningrad to Germans, and form a formidable setup against the United States in East Asia.³⁴ China, no less than the US, is taken as "the most dangerous geopolitical neighbour", that should be dismantled by controlling "Tibet-Xinjiang-Mongolia-Manchuria" as Russia's 'security belt' and to avoid China's anticipated 'thrust' into Central Asia.³⁵ Dugin proposes to offer China in the South, such as Indo-China and Southeast Asia, a 'geopolitical compensation' for its loss in the North.

Moscow-Tehran Alliance

The Moscow-Tehran alliance is central to Dugin anti-Atlanticist strategy which, besides making inroads for Russia to warm waters, describes the traditional coexistence between Russian and Islamic civilizations.³⁶ Dugin capitalizes on anti-American resentment in the Muslim world, its incompatibility towards religion and general trend of friendly Islamic behaviour and association towards Eurasia for Moscow-Tehran alliance.

³² Alexander Dugin, p. 228.

³³ Alexander Dugin, p. 343.

³⁴ Alexander Dugin, p. 238.

³⁵ Alexander Dugin, p. 363.

³⁶ Alexander Dugin, p. 158.

The alliance gives Russia-Eurasia to hold sway in all of Caucasus, eastern and northern shores of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and Mongolia. Dugin takes Turkey as dangerous as the US and China and stresses to dismantle Turkey with 'geopolitical shocks'. By gaining geopolitical access and establishing bases on shores of the Indian Ocean, Eurasia will ensure its security from the NATO-led anti-Russian 'Anaconda Ring'.³⁷

Neo-Eurasianism and changing Russian Geopolitical Behaviour

Putin's obsession with Russia's civilizational reincarnation and subsequent relative weight in support of an ambitious foreign policy in the Kremlin redefines Eurasian geopolitics. To this end, Alexander Dugin's *Foundations of Geopolitics* reintroduces geopolitical determinism over the Eurasian landmass with prospects for a confrontational geopolitical climate in the twenty first century.³⁸ His literature finds appreciation in widespread Russian geopolitical thinkers, politicians in Kremlin and nationalist elements whose ambitious designs can lead Russia towards a geopolitical *blitzkrieg*. In his interview at the Moscow State University in 2008 Dugin states that, "I was a voice in wilderness about this a few years ago, but now it's the view of our political leaders and the majority of the populations."³⁹

Russia's national interests have been defined relative to the spatial dimensions of its confused geographical identification between Europe and Asia. However, the country is largely treated, at least in the Neo-Eurasianism literature, as the Eurasian power representing interests of the Eurasian region. This perception and transformation in Russian polity took place in late 1990s with failed efforts of Westernization, and in defining Russia's national interests and foreign policy henceforth. Since then, the Eurasianists remain vital players in bringing a 'conservative turn' to Russia's geopolitical vision on the Eurasian landmass, especially under Vladimir Putin whose geopolitical vision is so far consistent with Dugin's model of Neo-Eurasianism.

³⁷ Alexander Dugin, p. 241

³⁸ Kirill Kalinin, "Neo-Eurasianism and the Russian Elite: Irrelevance of the Aleksander Dugin's Geopolitics", *Post Soviet Affairs* 35 no 6, (2019): 461-470. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1060586X.2019.1663050?needAccess=true>

³⁹ Fred Weir, "Moscow's moves in ...", 2008.

Russia's Emerging Alliances

Besides the European Far-Right support and belief in Putin as the Custodian of 'Christian Heritage of European Civilization', President Putin is earning alliances from Europe, Asia, Asia-Pacific and even Latin America.

The Post-Soviet Russia seeks to fuel Russia's resources with German technology to deter American hegemony in Eurasia. Dugin's proposal of Moscow-Berlin alliance and division of sphere of influence is alternatively a repeat of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. Today's Kremlin under Vladimir Putin is receptive to collusion with Germany, inspired by historical settlements started with the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 and Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, which Putin repeatedly attempted to defend.⁴⁰ Such collusion can be based on broader socio-economic interests, rejection of Atlanticism, reduced German spending in NATO, and shared political views on Ukraine and Georgia, which of course is abetted by the rise of German nationalism. Irrespective of the Chancellor Angela Merkel's pro-NATO policies, the growing attraction and influence of Pro-Russian Far-Right nationalist parties such as Alternative for Germany (AfD) brightens the prospects for a possible German strategic collusion with Putin's Russia. The Party secured around 25 percent votes in German state election against Merkel's Democratic Union in March 2016 which can possibly turn the tables on the Pro-Western parties in the near future.

Moreover, Washington's contemporary irritating attitude towards Berlin including the gradual withdrawal of one-third of its troops and continued economic threats over construction of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline rather pushes for a mutual geopolitical understanding between Germany and Russia.⁴¹ Additionally, the diverging views on a range of issues like nuclear Iran, defense spending, US-Europe trade war, conflicts at the G-7 and the differing views of engagement with the rising China and Russia is

⁴⁰ John O'Sullivan, "Why is Putin Defending Nazi-Soviet Pact?", *National Review*, January 3, 2020. <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/why-is-putin-defending-the-nazi-soviet-pact/>

⁴¹ Kim Hjelmgaard, "Pentagon to pull 12, 000 troops from Germany following Trump demands, slammed as gift to Russia", *USA Today*, July 29, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/07/29/us-troops-leave-germany-following-trump-demands-costly-move/5534462002/>

threatening the decades long Trans-Atlantic relationship to a point of ‘no return’.⁴²

Interestingly, Turkey, which Dugin proposed to be treated likewise the US and China, cannot be left a trouble as a NATO member in the Black Sea with Bosphorus as key access for Russia’s Black Sea fleet to the Mediterranean. Putin recognizes this strategic necessity to entice Ankara evident by the geopolitical settlements in the Middle East, especially at a time when Turkey is ruled by the anti-Western conservative Recep Tayyip Erdogan (unlike Dugin’s ‘secular’ Turkey). The Moscow-Ankara Idlib Deal and shared rejection of US position on Syria while Erdogan’s risky business in Russia’s S-400 ADS to ditch lucrative US offers, threats to withdraw from NATO and block its Baltic Defence Plan, and to shut down US air bases indicates Moscow-Ankara strategic warm-up. Therefore Turkey and Germany, standing second and fourth respectively in terms of the NATO contribution, could drop NATO’s efficiency and defense capability down by the unprecedented 27 percent as a strategic favour to Putin’s Russia.

For Japan, Moscow did not participate in the Treaty of San Francisco (1951) which ended Tokyo as the US’ major ally and strategic base in East Asia. Dugin proposed that Kurils Islands, occupied by Russia during WW-II, and now home to Russia’s Pacific Fleet and its bastion-based nuclear deterrent, be offered as a Grand Bargain that could restore Japanese ‘new order’ in the Pacific as the unfinished agenda of Imperial Japan in the 1930s.

Japan’s growing defense spending, almost by 15% since 2012, under Shinzo Abe and planned revocation of Article 9 of the constitution, to transform Japan into a ‘normal’ country with ‘normal’ military, reflects Tokyo’s intention of security independence.⁴³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US diplomat, in his book *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global power states*; that in case of uncertain US security assurance, evident by

⁴² Holly Ellyatt, “America’s relationship with Germany may never be the same again, warns Berlin”, *CNBC*, June 29, 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/29/us-germany-relationships-decline-over-g7-nord-stream-2-defense-spend.html>

⁴³ Scott Foster, “On Trump’s demand that Japan pay more for security”, *Asia Times*, February 11, 2020. <https://asiatimes.com/2020/02/trumps-demand-that-japan-pay-up-for-cooperation/>

Trump's repeated warnings;⁴⁴ Japan could seek geopolitical settlement with Russia and even develop its own nuclear capability against growing Chinese threat.⁴⁵

Here again, Dugin's strategy leaves China as a major challenge that could rather jeopardize Russia's existing position in East Asia. This is because China is rapidly emerging to challenge the US' hegemony in Asia, most notably in Indo-Pacific rather than staying as what Dugin terms as the 'Atlanticist factotum'. With Mao's logic of "the east wind prevailing over the west wind", Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) connects Asia with Europe to take off pressure from the commercially significant maritime routes,⁴⁶ which the dominant *Thalassocratic* sea power US already threatened to block in case of conflict. The proposed interlink between Putin's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Xi Jinping's BRI brings the two ambitious Eurasian powers into a marriage of inconvenience or what the Chinese strategists term as 'low-friction path' against the shared Atlanticist challenge. Such Sino-Russian joint cooperation on Eurasia was also suggested by a report titled "Towards the Great Ocean" in 2015 by *Voldai Club*, a group of Russian experts for Eurasian integration.

Finally, in the South, the anti-American Islamic Theocracy in Tehran offers natural strategic bonhomie to Putin's Russia. Despite timely divergences on Syria; victimization of western sanctions, international isolation, mutual dependencies and shared resentment towards the US provides sufficient reason for a long-term Moscow-Tehran alliance. Iran and Russia want the US out of the strategically important Persian Gulf and which Dugin considers necessary for breaking the hostile 'Anaconda Ring'.⁴⁷ Such cooperation is re-enforced also by President Donald Trump's ineffective approach of "Maximum Pressure" as a replacement to Obama's 'Constructive Engagement' policy, bringing Iran closer to the Russian ambit. Trump's immediate withdrawal from the P5+1 Nuclear Deal and killing of

⁴⁴ Lara Seligman and Robbie Gramer, "Trump Asks Japan to Quadruple Payments for U.S. Troops in Japan", *Foreign Policy*, November 15, 2019. <https://asiatimes.com/2020/02/trumps-demand-that-japan-pay-up-for-cooperation/>

⁴⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* (New York City: Basic Books, 2012) 159.

⁴⁶ Misha Katchell, "China's play for supremacy in Eurasia revives and old geopolitical vision", *The Conversation*, March 2, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/chinas-play-for-supremacy-in-eurasia-revives-an-old-geopolitical-vision-71753>

⁴⁷ Alexander Dugin, p. 242.

IRGC General Qaseim Suleimani has rather convinced Iran to accommodate Russia as a strategic partner in the Middle East and Eurasia. Suleimani's death also helps Russia in convincing Iran on employing Russia's model to solve the Syrian crisis.⁴⁸

President Putin also believes that encouraging a regional approach against the US is essential to its broader strategic resurgence. Therefore, he continues to build ties with Saudi Arabia that houses thousands of US troops and its major ally in the Middle East.⁴⁹

Russo-Georgian War – 2008

Since Putin's Presidency and the Pro-Western shift in Tbilisi, Russia's relations with Georgia deteriorated and reached full diplomatic crisis by the 2008 when the two countries embroiled in armed conflict that experts call as the 'first European War of the twenty first century'.⁵⁰ This was a comprehensive Russian aggression where the military action was complemented by advance Russian cyber warfare capabilities. Politically, Russia's aggression spoke a lot about its uncompromising behaviour towards NATO expansion in its near abroad.

Intervention in Ukraine and Annexation of Crimea – 2014

Nostalgia for the Soviet Union's glory and power describes Putin's desperation for the loss of Crimea in 1954 as a gift to Ukraine by Nikita Khrushchev, that some describe as the 'Drunken' moment in Russian history. To Putin, Crimea and its Sevastopol remains 'sacred Russian soil' that was vital in both the Crimean and Great Patriotic Wars, and was among Stalin's 'Heroic cities', together with Leningrad, Stalingrad and Odessa. Currently, the port city Sevastopol in Crimea houses Russian Black Sea fleet.

Strategically speaking, Sevastopol's strategic importance and the energy resources in the Black Sea are some reasons behind Putin's decisive conflict

⁴⁸ Dmitry Shlapentokh, "Why US-Iran Conflict Suits Russia", *Institute of Modern Russia*, January 29, 2020. <https://imrussia.org/en/analysis/3070-why-u-s-iran-conflict-suits-russia>

⁴⁹ Frank Gardner, "Saudi Arabia warms to Russia's embrace", *BBC*, October 16, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50054546>

⁵⁰ Michael Emerson, "Post-Mortem on Europe's First War of the 21st Century", *Center for European Policy Studies*, Policy Brief No. 168, August, 2020. <http://aei.pitt.edu/9382/2/9382.pdf>

with Ukraine after Euro-maiden protests ending up with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. However, ethnic Russian speaking population and shared Russian values of Crimea links Russia's actions in Ukraine to the broader manifestation of Neo-Eurasianism. This is why many think Crimean annexation as the 'brainchild' of Alexander Dugin who, even before Russia-Georgian war in 2008, indicated that "Our troops will occupy the Georgian capital Tbilisi, the entire country, and perhaps even Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula, which is historically part of Russia, anyway".⁵¹

Putin's belief in Ukraine as the foundation of Russian civilization and intrinsic to the Russian values than a distinct political identity inspired such bold alteration to the status quo defined by the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

Hence, Putin's historical obsession, economic and strategic compulsions, and the 'inevitable' soaking of Crimea as the 'Heartland' of Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism Project allowed the Kremlin to intervene in Ukraine and annex Crimean Peninsula.

Restructuring of the Eurasian Institutional Integration

Initially, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) emerged as the first Russian effort to integrate the lost states of Soviet Union under Kremlin's leadership. However, CIS is more of a "divorce court" for the independent republics than a platform to represent the idea of all inclusive Eurasian integration. This was inspired by Russia's security dilemma from the CIS states in near abroad joining the EU and hence NATO. Russia in its submission to the EU warned against any EU efforts of 'special relationship' with regional states that harms Moscow's interests. Dmitri Medvedov, the Russian Prime Minister during Georgian crisis in 2008, claimed in an interview that Russia enjoys 'privileged influence' in the Post-Soviet space. James Sherr states that Putin's Russia in resemblance to Tsarist and Soviets takes sovereignty as "contingent factor depending on power, culture and historical norms, not an absolute and unconditional principle of world politics."⁵²

⁵¹ "The Chronicle of a Caucasian Tragedy", *Spiegel International*, August 25, 2008. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/road-to-war-in-georgia-the-chronicle-of-a-caucasian-tragedy-a-574812.html>

⁵² James Sherr, *Hard Diplomacy and Soft Coercion: Russia's Influence Abroad* (London: Brookings Institution Press, Chatham House, 2013) pp. 61-62.

Such a Moscow-led integration project is considered a hybrid geopolitical agenda with economic and political “Janus Bifrons” supporting Moscow’s ambitions to become a Eurasian pole in the anticipated multi-polar world.⁵³ The strategic necessity and nostalgia for control over the former Soviet territories inspires Vladimir Putin’s Eurasian integration project consisting of economic-centred, hard security-centred and politico-security centred regional arrangements.

Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

In 2012, Putin amplified efforts as a President for his Eurasian integration which resulted in establishment of EAEU in January 2015. The Union is not necessarily revival of lost Soviet Space but rather a “powerful supra-national union” comprising the sovereign CIS states. It integrates around 180 million people and an economic market of \$5 trillion consisting of Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia. Despite European Union (EU) tendency of cooperation, the two unions are competing for influence in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. On the other hand, Russia plans to link the EEU with China’s BRI that props up a Moscow-Beijing Nexus and complex regional economic interdependence with limited role for the US.

Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

Secondly, originally founded as Collective Security Treaty (CST) in 1992, CSTO was established in May 2002 as regional gendarme against possible forced majeure and threats from NATO. CSTO includes Russia and five former Soviet republics including Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. It claims to be an emerging peer to the NATO bloc. However, despite its relevance to the three regional security complexes i.e. Central Asia, Caucasus and the Eastern Europe, CSTO is yet to bring strategic bonhomie among conflict-laden hostile neighbours. Irrespective of its limitations, the organization is dubbed as “Eastern NATO” which holds military drills; thereby improving forces’ interoperability and defense cooperation, evident by the creation of its “Rapid Reaction Force” in 2009.

⁵³ Brunoc S. Sergi, “Putin’s and Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union: A hybrid half-economic and half-political “Janus Bifrons””, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 1, (January 2018): 52-60,

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Thirdly, the politico-security SCO is led jointly by Russia and China. SCO is mainly a Chinese project but an influential platform for Moscow to organize political and security arrangements among Central and South Asian states. Despite its success as a regional organization, Moscow is unlikely to endorse it as a platform for Beijing's growing regional ambitions. Some experts note that the enlargement of SCO to include India was Moscow's effort to offset Chinese influence in SCO.

Russia's aggressive regional approach, inter-play with Beijing in these organizations and willingness to expand its scope to the edges of Central Europe and South and East Asia, and its confrontational approach towards NATO and the US paints a revisionist picture of the Moscow-led Eurasianism project.

Russia's Eurasianism: A Scarecrow for the Atlanticism*Eastern Europe: The Rise of the Far-Right Political Groups in Europe*

The Far-right political groups and the sentiments they encapsulate have seen a spike in Europe in recent years. These groups are the flag bearers of bigotry and hate with the sentimentalism of "national pride"; they harbour the concept of patriotism amalgamated with xenophobia, a homogeneous vision of nationalism. The rise of populism across the European politics is of immediate challenge to the US as it stands in support of Russian propaganda to erode European trust for the EU, NATO and the liberal political order at large.⁵⁴

The reason for the US concern over populism of the far-right is the threat they pose to the European democracies with their authoritarian leanings. Such authoritarians reject institutional constraints over decision-making in favour of the majority and hence push the formal and informal boundaries of the democratic governance.

The far-right activism is more intense in Russia's immediate neighbourhood including Hungary whose president Viktor Orban has declared the "shipwrecked liberal democracy" to be a thing of the past and has been

⁵⁴ ROHAC, DALIBOR, EDIT ZGUT, LÓRÁNT GYÓRI, "Populism in Europe and its Russian Love Affair", *Report. American Enterprise Institute*, 2017, 1. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep03271.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A36c43078e581473971a8b1dd237e8eac>

replaced with “Christian democracy”; and that EU should abandon its “nightmare” of the United States of Europe.⁵⁵

Such groups are suspiciously used by the Kremlin as their linchpins to increase its influence and decline standing of the US in Europe.

However, the Far-Right groups are divided over the Russian factor. Some consider Russia as the leader of the European Far-Right while the others take the “wounded bear” a threat in similar tone as the liberal far-right itself.⁵⁶ One thing they share is the scepticism of globalization and free trade as the instruments of Western supremacy.

Losing Turkey to Russia

Washington found itself questioning “who lost the country?”; from China being taken over by Communism to the Iranian revolution and yet again; it seems that the US will find itself pondering upon the same question if it doesn’t take the reins and let Turkey slip to Russia.

President Erdogan’s anti-Americanism is consistent with his model of Turkish strategic independence. Despite being a NATO partner, majority in Ankara sees Washington as a nemesis vis-à-vis the Kurds issue in the region with larger divergences in the Middle East, while Russia as ‘better ally’ which complicates the prospects for Washington’s influence in the Middle East and Baltic.⁵⁷

Turkey now sees herself as an independent entity that can dig her clasp without the American authorization. Its military operations in Syria, Libya and Iraq against the US-backed Kurds, efforts to offset US sanctions on Iran, and its cozying up to Kremlin for military tells the story. Turkey’s divergence from the West and the US in particular is purely due to its geo-political considerations.

⁵⁵ Darko Janjevic, “Viktor Orban: Era of ‘liberal democracy’ is over”, *DW*, October 5, 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/viktor-orban-era-of-liberal-democracy-is-over/a-43732540-0>

⁵⁶ Shaun Walker, “Europe’s far-right divided over Salvini stages pre-election rally in Milan”, *The Guardian*, May 17, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/17/europes-far-right-divided-over-russia-as-salvini-stages-pre-election-rally-in-milan>

⁵⁷ Robin Wright, “After Six Decades, Turkey is Now a U.S. Ally in Name Only”, *The New Yorker*, November 14, 2019. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/after-six-decades-turkey-is-now-a-us-ally-in-name-only>

East Asia and Indo-Pacific

The alliance established after the World War II has served both U.S and Japan's interests in the East Asian region, but has the potential to go sour. Japan and U.S share mutual adversaries in the region which if not handled carefully can be turned against these allies. President Trump calling the 1960 treaty "unfair" was a diplomatic fiasco undermining Japan's position.

Washington's dilemma on Taiwan's security and its ambiguity will further sideline U.S from the region. China's ambition will only enhance its prospects in Taiwan and if U.S will not have strategic clarity for Taiwan it will cause a down-hill descend for Washington. Beijing-Washington relations have touched the lowest ebb after the outbreak of COVID-19.

The Persian Gulf

One reason for the growing ineffectiveness of US policies in the Persian Gulf is its unilateral approach towards Iran which disregards the collectivist approach with its European allies, in case of JCPOA in particular which is still alive for Washington's European allies. The E3 (Germany, France and UK) not only rejected further sanctions on Iran but also developed an alternative system for economic transactions to avoid US sanctions.⁵⁸

On the other hand, despite its coercing approach, the US has failed to contain Tehran's influence, rescind its nuclear activities by renegotiating the nuclear deal or alter its ambitions to acquire long-range ballistic missiles. Instead these policies have rescinded the gains of the Obama administration's diplomacy and pushed Tehran towards China and Russia.

China and Russia have its own interests which motivate them to capitalize on Iran's isolation. Both countries want to expand their horizons in the region.

Russia and the Emerging World Order – No One's World

The world is passing through a steady phase of progressive erosion where the US is on down-slide; China is emerging while Russia is trying to rebuild its stature as a credible great power. This also brings to the end, a tremendous 500 years rule of the Western dominance, first by the British

⁵⁸ Michael Peel, "Can Europe's new financial channel save the Iran nuclear deal?", *Financial Times*, February 4, 2019. <https://www.ft.com/content/bd5a5046-27ad-11e9-88a4-c32129756dd8>

and then by the US over defining the rules of the international system. However, the pre-eminence of the western societies is part of a longer detour to the supremacy of other civilizations prevalent before the European expedition of the sixteenth century which was, in fact, inspired by its relative poverty and high esteem of the Chinese, Indian, and Middle Eastern civilizations. Now, in this phase of relative transformation where the shifting current international order begins to move; the prospects for an end to the western supremacy and an alternative order are of particular concern to the geopolitics of the contemporary world.

The United States, still the dominant power, is on the verge of speedy erosion with continuous decline in global influence as well as in reputation among its allies and key partners, especially after a failed global response to the COVID-19.⁵⁹ Washington's slackening commitment to its allies in the Eastern Europe, Middle East and East Asia weakens its grip over these vital geopolitical hotspots. In other words, the United States is on a gradual global retreat and its credibility to maintain global dominance is declining with the rise of China and increasingly ambitious Russia.

China on the other hand is ascending on the hierarchy of the international order with its unprecedented economic growth and ambitious military might. Some describe Beijing as a revisionist power challenging the American dominance while others consider it to be setting the rules for the anticipated global order.

Finally Russia, having remained a global peer of the US during the Cold War, is increasingly pessimistic about the existing international order. Moscow considers the use of economic sanctions, direct interventions, large-scale propaganda warfare and the unconstitutional regime change as the efforts to use the American lexicon in ensuring its global leadership. With the receding of American power and growing transformation in the hierarchy of the international system.

Charles Kupchan solves puzzle of transformation at the international level. To him, the next century is neither of the US, Asia, China, nor of Russia, but

⁵⁹ Richard Wike, Jennel Fetterolf, Mana Mordecai, "US Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly", *Pew Research Center*, September 15, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/15/us-image-plummets-internationally-as-most-say-country-has-handled-coronavirus-badly/>

of No One. In his book, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn*, Kupchan explains that the contemporary world is globalized and interdependent but increasingly becoming without a center of gravity. The Western liberal order since the 19th century is based on the power of the West coupled with the appeal of its ideas which led to the universalization of liberal modernity. That is why the West made globalization happen and which is why globalization and westernization are going together.

Now, the western values, norms and ideas are increasingly approaching to outlast its material supremacy by the next few decades over other civilizations like China and Russia which have become wary of the Atlanticist liberal model as the inevitable order of progression. Interestingly however, the United States is retreating globally as the centre of power but the rising peers like China or Russia are also less likely to achieve global dominance. And this is why Kupchan predicts that the growing scepticism of the liberal universalism will give rise to “numerous power centres as well as multiple versions of modernity”; instead of a traditional power transition from a status quo to the revisionist power.⁶⁰

Moreover, Russia's ambition to improve its grip over the 'near-abroad' and in Europe is of little utility without having a geopolitical understanding with China. Besides sharing the Anti-Atlanticist agendas and ambitions of rejuvenation, Moscow and Beijing have repeatedly promised to link the single market of EAEU and the BRI as part of their “allied relationship” based on “multifaceted strategic partnership”.⁶¹

In such a geopolitical setting, the United States should embrace a less ambitious brand of statecraft and support a peaceful transition towards a multicultural order that could bring a new level of prosperity and co-existence.

⁶⁰ Charles A. Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and Coming Global Turn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) 3. <https://politics.virginia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Kupchan-VISC.pdf>

⁶¹ Jonathan E. Hillman, “China and Russia: Economic Unequals”, *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*, July 15, 2020. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-and-russia-economic-unequals>

Conclusion

Russian geopolitics resonate the idea of Dugin's Neo-Eurasianism that seek the Atlanticist influence from the Eurasian supercontinent. Its geopolitical model focuses on the troika of the geopolitical hotspots around Eurasia i.e. Eastern Europe, the Persian Gulf and East Asia, which remains the topmost priorities of the American foreign policy for atleast the last seven and a half decades. The geopolitical settlement with Germany in Eastern Europe, Iran in the Persian Gulf, and Japan in East Asia is the proposed way forward against the American influence which, if managed carefully, can restore Russian influence across the Eurasian region.

However, such a model, besides being radical in nature, is not without its geopolitical shortcomings. First, disregarding China as the 'Atlanticist Factotum' is not valid as Beijing is the primacy Atlanticist opponent and the likely contender for a major role in the emerging multipolar order. Therefore, Russia is unlikely to achieve its geopolitical objectives in the region without making a smart geopolitical settlement with China. Secondly, Dugin's proposal to punish Turkey is absurd and undermines the anti-atlanticist inclination under President Erdogan. Also, the proposed 'geopolitical shocks' are reminiscent to inviting a Turkish reprisal which is the only gateway for the Russian Black Sea fleet to the Mediterranean. Third, Dugin's geopolitical model brands Iran as the whole of the Islamic world, which in actual makes only part of it with even larger and powerful contenders such as Saudi Arabia. Therefore, improved relations with and influence in Saudi Arabia is equally essential for Russia to improve its position in the Gulf and avoid encirclement by the NATO's 'Anaconda Ring'. This allows Russia to decline NATO's defense efficiency, roll-back the Atlanticist influence from the three geopolitical hotspots, and emerge as an influential actor in Eurasia. Still, however, the geopolitical reconciliation among these adversaries i.e. Japan and China, Iran and Saudi Arabia, remains a major challenge.

On the other hand, the growing strategic irrelevance of the US from the Persian Gulf and unnecessary reliance over its Maximum Pressure approach, differences with Germany on Nord-Stream 2 and the troop's withdrawal, and slackening security commitments to its allies in East Asia is likely to erode America's primacy along the three vital geopolitical hotspots. Yet, America's prospected decline does not mean the rise of Russia as a Eurasian pole or China as the global hegemon. Instead, the

geopolitical ambiguities of the rising powers indicate the rise of a world without any centre of gravity with no power dominate the order i.e. No One's World. Such a global structure is likely to reflect Dugin's conception of multiple versions of modernity seeking modernization without westernization with each civilization having its own logic of development and progress.