

THE WEST, HEGEMONY AND EURASIA

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Any analysis of the West's role in Eurasia, its interests and objectives, has to be undertaken in relation to the West's main rival in the region: Russia. A number of concepts are useful in order to understand this relationship in its most salient points. These include the concepts of hegemony, globalization, regionalization and core-periphery relations.

In order to consider Russia as a hegemonic power, it needs to fulfil certain function.¹ The notion of hegemony in international relations is, according to both Western and Russian scholars, generally associated with the political forces of the United States as the sole remaining hegemonic power. Another related view of a hegemonic power is that it has a preponderance of resources – of both material sources and military might. The Gramscian use of hegemony is useful here. Hegemony in this sense means that global leadership is attained through the active consent of the subordinated.² A hegemonic power thus is regarded as legitimate by its subordinate powers; who are dominated not by force, but by acquiescence of the dominated members. From another perspective, a hegemon should be able to provide collective security. This function of a hegemon in the global arena is similar to the role of a domestic government. Linked to this is the concept of hegemonic stability where the hegemon is not only the main beneficiary of the institutional environment; but is also the main provider of externalities to the other members. It receives disproportionate benefits, but also accepts disproportionate burdens.³ The hegemon is interested in providing goods, and according to hegemonic stability theory the absence of a hegemon will impede the procurement of public goods.⁴

In terms of Russia, and in relation to the above noted functions of a hegemon, most commentators agree that Russia's capacity to act as a hegemon in the Eurasian region is declining.⁵ Moscow's

regionalist policies are encountering significant opposition from other CIS members. Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, for instance, have refused the stationing of Russian troops at the former Soviet borders. It should also be noted that Russia is unable to provide its CIS partners with the public goods they are requesting. Russia is failing to provide stability. It is unable to go beyond the freezing of conflicts, or outright military operations as witnessed both times in Chechnya. In addition, Russia does not have sufficient preponderance in economic or even military power to establish its role as a hegemon.⁶ What the majority of countries in the region desire is more Western involvement. Thus, Russia's hegemony in Eurasia, and contrary to many commentators, is gradually being replaced by Western hegemony. In short, the West has an absolute preponderance of economic and military resources over all Eurasian countries, including Russia. Eurasian states can today almost count on Western economic involvement and its military policies in the region. With regard to the latter point, we only need to note the popularity of the Partnership for Peace, and the support for NATO's idea to create peacekeeping battalions in Central Asia – although not in a peace-enforcing capacity. There is even the possibility of Western peacekeeping forces through the OSCE in Nagorno-Karabakh; or even a possibility, although admittedly remote, through the UN in Abkhazia – in cooperation with CIS troops. There are not, moreover, consistent expectations of China, Iran, Japan or Turkey. The West is poised for lift off in the region, not least because the West has the potential to incorporate the bulk of Russia's natural resources. Even Yeltsin remarked in May 1997 that both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were turning nearly all their industrial resources over to 'foreign partners.'⁷ Although such involvement by Western capital investment is a far cry from any notion of an alternative to the economic relations pertaining between Russia and the states of Central Eurasia, such investment is, along with cooperation in other fields, leading to radical altering relations between CIS countries and Russia to the latter's disadvantage. Western institutions are also involved in the procurement for the Eurasian countries of some public goods such as monetary stability loans. Hence, it is probable that the

above factors will lead to the further subordination of Russia in the competition between Russia and the West.

The evolving Western ascendancy over Russia's Near Abroad is not as a result of sub-regional arrangements between Central Asian and other CIS states with the exclusion of Russia. The reason lies in the combination of the above factors, along with, for instance, military cooperation policies as provided through Partnership for Peace. In this context, a hegemonic West is the emerging hope of an historical alternative to Russia. However, it remains to be seen as to whether Western hegemony could offer a new chance for the settlement of ethnic conflicts. One danger here for the West in Eurasia is that in its attempts to enhance regional integrationist efficiency, it may suffer the fate of a Western imperial overstretch. It is also worth bearing in mind the potential for conflict within the Western camp between Western Europe and the United States over competition for resources in the region.

For Western hegemony to take root in Eurasia, it is absolutely vital that Western organizations respond positively to the expectations of governments in the region – several in Central Asia and the Caucasian countries.

As noted earlier, some authors, such as Brezinski, have pointed their analysis at a 'Great Game' between Russia and Western powers. Others disagree, noting that such a nineteenth-century analysis, along with its romantic Great Powers-can-do-rhetoric, is no longer applicable to today's competition between various state or oil and gas company interests in the Caspian region. Moreover, unlike the nineteenth-century, in a period of Russian expansionism and Western imperialism, countries in Russia's Near Abroad were not sovereign players in the international arena.⁸ Notwithstanding, the decline of Russia and the ascendancy of the West have to be seen, in significant part, in the light of the failure of the CIS.

Most commentators on Eurasia have rated the chances of the CIS to provide a foundation for the integration of the region, of linking Russia and the other former Union republics on the basis of equality and sovereignty. For one thing the CIS does not possess the political structures for the integration of its members. Even the one

attempt at integration took place outside the CIS – i.e. the creation of a Union between Belarus and Russia begun in May 1997.

Russia's leading integrationist role in the CIS is indisputable, but this is no longer a condition for its recognition as a global power by the international community.⁹ Russia cannot stop NATO's expansion eastwards, and Russia's more assertive attitude to its Near Abroad since the mid-1990s has not had any direct consequences for the Central Asian states. CIS members here have in degrees disassociated their own security outlooks from that of Moscow. This does not mean that these states in the region are no longer independent of Moscow and the CIS arm, but it does mean that they are attempting to find the most appropriate form of dependence.¹⁰

For the majority of governments in the region, the CIS should function not as a supranational organization, but rather as a regional organization. Except for countries poor in resources – Belarus and Kyrgyzstan – CIS member states see this organization as a provisional integrationist process. The CIS is not seen as a long-term option. It is simply too problematic. The setting up of a customs union within the CIS, for instance, would preclude Georgia's membership of the World Trade Organization. The political elites of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, moreover, view their relations with Russia within the CIS as global relations; they view cooperation with each other as regional relations and are regarded as more productive.

From a positive angle, the CIS has contributed to stability in the region (Tajikistan), but it has failed to create integrationist organs on a par with regional experiences in Western Europe. Other integrationist projects have also largely failed. The Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus (AGNK), created in 1989, which later changed its name first to become the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus (KGNK), and then to the Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus (KNK) is an example of smaller groups and nations of the North Caucasus aiming at integration. On the whole, however, they have failed to unite the groups, with the Chechen leadership of the organization frequently blamed. The unifying idea of a Chechen home as a particular political interest remains a contradiction. This attempt at integration, moreover, sometimes

referred to in Western literature as ‘soft regionalism’ has not thus far activated processes of trade and investment flowing between different parts of the North Caucasus region; neither has it achieved the role of an informal, communicating force of social interaction. The concept remains on the table, rather than in practice, despite the fact that the concept of a Caucasian home does not exclude Russia.

Declining Russian power in the region has led right-wing forces to periodically call for a form of pan-Slavism in countering the ‘Islamic threat’, or the ‘pan-Turkist threat’. However, as Russia’s strained relations with Ukraine attest, such an idea is viewed in Kyiv as a cover for Russian imperialism. Cultural affinities do not lead to integration, or even in the deepening of ties, as Turkey has found out in the Central Asian Turkic republics.

The current agenda of Central Eurasia is dominated by the decline of Russia as a global power, and the emerging ascendancy of the West in Eurasia. Russia and the West, both involved in conflicts in the post-Soviet space, appeal to the international community in criticizing each other’s efforts at solving ethnic conflicts, and in pursuing their *realpolitik*. Moscow is currently adamant that it observes the UN Charter and the CSCE Final Act and indeed countless other legal documents intended to foster peace in the international community. It rejects all Western criticism.

While disagreeing with this assessment, the foreign policies of Western governments are not aimed at excluding Russia, but rather at the attainment of strengthening their positions in Eurasia as part of a certain balance with Russia. It is simply not in the interests of the West to marginalize Russia since mutual exclusion in the region is not possible. Western interests dictate foreign policy objectives that focus on a balance of interests between the smaller states in the region and those of external regional powers. Russia is part of this set up, not in the sense of a competitive Great Game being played, but rather as a participating regional power. However, the decline of Russia will accelerate as Russia’s leadership of regionalist policies is degraded. This process has already started to bite. The Western factor is slowly, but surely becoming the dominant factor in Central Eurasia.

The Western factor is more neglected than the Russian factor in literature on Eurasia.¹¹ And yet the European Union's perspective on Eurasia is of vital interest. The EU conceives of a regional integration in Central Eurasia in its own way, linking technical assistance policies with integrationist goals, and in the case of the TACIS Program, is devoted to the transfer of know-how to promote economic transformation and the development of democracy in the CIS countries. Central Asia, including Mongolia, and the Transcaucasus are seen as two regions, which may gradually transform themselves into some kind of regional units.¹² Cooperation within the Economic Cooperation Organization of which Iran and Turkey are members is favored, not least because it is seen as a solution to the transport and economic problems in the Transcaucasus.¹³ The United States, furthermore, supports regional cooperation at a military level in Central Asia. Aside from its huge subsidies to Armenia, and not thus far to Azerbaijan (although this could well change in the near future) the United States follows an integrationist line similar to the European Union, but differs from the EU in its forthright attempts to isolate Iran in its pipeline policies.

According to the core-periphery model of European integration, the construction of Europe should be conceived as the result of a process that started from a core and is gradually encompassing large peripheries of the European continent. The core refers to the given actors in the European integration process and the periphery to its future players. The periphery should gradually become part of its core and take part in the common decision-making process. The idea of a European identity underpins the institutional unification process in Europe and runs counter the idea of national sovereignty.¹⁴ This integrationist process will encompass parts of Eastern Central Europe in the future. However, this does not mean that all other parts of the European periphery will take part in the future unification process. The European Union, with its 286 million citizens, will in all probability continue to represent the affluent part of Europe, while in a contradictory sense maintaining its claim to represent the destiny of the whole of Europe (and therefore Eastern Europe's 269 million citizens). The Transcaucasus, which considers

itself as European is not a candidate for EU membership. In fact, the European Union's foreign policy does not make any distinction in principle between the Transcaucasus and Central Asia.

Globalization can either work in favor of regionalism or against it.¹⁵ For instance, economic development may favor regionalisation, but the financial and productive forces that are the basis of such development cut across those regions and are generally far too powerful to be constrained by any regional arrangement. And as Western interests largely dominate specialized regional international institutions, and specific-issue ones that are not regionally based, the globalization process favors the West, and further enhances its future credibility as hegemon. Moscow centered forms of regional organization cannot withstand the onslaught of these globalising tendencies – 'rational' economics, global markets and global capital investments – which are under Western hegemony. On the other hand, the Central Asian states' dependence on Russia will remain for the near future. For example, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan remain economically dependent on Russia, and although the Uzbek government has made Uzbekistan less dependent on Russia for energy and grain, it still relies on Russia and Kazakhstan (as a double-locked country) for transport to world markets (and pays substantial transit fees into the bargain). Uzbekistan believes that Western financial investment will help strengthen its economic sovereignty. Kyrgyzstan needs the Russian market as an outlet for its substandard processed goods, and has to export its mineral ores to international markets through Russia.¹⁶ Turkmenistan, on the other hand, has at least found a partial solution to its transport problem with the help of Iran - a new railway connection to Iran and the Persian Gulf, and the construction of a gas pipeline. The Customs Union, which was established in March 1996, includes Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, along with Russia and Belarus; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have not joined. However, there remains a major problem with the Customs Union. In short, the World Trade Organization's emphasis on multilateral trade is not consistent with the privileges that Customs Union members extend to each other's exports. Kazakhstan has especially experienced problems as a potential WTO member,

applying to join in 1997 because of its membership of the Customs Union. It is likely that Kazakhstan will, if necessary, leave the Customs Union sometime in the near future as it views WTO membership as providing the advantage of improving global market access. The Western factor cannot be escaped.

Moscow remains suspicious of Western integrationist policies. It sees a struggle for influence in the new Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.¹⁷ They see the West as being opposed to any new integration between the newly independent states and Russia. Moscow feels restrained as a great power in the region by Western designs. Since the mid-1990s Moscow has held an enhanced geopolitical view of the region, and views integration between the motherland and the newly independent states as historically inevitable. Moscow also believes, and frequently states, that it has a unique and deep understanding of the region's problems, and that it is responding creatively to the challenges of the post-Cold War era. For instance, Russian diplomats have pointed out that the Russian Federation has used force to protect peace, just as NATO did in its enforcement actions in ex-Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1998. The West, on the other hand, has serious doubts as to whether Moscow always secures the consent of all parties involved, or whether the consent is genuine. More importantly Western governments generally view Russian military forces in the conflict areas as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

Nuclear proliferation is a major concern for the West, and especially the United States. With the break up of the USSR, the West was worried about access to nuclear arsenals in the weak successor states, as was Moscow. The interests of Russian Federation, which claimed itself as the sole successor of the Soviet nuclear power, and the interests of the West, were thus in agreement. Kazakhstan, Belarus and especially the Ukraine had nuclear strategic arms on their territory (the Ukraine was the third most powerful nuclear state in the world, and Pervomaisk was home to more than 700 warheads aimed at the United States. All of those have been shipped back to Russia). All three countries have now signed the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear states. The United States has gained a good

advantage here as it is now a third partner between Moscow and Kyiv and to a lesser extent between Moscow and Astana. Only Minsk has gravitated towards Moscow.

As the West gradually extends its influence in Central Eurasia it is involved in a holding operation, in the operationalisation of a major foreign policy objective: to maintain stability, while at the same time defending the independence of the new republics. Ukraine's continued independence is seen as absolutely essential. Moscow views the Collective Security Treaty signed by Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Armenia and later Belarus, as the best way to prevent conflicts between these states. However, no integrated forces or command structures have been established under the CST, and its role outside of the Tajik conflict is minimal. Belarus, for example, is reluctant to commit troops beyond the country's borders; and Armenia has tried unsuccessfully to use the Treaty in the conflict over Karabakh. Western fears, furthermore, over Russian neo-imperialist expansionism are now diminishing as any incorporation of a CIS state, or a breakaway province, like Transdniestria or Abkhazia, into the Russian Federation is prohibitively costly. But the West remains wary of Russian control of the CIS, and sees it as an arm of Russian control in the region. Moscow denies that it usurps its position as the main power in the CIS, and that it has no intention of turning the CIS into another Warsaw Pact II. This remains an issue between Western and Russian foreign policy shapers.

Within a broader context, Western governmental perceptions of Eurasian international politics can be found within a liberal context of world politics. In the international community, every state in this perspective is responsible for its own fate. However, the world community may provide every state with a stable international legal framework, and thereby preserve its means for attaining wealth. Where the fate of minorities in particular states is concerned, the international community will only intervene when the major world powers consider it politically opportune. The Ingush-Ossetian conflict of 1992 was regarded as an internal Russian affair. Western Europe did not protect the rights of the Ingush, although it is interested in a settlement of the conflicts in the Caucasus. In principle, the European

Union's foreign policies on the Caucasus and Central Asia can be summed up as follows:

- to defend stability, democratization and the defense of human rights – seen as intrinsically linked to economic reform;
- to defend the interests of European companies in the region, particularly as the EU will be a major consumer of Caspian oil gas reserves. The EU will rely on US military help in this matter.
- to promote environmental security (e.g. concerning the nuclear plant of Medzamor NPP in Armenia) and drilling for Caspian Sea oil in line with environmental standards.¹⁸

The EU will in all probability be the region's major trading partner in the near future. The EU is currently the major humanitarian donor in the region. EU economic interests now favor a higher political profile for the EU. EU governments are now offering political support to European companies in their competition with American firms. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) are one of the EU's instruments in gaining ground in Central Eurasia – i.e. used to develop political and trade relations between the parties, and in the process strengthen the democratization process. The EU sees cooperation in the form of political dialogue between itself and the states of the region as necessary for the strengthening stability and security in Europe.

The function of a bridgehead for Western interests in the Central Eurasian region is attributed to Turkey, and lately also to Israel. Ankara has offered itself as bridgehead for Western economic and political interests wishing to penetrate the Transcaucasus and Central Asia. Armenia was originally thought to be a possible Western bridgehead, but this has not been realized as Armenia has maintained a careful balance between the West, Russia and to a lesser extent Iran.

Western government's liberal model of core-periphery relations is a positive assessment. However, a different negative model, a structural theory of imperialism initially generated in the 1970s, is Johan Galtung's center/periphery model.¹⁹ Unlike Lenin's approach, Galtung does not consider imperialism to be a specific

historic stage of capitalism. Galtung notes that the world consists of Center and Periphery states, and that every state in turn has a center and a periphery. Imperialism is to be conceived as special type of domination in which the center of the Periphery is used by the center of the Center as bridgehead in order to establish a harmony of interests between both, whereas there is a disharmony of interests between the periphery of the Center state and the periphery of the Periphery state. This disharmony of interests is greater within the Periphery than within the Center. The center of the Periphery serves as, for instance, a transmission belt for the procurement of raw materials for the Center, whereas the subsidiary economic effect of the extraction of raw materials for the development of the Periphery is seen as negligible.

Unlike other economic definitions of imperialism where the unequal exchange of value takes place in the economic field, Galtung distinguishes between different types of imperialism. Imperialism can be economic, political, military, communication or cultural. In the political and cultural spheres, for instance, the Center State provides decision-making models and cultural models to the periphery. In all types, the Center establishes a monopoly position in its vertical relationship with the Periphery states, impeding interaction between them. This is fundamentally a feudal relationship, and any modification of the vertical interaction structure (e.g. as a result of competing different Centers) cannot change this basic structure. Galtung notes that any significant changes to this dominant core-periphery structure will occur in a reduction of the vertical interaction and the horizontalisation of Center/Periphery relations – i.e. division of labor and exchange products on more equal terms. A second strategy to change the international dominance system would be provided by the defeudalisation of international organizations, and the development of viable organizations of Periphery states.

Georgia's relationship with the West, for instance, can be described as a dependency relationship characteristic of Galtung's center-periphery model, where the political and cultural types of imperialism are concerned – e.g. in which models from the center are implemented in the periphery.

This model, however, encounters problems when we note that Western Europe has produced a universalistic approach to politics and culture that transcends each individual center/periphery relationship. The Western European center regards its own model of civilization as being emancipatory for its periphery. In addition, Galtung's model ignores the notion of free choice. His structural theory notes that players cannot always be considered to be aware of their own real interests. Under Galtung's model, furthermore, relations say, between Georgia and Russia, and Georgia with the West can be seen as political and cultural types of imperialism. This model stresses the similarities between both forms of dependence on a foreign model. There is however, a basic significant difference between Georgia's relations with Russia, and its relations with the West. The Russia/USSR model was imposed; whereas the Western model is freely chosen. This choice itself may be explained as a reaction against dependence on the cultural and political Russian/Soviet model. Dependency analysis is guilty of neglecting not only free political choice existing in Georgia, but also of human agency in general.

Galtung's structural theory of imperialism, despite its claim to be ahistorical, is based on an analysis of the capitalist system during the Cold War period and seems inappropriate for analyzing the new dependencies created by the demise of the USSR. The application of Galtung's model fails to ascertain the significance of universal norms and models.

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Х ц л а с я

QÄRB, HEGEMONİYA VÄ AVRASIYA

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Qärbîn Avrasiyada äsas räqibî Rusiya olduõu üçün, onun bu regiondaki rolunu, maraqlarını və məqsədlərini araadıran hər hansı bir elmi tədqiqat lail mütläq Rusiya faktorunu ähatä etmälidir. Qärb-Rusiya münasibätlərini anlamaq və bu münasibätlərin Qärbîn Avrasiya siyasätinə necä təsir etdiyini görmäk üçün, “hegemoniya”, “qloballaama”, “regionallaama” və s. kimi mühüm nəzəri anlayışları bu mövzuya tətbiq etməyin böyük faydası olar.

“Hegemon qüvvä” anlayışının bir neçä tərifi və ya izahı vardır. Änənävi sayılan “hegemonluq” konsepsiyası iqtisadi, siyasi və hərbi gücä istinad edän hər hansı bir dominasiyaya əsaslanır. Antonio Qramşının beynälxalq münasibätlər elminä gətirdiyi “hegemonluq” anlayış isä daha fərqlidir. Qramşiyä görə, hegemoniya bir dövlətin digər dövlətlərin könüllü razılıqla vasitəsilä äldä etdiyü dominasiya formasıdır. Bu halda, hegemon qüvvä legitim (məaru) sayılır, çünki onun üstün statusu baəqaları tərəfindän normal olaraq qəbul edilir.

Digər nöqtəyi-nəzərdän, hegemon dövlät (qüvvä) beynälxalq və ya regional miqyasda təhlükəsizliyi təmin edän dövlətdir. “Hegemon sabitlik” nəzəriyyəsi də məhz buradan gəlir: hegemon qüvvä ümumi bir qlobal təhlükəsizlik mühiti yaradır və onu qoruyur. Doğrudur, bu mühitdən ən çox fayda götürän hegemon özü olur, ancaq öz üzərinä ən çox məsuliyyət götürän də məhz odur.

“Hegemon qüvvä” nəzəriyyəsi çərçivəsindən baxdıqda görürük ki, Rusiyanın Avrasiya məkanında hegemon dövlät kimi gücü get-gedä azalmaqdadır. Moskvanın regional siyasätinə bir çox MDB üzvü ölkələr ciddi müqavimət göstərir. Məsəlän, Azərbaycan və Özbəkistan artıq rus qoşunlarının keçmiş Sovet sərhədlərini qorumasına qarşı öz etirazlarını əməli əhkildä göstərmişlər. İqtisadi cəhətdän baxsaq, Rusiya öz MDB partnyorlarını lazımlan istehlak malları ilə təmin edə bilmir. Eyni zamanda, onun siyasi gücü regional münaqişələri həll etməyə yetmir, sadəcə onların dondurulmasına çatır. Yəni artıq Rusiyanın hərbi, siyasi və iqtisadi gücü ona Avrasiyada hegemon dövlät kimi çıxış etmək imkanını vermür. Məhz buna görə də, Rusiya bölgədəki

dövlətlərin etimadını və razılığını qazanmaqda çətinlik çəkir. Beləliklə, bölgə dövlətləri daha çox Qərbin bu regionda öz hegemonluğunu qurmasını istəyirlər.