



**OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS**



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Программа: Магистратура (1 год)
Университет: Университет Лидс, Великобритания
Направление: Международные отношения
Годы обучения: 2008-2009

Автор работы: Айжан Шаршенова
Степень Магистра в области международных отношений
E-mail: brain9@mail.ru

Тема исследования:
Политическое конструирование географии: понятие региона
Центральной Азии в США и России

Краткое резюме (не более 200 слов):

Данная работа посвящена анализу понятия региона Центральной Азии в США и России на трех уровнях местного социума: на уровне политических элит; на уровне академического сообщества; и, на уровне среднестатистической массы местного населения. Исследование опирается на широкий спектр публикаций, включая речи государственного руководства США и России, официальные документы по стратегии внешней политики и безопасности, академические публикации, статистические данные, карты военного командования США, а также фильмы, телепередачи и другие продукты индустрии массового развлечения. Работа получила более 70-ти баллов, что аналогично оценке “отлично” в Кыргызстане.

**Political construction of geography: the US and Russian concepts of Central
Asia**

By Aijan Sharshenova

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of
MA International Studies

School of Politics and International Studies
University of Leeds

2 September 2009

Word count 12 738

Dissertation supervisor: Dr Christine Harlen

Acknowledgement

I owe my deepest gratitude to the Open Society Institute, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Chevening Programme and the University of Leeds. This thesis would not be possible without their financial and moral support.

I am also pleased to thank my academic supervisor Dr Christine Harlen whose attentive and patient support helped me to accomplish this dissertation. Other persons who contributed to this dissertation are Dr Nick Megoran of the Newcastle University and Professor Christoph Bluth. Dr Megoran and Professor Bluth kindly advised me about relevant literature and shared their deep knowledge and inspirational ideas on the subject.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to module tutors, Professor Alice Hills and Dr Bina Fernandez. I would also like to thank my personal tutor and director of the International Studies MA programme Dr Naomi Head.

Table of contents

Introduction	5
Chapter 1. The US perception of Central Asia: construction of danger on a blank spot.....	8
Chapter 2. Russian perception of Central Asia: discourses of inclusion and alienation.....	16
Chapter 3. Influence of the US and Russian interests on their perception of Central Asia....	25
Chapter 4. Central Asia in Western and Russian geopolitical pictures of the world.....	33
Conclusion	42
Bibliography	45
Appendices	

Abstract

The USA and Russia display different understanding of the concept of Central Asia. Until recently there has been a common understanding of Central Asia's geography: both the US and Russia included Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to the concept of CA. However, currently the US leadership seems to adopt the Greater Central Asia project which broadens geographic boundaries of the region by including Afghanistan.

Substantial differences exist in socio-political understanding of CA, its geopolitics and policies the USA and Russia apply to the region. The US policy in CA aims to incorporate Afghanistan into CA, establish mutually beneficial links between local countries and ensure that no power in the region have monopoly on influence there. On the contrary Russia's policy seeks to incorporate CA into Moscow-led regional organisations, ensure its influence there and exclude external powers.

The difference in perceptions of Central Asia might be a result of different interests the USA and Russia seek in the region. Also their perceptions might be affected by geopolitical traditions which inform political and academic discourse in these countries.

List of acronyms

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO - Collective Security Treaty Organisation

GCAP – Greater Central Asia Project

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

USA – the United States of America

USCENTCOM – United States Central Command

USDoD – the United States Department of Defence

USDoS – the United States Department of State

USEUCOM – United States European Command

USPACOM – United States Pacific Command

USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WoT – War on Terrorism

Introduction

Maps and map projections are never neutral or value-free mechanisms for representing the world

Karl Dodds in Blouet 2005, p.140

The post-Soviet Central Asia has been in the focus of academic and political debates twice during the recent history of its independent existence. The collapse of the Soviet Union followed by parade of sovereignties of ex-Soviet republics launched the first wave of reports and publications about the region. Content and character of the research held within Central Asian studies reflected general concerns about the fate of newly-established states. Research topics included nationalism studies with a particular stress on the role of cultural and ethnic identity in state consolidation (Glenn 1999; Hunter 1996); relationship of Central Asian countries with the world community (Malik 1994; Ehteshami 1994); adjustment of local command economies to free market economy; transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Atabaki 1998; Banuazizi 1994). Also security-related issues were discussed: the future of nuclear weapons and military industrial complex in Central Asia, prospects for instability and state disintegration, the Tajik civil war and border conflicts (Allison & Bluth, 1998).

By the time these topics had started losing their urgency the September 11 tragedy took place. The rise of terrorism and subsequent War on Terrorism proclaimed by the US leadership created a new global context where Central Asia's importance increased in the eyes of such major powers as the USA, Russia, China and the European Union.

As a result of revived interest in CA the second wave of research emerges in Central Asian studies. This research mainly concentrates on conventional security issues: the role of CA in the War on Terrorism, prospects for Islamic extremism and insurgency in the region, drug trafficking, the US military bases and the Afghanistan operation (Olcott, Blank, Nickol, Starr

etc). The debate also concerns energy supplies and energy transportation routes located in CA and Caspian Sea region (Bluth 2009).

In spite of growing number of individual experts and research centres which specialise in CA there are still few publications and major academic debates. To put it more precisely the academic knowledge and research on Central Asian politics does not correspond to the degree of its real (or perceived) importance for major powers. Moreover, the existing research is rather partial and fragmented: such aspects as the role of militant Islam, oil and gas, realism approach are overemphasized while others are underestimated (political geography of the region, application of post-positivism to the local politics).

This dissertation attempts to address a less-developed but essential question of the politico-geographic definition and socio-cultural perception of CA. The purpose of the dissertation is to explore the US and Russian perceptions of CA and to discuss possible factors which shape the region's image. The dissertation goes beyond physical geographic maps and reveals narratives and images that are used to write the region into global space.

The USA and Russia display a considerable interest and certain degree of competitiveness in Central Asia what makes scholars assume that there is a new Great Game where players compete for influence and control of local politics and economy¹ (Edwards gives a good summary of the debate). However, Russia and the USA have different vision of the region. Russia perceives it as a legitimate domain of its influence inherited from the USSR. The USA is in process of re-conceptualisation of Central Asia. The conventional perception of political concept of CA as the group of post-Soviet states is now under revision. The emerging understanding of CA includes to the concept Afghanistan and sometimes Pakistan.

It would be argued here that political mapping of CA reflects diverse interests that the USA and Russia might have there. Also these map images might be rooted in respectively Western (Atlantic) and Soviet-Russian (Eurasian) geopolitical traditions. Thus, for the US Central Asia

¹ The term Great Game refers to the XIX century's rivalry between the Tsarist Russia and the British Empire (Edwards 2003; Blouet 2005).

represents strategic area because of the War on Terrorism and local energy supplies. The US leadership and academia picture CA as a vast landmass and uses simplified labels (Greater Central Asia, Heartland, and Chessboard²) due to the long-standing Western tradition to map this part of the world. The Russian views are based on the Tsarist and Soviet legacies of domination in the region and are closely affiliated with Eurasianism – a geopolitical theory that ascribes to Russia a special role in Eurasia and stresses close cultural, philosophic and spiritual ties with Central Asian peoples.

To support these arguments a set of research methods would be applied. In particular, I would use comparative retrospective analysis and critical analysis of contemporary debates and issues in the field. The theoretical basis of the dissertation is realism with a slight inclusion of critical approach to geopolitics. Theoretical assumptions would be supported with empirical evidence. Sources range from classical geopolitical writings and state documents to feature films and comedy shows.

Due to the space limits the dissertation would analyse and compare views only from the USA and Russia. There also would be spatial limitations within the research. Since both the US and Russian perceptions include the post-Soviet Central Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) to the region the research would focus mainly on these countries.

The dissertation has following structure. The first and the second chapters analyse respectively the US and Russian perception of CA at different levels of society. Third chapter focuses on vested interests of the USA and Russia in Central Asia that might affect their perceptions of the region. The last chapter is devoted to geopolitical tradition which might have affected the US and Russian perceptions of Central Asia. The final part of the dissertation provides summary of the analysis and draws conclusion.

² The 'Greater Central Asia' is a concept of Frederick Starr; the 'Heartland' concept has been introduced by Halford Mackinder; the 'Grand Chessboard' notion belongs to Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Chapter 1. The US perception of Central Asia: construction of danger on a blank spot

Introduction

This chapter explores perception of the politico-geographic concept of Central Asia (CA) in the USA. It addresses general trends in picturing the regional geography. In particular, it reveals what countries are included to the CA region, what narratives are used to picture it and how the perception of CA varies in different social strata of the US society.

It is obvious that the USA does not represent a monolithic entity characterized by common views. The country is composed of various social, cultural, ethnic and other groups which might have different access to information about and varying degrees of interest in CA. These groups form their 'knowledge' and perception of CA countries on the basis of available information or its absence (Flint 2006, p.84). Therefore it would be rational to focus on the perception of CA at two different levels. The most informed level of perception exists among policy-makers and academics who expertise in CA studies. This is a high-politics domain with a community of experts whose work is directly related to CA politics. Less informed perception exists among citizens whose activity is unrelated with CA but who might adopt perception of the region on the basis of numerous information outlets' production.

The chapter first discusses the high-politics level perception of CA which has appeared immediately after the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of new independent states. Then it focuses on images of CA in popular culture. Finally it analyses shifts in the US perception after the 9/11 tragedy.

Blurred vision: the US view of Central Asia in the post-Soviet period (1991-2001)

It is possible to mark out two images of CA which are spread in the US society. One image reflects general unawareness of the US society about the region. CA is not portrayed at all; it is rather a blank spot or a remote territory associated with Russia. Another image represents the region as troublesome, chaotic, dangerous and rather Oriental area associated with Afghanistan.

Chronologically first image is actually an absence of any image or at best a blurred picture of a remote and alien place somewhere near Russia. The US had little interaction with the region during the Cold war as CA was an integral part of the USSR since 1922 to 1991. Few expected that they could emerge as independent states. When they eventually gained independence as a result of the USSR's disintegration in 1991 the USA faced a challenge of building relations with previously unfamiliar countries (Menon in Rumer et al. 2007, p.4).

The US Department of State has been primary responsible for relations with new states. The USDoS in the person of Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott defined how the US sees the region in his policy statement (1997). In particular, Talbott delineated the borders of the region; he included Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. At that he closely associated CA countries with Caucasian states – Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan; he consistently addressed them together in the statement.

The statement contained a clear message: the US would not get involved in any 'great games' there and would not like Russia to dominate CA and Caucasian republics; it would rather prefer to see the region as a power-free zone (Talbott 1997). Nevertheless, the policy had rather general character and in comparison to the US policies towards Russia or other world regions it was a second-priority issue (Rumer 2007, p.13).

The degree of the US disinterest and unawareness of CA is especially evident in regard to the US Department of Defense, another state body whose activity transcends US borders. The USDoD regularly updates the Unified command plan map, an important document which 'establishes the missions, responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility for commanders of combatant commands' (USDoD 2009). The map is divided between USDoD Commands into several areas of responsibility. On the map of the 1996 edition CA countries are not included to any of the USDoD's Commands. The region is literally a white spot between areas of responsibility of the USCENTCOM, USEUCOM and USPACOM (Appendix 1). However, it should be noted that with the course of time this spot has been filled with information by the US

Embassies, NGOs, experts and journalists. The US state agencies created detailed profiles of CA states and the number of formal contacts – bilateral treaties, mutual visits of political figures, increased significantly since then.

Central Asia in popular culture: shadows of Central Asia and narratives of danger in US feature films

While policy-makers had a range of means to ‘discover’ the newly-established countries the rest of the US society remained generally unaware of the region. Having had scarce information and virtually no record of interaction with CA ordinary US citizens adopted a specific perception: the former Soviet CA republics have been ‘a black hole of ignorance for almost all Americans’ (Hooson in Blouet 2005, p.170). In this regard it would be appropriate to question what fills this ‘black hole of ignorance’ at the grass roots level. As some researchers suggest popular culture in the form of news, films, comedy shows etc. are ‘producers of knowledge in the USA’ (Sharpe in O’Tuathail & Dalby 1998, p.156). Out of the variety of the US entertainment production I would like to focus on cinema since other kinds of popular culture simply do not contain any mentioning of Central Asia.

It is characteristic that during 90-s few films focused on CA. Some films contained ‘*shadows*’ of CA i.e. minor details associated with the region. Thus, in ‘The world is not enough’ (1999) the villain Renard, an ex-KGB agent, intends to use in his plans a nuclear bomb stolen from a Kazakhstani nuclear facility. In ‘Air Force One’ (1997) and ‘Aurora: Operation Intercept’ (1995) antagonists originate from Kazakhstan. These details do not contain any factual information which could increase awareness of the region, but they do leave an impression that CA is rather a dangerous place where disorder and chaos produce tyrants, terrorists and result in derelict nuclear weapons which are used by terrorists.

Narratives of danger in CA could be found in other films and TV series. Heathershaw and Megoran apply critical geopolitics to analyse ‘the way in which Central Asia is written into global space as the object of [...] geopolitical discourses which imagine and inscribe it as a

particular locus of danger to the wider world' (2009). They explain how CA is endangered in the 'West Wing', an American popular TV drama about Presidential politics. In particular, the region is portrayed as *obscure* (even unintelligible), *oriental* and *fractious* (ibid).

Narratives of danger coupled with Oriental features are especially evident in the 'War, Inc.', a political satire film of 2008. The plot of the film is set in a fictional Central Asian country *Turaqistan* freed by US troops during a military campaign sponsored by US private companies. Though the story line and smart references to recent US-led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan might be interesting to discuss the film is relevant to the topic only as it pictures a 'typical', as it is believed, image of Central Asia. Firstly, Turaqistan is clearly unsafe: bombings in the capital are a common occurrence; people openly carry weapons. There is no rule of law or any sign of order apart from American soldiers. Secondly, the portrayal of country contains wide-spread stereotypes about the Orient and could be viewed as a visual manifestation of 'imaginative geography' by Said. According to Said 'the Orient was routinely described as feminine, its riches as fertile, its main symbols the sensual woman, the harem, and the despotic [...] ruler' (Said in O'Tuathail et al. 2006, p.254). Turaqistan has it all: it is rich of oil and gas which attracts the US; local male characters are portrayed as tyrannical and short-tempered people who enjoy being in power. The leading local female character, young pop-star Yonica herself is a symbol of the Orient: feminine, sensual, irrational and dangerous person.

It is interesting to note that while the US cinema associates CA with danger experts 'know of no statistical or anecdotal reason to suppose that Central Asia is less safe a place [...] than any other part of the world' (Heathershaw & Megoran 2009).

Nevertheless, the mainstream US view draws CA into global space as a place of multiple dangers and this trend is likely to remain strong at least in the nearest future: the War on Terrorism rhetoric still informs American views of the world.

Post-9/11 perception of CA: Greater Central Asia project

As many researchers agree the tragedy of 9/11 and the War on Terrorism forced the US to reconsider its policy and views in CA (Rumer, Edwards, Heathershaw and others). Now CA countries are referred to by the US policy-makers as ‘the most important frontline states in America’s war on terrorism’ (Rumer 2007, p.39). In fact the WoT fuelled a construction of danger in this previously ‘empty’ or obscure space.

Papers of leading American experts in CA abound in the narratives of danger. Most of published works about Central Asia almost necessarily contain such phrases as ‘war on terror’ (Olcott 2003a) or ‘Islamic revival’ (Tazmini 2001). Martha Olcott, a prolific writer in the field, voices rather spread view assuming that ‘the region remains rife with a host of transnational risks’ (2003b, p.12). According to Olcott one of the most urgent and real risks is the spread of extremist ideological groups connected with Islamic terrorism (ibid). The issue of Islamic terrorism links post-Soviet CA countries to Afghanistan and Pakistan. This linkage becomes a focus of the recent scholarly debate and might have informed some changes in the US policy-related bodies as it would be discussed further.

Frederick Starr, a known expert in CA politics, offered a concept of CA which arguably has informed the actual US policy in the region. He provided policy recommendations for the US leadership in the paper titled ‘A Greater Central Asia partnership for Afghanistan and its neighbours’ (2005).

According to Starr the necessity of a new strategy in CA stems from faults in the current US strategy. Firstly, the immediate post-9/11 US strategy has sent wrong signals to leaders of CA states and regional powers: the US engagement with the region is temporary. Second fault is related to the first one: the US engagement is limited to negative goals, i.e. it is aimed to eliminate Taliban and Al-Qaeda and withdraw from CA. Thirdly, the US policy-makers follow the conventional but inadequate understanding of the regional geography: they view CA as the region which includes solely five post-Soviet CA republics. This view has been established and used by Russian colonial administration in order to keep the region closed from the outer world.

Fourthly, the US politicians accepted the zero-sum game rules which existed in CA since the original Great Game of XIX century. This game supposes one power's domination over the region and seriously undermines CA's independence.

These faults lead to unfavourable outcomes: the US is not viewed as a long-term partner by local governments. Regional powers consider the USA rather as a new powerful rival. The region keeps being an object of great powers' game which hinders its development and stability. The lack of development and permanent instability do not let to tackle security issues that are actually the primary US goal in the region.

In Starr's opinion there is a way out of this vicious circle: the Greater Central Asia partnership for development and cooperation (hereinafter GCAP). The GCAP aims to create regional cooperation network which would unite post-Soviet CA republics with Afghanistan. It is a flexible development plan open to any interested parties. The basis of the GCAP is trade and transportation as well as shared security interests. The plan supposes that six participants would get to know each other, re-establish economic, social and cultural ties and get engaged in long-term regional and international cooperation which eventually would bring them prosperity and real independence from external powers. They would be able to maintain domestic stability and enforce economic development. The US role in the GCAP is to provide financial and logistic support and to ensure that no external power would gain domination over the region. The plan should benefit all parties concerned: local states, the US, Russia, China, India and other regional powers.

There is no explicit information if the GCAP has been adopted as a strategy by the US leadership. However, in 2006, a year after the GCAP paper was published, the USDoS changed its structure: five post-soviet CA republics were transferred from the competence of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. The latter is in charge for the US relations with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (USDoS 2009). If a discourse shapes politics the USDoD grasped it

earlier. In 1999 the US DoD included Central Asia to the area of responsibility of the Central Command (USCENTCOM) which is also in charge for the Middle East and South Asia (Klare 2001, p.49; Appendix 2). USCENTCOM manages military activities in the most intense region; in fact this is the region where the US military are involved in field operations with the use of weapons.

The change in the USDoS made some researchers suppose that the Department has taken to consideration the GCAP (Laumulin 2005, Heathershaw 2007). Heathershaw supposes the change reflects 'US thinking about Central Asia as a region apart from the Former Soviet Slavic states' (2007, p.134). He finds it fascinating how discourse can shape the structure of policy-making institutions (ibid). Laumulin considers the situation from the realism standpoint. He doubts the possibility of positive results for CA states and assumes that the GCAP is a republican mega-project which aims to exclude Russia and China from the regional geopolitics (Laumulin 2005).

Conclusion

It has been argued here that the general US perception of CA consists of two basic images spread among the US political and expert community and ordinary citizens. Soon after CA states gained their independence in 1991 CA has been viewed by the US policy-makers as a second-priority region while at the grass roots level there was a clear lack of awareness about the region's existence. CA has been perceived as a blank spot since people did not have sufficient information to make judgements about the region. With the course of time the information gap has started being filled with narratives of danger which could be found in academic papers, political discourse and popular culture.. The shadows of CA and direct references to the region in feature films shape an impression that CA is dangerous and rather Oriental place.

The danger narratives reach their peak after the 9/11 tragedy and subsequent US counter-terrorist operations. Currently the US perception of CA is inevitably informed by the US-led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This results in an increased number of publications and experts on CA who include post-Soviet CA countries to the US strategic plans for Afghanistan.

Thus, Stephen Blank proposes the Greater Central Asia Project which promotes regional reorganisation and cooperation under the aegis of the USA: CA should be taken out of Russian influence and participate in development programmes for Afghanistan. Finally structural changes in the USDoS and USDoD supplement the overall view that CA is Oriental (associated not with Russia but with Middle East and South Asia), potentially dangerous place which needs as much US attention as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Chapter 2. The Russian perception of Central Asia: **discourses of inclusion and alienation**

Introduction

This chapter examines the Russian perception of Central Asia. Unlike the USA Russia has a long-standing history of close interaction with Central Asia. Consequently Russian society has more informed view about the region. Nevertheless, Russian society consists of different social strata and it would be rational to take this into consideration. I focus on trends which exist in high-politics domain and analyse how they differ from those at the grass roots level.

Mechanisms to address the question at these two levels slightly differ. The formal perception of CA is examined through the lens of Russian domestic politics. The grass roots views are traced via sociological data in relevant academic articles and via popular culture. Consequently, different sources are used. Analysis of political and intellectual elites' views is based on works of Russian and Western experts and official state documents. Grass roots' views are analysed by the medium of sociological papers and popular culture in popular comedy shows.

The chapter is structured as follows. The first paragraph discovers the way general Russian perception has been changing throughout history since the first close interaction of Russians with Central Asian land and peoples in XVII century. The second paragraph addresses more recent developments in Russian-Central Asian relationship. In particular it focuses on policies and views revealed by intellectual and political elite in the post-Soviet Russia. Finally, the chapter focuses on popular views on Central Asia.

The evolution of Russian perception and policy in Central Asia

The image of Central Asia has been changing along with the Russia's mode of interaction with the region. Thus, for two centuries (XVII-XIX cc) CA was a *terra incognita* which attracted Russian merchants, explorers and adventurers, and was considered for the imperial expansion. For period from 1860 to 1917 CA had been a southern *colony* and a buffer zone between the

Russian and British Empires. The Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 ousted the Romanov's royal family and changed Russian policy in CA. The Soviet authorities divided the former imperial province into several territorial entities which constituted the USSR along with other '*brotherly republics*'. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the emergence of *sovereign states* and a new phase of Russian-Central Asian relations appeared (Gatagova & Filippova 2004).

It is interesting to note how the Russian denomination of the region has been changing with the course of time. In the Tsarist Russia the region was referred to as *Turkestan*³. Turkestan as a geographic concept included territories of 5 post-Soviet CA republics, Xinjiang, Southern Siberia, northern part of Iran and Afghanistan. Russian Empire controlled only Western Turkestan but considered Eastern Turkestan (Kashgaria or contemporary Xinjiang) as a potential object to annex (Rumer 2007, p.77). It is reasonable to suggest that the denomination of the colony reflected prospect of its further expansion. In the Soviet Russia the region was named *Middle Asia* (Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Tajik Soviet Socialist Republics) and *Kazakhstan*. This name also had political implication: the Soviet authorities avoided using of the word 'central' since only Moscow could be central for the country. The last and current denomination of the region is *Central Asia*. In fact, this is the name preferred by CA countries themselves (Rumer 2007). To a certain degree the Russia's agreement to use 'Central' instead of 'Middle' might symbolise its recognition of the independence of its former colonies. Nevertheless, the term 'Middle Asia and Kazakhstan' is still widely used by Russian writers and policy-makers.

Apart from these politico-geographic definitions CA along with other former Soviet republics is often referred to '*Near Abroad*.' The term contains more political implication than any of the above-mentioned. As Menon assumes the term 'Near Abroad emits a proprietorial aura' (Menon 1998, p.100) as it implies that Russia has special interests there and claims special privileges.

³ It is interesting to compare the word with fictional Turaqistan discussed in the previous chapter.

Near Abroad is a part of the Soviet legacy. For more than hundred years CA has been 'ruled by two successive empires, those of the Romanovs and the Bolsheviks' (Menon in Rumer et al. 2007, p.5). The Soviet past generated a specific 'north-south imperial structure' (ibid, p.6) and a commonality of political systems and values, cultural and social features. Moreover, the Soviet ideology planned creation of common identity: the process would include the flourishing of nation, gradual 'coming together' and finally the 'merging' of the proletariat of different nations (Glenn 1999, p.74). Social continuities of these processes have not vanished after Soviet republics gained independence. At the high politics level Russia claims to have special status in relations with former Soviet countries. At more general level there is a situation when 'Deeply embedded in the Russian psyche is the notion that Central Asian states are simply '*nashi*', the Russian word for 'ours' (Brannon 2004, p.426-427).

Alienation and inclusion of Central Asia by Russian political and intellectual elite

The Russian perception and policy in CA in *policy-making* and *intellectual community* have passed through phases of alienation and inclusion of the region. Russian relations with newly-independent CA countries started with unfavourable events. Firstly, CA republics did not participate in the decision-making process and the very disintegration of the USSR was a great and to a certain extent unwanted surprise for the CA leadership and population (Naumkin 2006). Secondly, soon after the collapse of the USSR Russia and along with Ukraine and Belarus ignored CA states and did not bother to invite them to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (Trenin in Rumer et al. 2007, p.29). Russian intellectual elite, especially political scientists portrayed and often continue portraying the region as semifeudal, backward and alien to Russian culture; other experts find it offensive towards CA countries (Naumkin 2006).

Some researchers argue that this neglectful attitude to the region in the beginning of 90-s is a result of internal political developments. Tsygankov and Aron state that Russia's foreign policy at that time depended on which group of political elite had more influence. Aron marks out two groups: *internationalists* identified Russia with the West and neglected CA as an equal partner;

'*derzhavniks*', a derivative from the Russian word 'derzhava' – great power, stressed the unique nature of Russia, its location between Europe and Asia, difference from the West, and insisted on close cooperation with the post-Soviet space is necessary and inevitable (1998, p.24).

In the first years after the collapse of the USSR pro-Western internationalists, who occupied positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had more influence in Russian politics and CA was neglected. CA countries were considered as 'ballast', which should be abandoned for the sake of rapid and successful modernisation (Naumkin 2006). However, growing disappointment with the Western politics and gradual understanding of the region's importance for Russian interest led policy-makers to adopt more inclusive perception. Derzhavniks, who consisted of hardliner realists and leaders of security forces, expressed opinion that CA is a vital for Russia's recovery as great power (Aron 1998).

Putin's and Medvedev's presidential administration appears to be closer to derzhavniks' views; they recognise the necessity to cooperate with CA countries (Tsygankov 2006). CA states now are full-fledged and most welcomed members of the most influential regional organisations such as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Collective Security Treaty Organisation (Blank 2008). The special relations with CA states along with other CIS states are highlighted in the Russian Conception of the foreign policy (2008). Relations with CA countries are prioritised; obviously CA receives more attention, financial support and political backing from Russia than any other region in the world (Rumer 2007' Tsygankov 2005). The degree of intimacy, at least if to judge by the rhetoric of some politicians, is of such measure that 'it is difficult to think of Russia's policy toward the Central Asian states as 'foreign' (Brannon 2004, p.427).

The *intellectuals* also include CA to the *nashi* category⁴. They tend to mark out features shared by Russian and CA people. Thus Grozin, the head of the Middle and Kazakhstan Department of the CIS Institute, stresses the conformity of political systems existing in Russia and CA; he notes that this conformity is a common ground which improves mutual

⁴ However, one should remember that intellectuals confess different views and the spectrum of their beliefs might incline to the ultra-right ideologies.

understanding (Grozin 2009). Trenin, the director of the Carnegie Endowment's Moscow Centre, counts multiple roles of CA stating that the South for Russia was a source of spiritual and cultural inspiration, area of competition, borderland with the Muslim world where Russia could perform 'mission civilisatrice' (Rumer 2007, p.76). Dugin, one of the main advocates of Eurasianism, emphasises ethno-racial commonality of Russia and CA. He states that at the ethnic level Russians are a dominantly Slavic Indo-European nation with a considerable element of Turkic and Ugrian ethnic and cultural features. At the racial level, Russian represent a 'synthesis of white and yellow races' (Dugin 2002a, p.41-42).

This recent developments in political and academic discourse allows one to conclude that Russian political and intellectual elite gradually change their exclusive perception of CA to more inclusive one.

'Our' vs. 'Their' rhetoric in Russian popular perception of Central Asians

At the *grass roots level* this 'ours' and 'others' discourse develops in a different way.

First of all it should be noted that unlike policy-makers and experts who see the region in terms of state-level relations, ordinary Russians tend to consider CA through the lens of human interaction. Soviet social engineering and long standing co-existence of nations within the Soviet state resulted in the creation of the large Soviet community where numerous ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups were closely interwoven (Glenn 1999). These groups shared common identity and viewed each other as *nashi* (ours). This tendency remained strong after the disintegration of the USSR. However, the shared identity at some moment gave way to nationalistic feelings and new, often ethnic-based identity. Nowadays one can trace increasing irritation and alienation of Central Asian 'nashi' in Russia.

The change in popular perception is characterised by disinterest and hostility towards CA and its people. Russian citizens gradually lose any interest in the region. Russian sociologists note increasing 'white spots' in the mass awareness of Russian citizens; ordinary Russians reveal indifference to events in CA. Moreover, about 50% of the pollees could not give any

characteristic to most of CA countries and 30% give rather negative assessment of CA (Belkin 2005). The trend of ignoring CA is also evident in educational institutions since it is virtually impossible 'to get a holistic understanding of Central Asia in contemporary textbooks' (Gatagova & Filippova 2004). History books used at schools and universities skip large periods of CA history; provide impersonal account of events and ignore cultural achievements of CA peoples before the advent of Russians to the region (ibid).

Most of ordinary Russians base their perception of CA on everyday interaction with Central Asians who come to Russia in search of job or better living conditions. The issue of migrant workers, or as they are usually called *gastarbeiters*,⁵ is an object of heated debate in Russian society. Central Asian migrants experience hate crimes, abuses and become victims of skinheads' attacks (Mitrokhin 2006). Their growing presence coupled with increasing racism and discrimination pose a serious threat to internal stability (Trenin in Rumer et al. 2007, p.115).

This grave matter could not be left without proper research. Russian sociologists regularly held polls and analyse the relevant data. According to one sociological analysis the scale of negative attitude to migrants rose significantly since the collapse of the USSR. While in 1990 there has been more or less neutral opinion about migrants in 2002 58% of the pollees expressed rather negative views. At that views varied from one social group to another. Thus, high class representatives revealed irritation; middle class felt hostility towards Central Asians; the lower social strata expressed fear. The overwhelming majority of the pollees could not give a rational explanation to their attitudes. Most of explanations would say 'They take things which belong to locals' or 'They are other' (Gudkov 2005). These results uncover the essential change in popular attitudes: Central Asians are no longer considered as '*nashi*' (ours), now they are '*others*'. In this regard it is interesting to recall the term 'Near Abroad' discussed in the beginning of given paragraph. It perfectly reflects the ambiguity of the popular perceptions: on one hand it is 'near'

⁵ 'Gastarbeiter' is a German word for 'guest worker'.

or close to Russia, its culture and people, but on another hand it is still 'abroad' – a space on the other side of the border.

Less formal manifestation of inclusion and exclusion duality could be also found in popular culture. In this regard *Nasha Russia*, a sketch-show broadcasted on popular entertainment TNT-TV channel, represents a curious case for analysis of popular perception of CA. *Nasha Russia* (Our Russia) is an analogue of the British sketch-show 'Little Britain'. As well as its Western counterpart the show features a set of characters, which are considered to be typical for this particular society. It addresses urgent social issues such as bribery in police, gay rights in Russian provinces, and the problem of *gastarbeiters*. The *gastarbeiters* phenomenon is visualised by two characters - migrant workers from Tajikistan. Their images reflect wide-spread popular stereotype about CA migrants. Firstly, migrants Ravshan and Jamshud are employed for 'usual migrants' job: they work on construction site and refurbish apartments under the supervision of local (ethnic Russian) foreman. Secondly, they cannot speak Russian properly: linguistic barrier hinders their job and adds the comical element. Thirdly, migrants are unable to perform necessary work in time and without faults. The Russian foreman always reveals irritation with their performance and most time he shouts at careless workers. Features and behaviour ascribed to CA migrants as well as their relationship with Russian foreman represent rather reflect the real situation as it is described by sociologists (Gudkov 2005).

It is interesting to note the paradox of the show's title and content. *Nasha Russia* means 'our Russia'. The choice of title allows one to suggest that all characters pictured in the show, including Tajik *gastarbeiters*, belong to the notion of 'Our Russia'. However, in a short prologue to Ravshan and Jamshud's part of show offscreen voice announces that characters are 'guests of our capital' (*Nasha Russia* 2006-2009). Here one can find the dualism of inclusion and exclusion which is inherent to the 'Near Abroad' concept. Ravshan and Jamshud are included to 'our' Russia, but the inclusion has temporary character; at some moment 'guests' might need to leave.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated the Russian perception of Central Asia. On the basis of the conducted analysis it is possible to conclude that the Russian perception of CA is characterised by discourses of inclusion and exclusion that have different dynamics at high-politics and grass roots level.

At the high-politics and academic level the perception of CA evolved from exclusive trends immediately after the collapse of the USSR to recent inclusive trends of Putin-Medvedev administration. Meanwhile, at the grass roots level the Soviet legacy of including CA peoples to *nashi* (ours) has given way to more xenophobic exclusive perceptions and attitudes.

This paradoxical dualism can be traced in the politico-geographic concept 'Near Abroad' which, on one hand includes CA to the Russian influence domain, and on another hand acknowledges that CA consists of foreign countries. In a less formal way the dualism is obvious in a popular sketch-show *Nasha Russia*.

It has been supposed here that at the high politics level these perception dynamics are affected by domestic political development (change of ruling elites) while at the grass roots level the shift could have been caused by the increasing presence of CA migrants in Russian cities. Other possible reasons which underlie the Russian perception of CA are discussed in consequent chapters.

Chapter 3. Influence of the US and Russian interests on their perception of Central Asia

Introduction

The US and Russian perceptions of CA are in the process of reconsideration. The US policy-making circles attempt to re-conceptualise CA by including Afghanistan to the political geography of the region. Meanwhile, Russian leadership eventually shifted from the abandonment and alienation of CA to inclusive perception and proactive policy. Now CA is viewed as kindred political, economic and cultural domain and closest ally of Russia. In this regard it is rational to question what factors underlie these perceptions.

This chapter aims to prove an argument that the US and Russian perceptions of CA depend on their interests in the region. In particular, it would be argued that the US tendency to include Afghanistan and take CA countries out of traditionally Russian political sphere reflects the US security and economic interests (War on Terrorism and energy security). Russian perception of CA as a legitimate domain of its influence is in fact a result of recent interest in great power reconstruction and security concerns.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the US interests in CA and then proceeds to Russian interests which affect the inclusion trend at the high politics level perception of CA.

The US interests in Central Asia

When CA countries first appeared as sovereign entities of international system the US had virtually no experience of communication with them. The US perception of CA within a decade after the collapse of the USSR (1991-2001) was characterised by the lack of awareness and commitment. The US politicians treated CA as a second-priority region while ordinary US citizens mostly had no idea what CA was (see chapter 1).

It might be so that this blurred perception reflected imprecise US interests there. The US policy-making circles simply lacked a clear vision of US interests in this remote and unfamiliar region (Rumer 2007, p.23). Central Asia was not considered to be a top priority since it could

hardly claim to play any decisive role in the US foreign policy; it was not a major opportunity, ally, adversary or rival. The US was interested in CA only as ‘the only remaining superpower and leader of the Western world’ (Hunter 1996, p.157). Thus, the US sought to establish good relations with the region, facilitate their transition from command economy to free market economy and from authoritarianism to democratic rule that is to ensure that this region accepts the US hegemony and allies itself with the world leader. The general US policy in CA remained rather uncertain and insignificant until 2001.

The 9/11 tragedy drastically changed the US views, interests and strategy in CA. Since then the threat of radical Islam and the War on Terrorism with its military campaign in Afghanistan define the US policy in general and its regional strategy in particular. The ‘terrorism’ word penetrated political and everyday life in the USA. Housson said to the point: ‘Terrorism is an imprecise word which can cover a multitude of sins and motives but it is now the word which inevitably comes to mind since September 2001’ (in Blouet, p. 170).

Nowadays, the USA is often said to have two basic interests: War on Terrorism and Central Asian (Caspian) energy resources. Certainly researchers mark out many other priorities and goals in the US foreign policy. However, the WoT and Caspian energy resources link the US foreign policy and Central Asia in the most direct way and as such they seem to be more relevant to the subject.

The victory in the WoT implies not only physical elimination of Al-Qaeda’s and Taliban’s militant adherents, but also supposes to prevent the spread of extremism. CA is crucial for the US operative planning in Afghanistan and global counter-terrorism strategy in two basic aspects. On one hand, CA countries represent a necessary element in logistic support of the US campaign in Afghanistan as their geographic proximity facilitates military and humanitarian operations of the US military (Rumer 2007). On another hand, CA is considered to contain a potential threat in case one of local states fails and militant Islamic insurgents occupy it. The rise of extremism made it clear for the US politicians and experts that failed states, poverty and lack of democracy

pose serious direct threat to the US interests. It has been recognised that state failure creates conditions for the rise of extremism and terrorism, and the US should prevent emergence of another Taliban in the region (Oliker & Shlapak 2005). Therefore, the US policy is aimed to prevent state failure in the region: for this end the US insists on democracy consolidation and supports measure which would provide economic independence and development. Long-term economic and political change in the region is even included to the US National Strategy on Combating Terrorism (2006).

There is also a certain interest in local energy resources, especially in Caspian oil and gas. This interest was indirectly inflamed by Strobe Talbott. Talbott gave a rough estimate of Caspian oil reserves in his speech of 1997 when he referred to CA as ‘an area that sits on as much as 200 billion barrels of oil’. This was a figure ‘that captured the imagination of many observers inside and outside the region’ and provoked interest of Western oil-and-gas private companies (Rumer 2007, p.33).

Bluth provides a comprehensive account of current issues related with Caspian energy resources. He states that though Caspian Sea does have a potential to become an important energy centre its strategic importance and profitability of Caspian ventures are exaggerated. The development of known oil and gas deposits requires substantial investment. The exploration of new deposits also requires foreign investment and in addition contains political implications: there is still no agreement about the division of the Sea between Iran, Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The last but not the least difficulty is transportation of energy resources; the overwhelming majority of Caspian oil and gas is transported via Russia-controlled pipelines. Moreover, it might be the case that these investments would not justify themselves: according to competent sources Caspian oil reserves amount to 17-33 billion barrels which equals to 1.3-2.8 % of global oil reserves. This number differs significantly from Talbott’s estimates of Caspian deposits of energy resources (1997).

Nevertheless, the US is involved in the Caspian-Central Asian region. It attempts to assist US companies to get a significant share of the oil and gas assets in the region and settle emerging political issues (Russia's opposition to the Western presence in the regions). But most importantly it also plans to change dismal economic performance of CA countries by means of efficient exploitation of their energy resources. This would ensure regional stability, economic development and independence from regional powers (Bluth 2009; Oliker & Shlapak 2005; Blank 2008b).

Both interests suppose inclusion of Afghanistan and reducing of the Russian influence. The War in Terror is directly related to Afghanistan and the US interest to make this state viable. The GCAP project by Starr discussed in the chapter 1 also originally aimed to help the US stabilize Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the US engagement with the Caspian energy resources implies economic development of the CA region in the broad sense of this concept i.e. with inclusion of Afghanistan. Thus, the recent US perception of CA as a greater geographic domain is rooted in actual US interests there.

Russian interests in Central Asia: great-power reconstruction and security concerns

After a long period of flux, uncertainty and search of identity Russia eventually managed to formulate definite and independent policy. However, this policy is unlikely to please the Western community since it has assertive, even aggressive character, and it contains a degree of anti-Western sentiment. These changes of foreign policy happened after Russian leadership adopted the idea of the reestablishment of Russia's *great-power status*.

Experts provide different reasons underlying this interest. Trenin supposes that Russia simply had no options to choose. Russia attempted to integrate into Europe immediately after the collapse of the USSR, but felt rejected by the Western community (Trenin 2007). As a result the Kremlin got convinced that 'Russia is essentially friendless [...] and many want a weak Russia that they could exploit and manipulate' (Trenin 2006). Consequently, the Kremlin adopted more assertive policy and sought to re-establish Russia as a power centre with the CIS countries in its

orbit (ibid). Aron suggests that Russia's drive for great-power status has psychological roots: wounded pride and neo-imperial emotions. He compares the post-Cold war Russia with post-World War II France which sought to restore its honour and pride by taking more assertive stand (Aron 1998, p.31). According to Aron for Russia it is a matter of principle to assert itself in international scene and oppose itself to the strongest power. Tsygankov views great-power reconstruction rather as a solution for problems than an interest in itself. He indicates that Russia faces now such problems as economic underdevelopment and terrorism and assumes that only by being a great power Russia can tackle those problems (2005).

It is rather difficult to discern one decisive factor among these suggestions. It would be more rational to assume that each of them to a varying degree have contributed to the intensive great-power reconstruction which characterises contemporary Russian politics. However, it is obvious that 'No great power [...] walks alone' (Trenin 2007, p. 81). To be a full-fledged great power Russia needs a surrounding of close allies.

Tsygankov gives a detailed account of Putin's great-power strategy which in his view consists of three phases: concentration of state power, re-engagement with the West after 9/11 and strengthening influence in post-Soviet Eurasia (2005). However, under conditions of deteriorated relations with the West (Trenin 2006) it is possible to state that Putin and his team skipped the second phase: after having accomplished the state concentration they directly proceeded to Eurasian integration.

Plans to enforce further integration of the CIS are evident in two fundamental documents: the Conception of the Foreign Policy and National Security Strategy. Both documents prioritise relations with CIS countries. Thus, the National Security Strategy (2009) indicates three regional organisations which are crucial for aspired integration. The Collective Security Treaty Organisation is the main mechanism to confront military and political threats; the Eurasian Economic Community serves 'a nucleus of economic integration'; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is designed to enforce mutual trust and partnership in the region. In the light of this

intense integration policy the discourse of CA's inclusion to the Russian 'orbit' takes deep roots in the high-politics Russian perception of CA.

The Conception of Foreign policy (2008) includes CIS to the list of its priority regions. Moreover, it is clearly stated that the first and foremost priority is given to the CIS countries; Russia seeks economic and security cooperation there and appeals 'to preserve and augment common cultural-civilisational legacy which under conditions of globalisation represent an important resource of the CIS' (Conception 2008).

The CIS and especially CA countries play crucial role in Russia's security arrangements. Russia has a vast border with CA which is considered to be prone to instability and often viewed as a source of threat (Brannon 2004, p.430). At the same time CA is a buffer zone between Russia and tumultuous world of Islam (Trenin 2007, p.80). CA for Russia is a zone of vital interest since has direct influence on Russia's national security.

It is interesting to see what Russia considers to be a threat from the South. Russia is concerned about two ideologies that pose threat to national and regional stability: radical Islam and Western liberal democracy. Islamism is intensely destabilising: it undermines Russian influence in CA and even can threaten Russia's internal stability by mobilising 25-million Muslim population in Russia. If the threat of radical religious ideology seem to be grounded and accepted as such in the most of the world Russia's uneasy attitude to democracy evokes many questions. How can democracy pose a threat to Russian security? There might be several answers. Firstly, it should be remembered that security in Russia implies regime security and stability. Democracy brings change, which could be drastic and as such it can destabilise the state system. Secondly, democracy has a potential to unleash political Islam since local population might elect Islamist adherents into power. Thirdly, Western-type democracy paves way for increased Western influence. In fact, any sign of Western democracy is strongly opposed by Russian leadership: NGOs' activity and colour revolutions are perceived as Western conspiracy plots aimed to replace Soviet-era, loyal to Russia elite with Western ones. Under

conditions of perceived zero-sum game to allow any Western influence in the region is a grave strategic mistake (Trenin 2007, pp.89-95).

Russian politicians often display suspicions about intents of the West in 'Russia's sphere of influence', i.e. its Near Abroad. The Security Strategy (2009) clearly indicates that new geopolitical situation is characterised by the emergence of new economic and political centres which make *external involvement* in regional problems *unnecessary* (italics added). Moreover, the Strategy sees the problem in the West when it says that the Atlantic-centric global architecture is outdated and poses a threat to international security. The Conception of Foreign Policy (2008) warns the NATO, an embodiment of the West in Russia's eyes, not to provide its security at the expense of Russia's security. Similar attitude is present in expert community. Ulunyan and Laumulin are concerned with the GCAP which in their opinion is another Western conspiracy plan aimed to undermine Russia's influence and might. Naumkin takes for granted this attitude and notes that 'No Russian politician who makes decisions would make concessions to Americans in the region since it might eventually strengthen their zone of influence' (Naumkin 2005).

Therefore, it is possible to state that Russian trend to include CA to the domain of *nashi* (ours) and simultaneously to exclude 'Westerners' from this domain is in fact a reflection of Russia's strategic interest to keep the region within its orbit.

Conclusion

The USA as the global hegemon might reveal multiple interests but there are two interests which directly link the US foreign policy to Central Asia. Since 9/11 tragedy the War on Terrorism has become the cornerstone of the American policy. CA plays crucial role in the WoT both as an ally in the struggle against religious extremism and as a potential victim of this extremism. Another interest which closely links the US foreign policy with CA is the Caspian Sea energy projects. Though oil and gas deposits might be smaller than expected and their

processing and transportation is expensive the USA keeps on investing in the development of these projects. These projects are supposed to contribute to the region's development and consequently independence.

On the basis of experts' analysis it is possible to discern between two basic interests which define Russian perception of CA. Firstly, Russia seeks to recover its great-power status by asserting itself as a centre of influence in international system and opposing Western influence in the CIS. CA in this regard is an integral part of the great-power strategy. Though it is unlikely that Russia attempts to restore the USSR in its original form it is obvious that Russia promotes Eurasian integration via multiple institutional frameworks.

Another major concern of Russia, security of its southern border, is directly linked with CA. In this case CA represents simultaneously a source of danger (radical Islam and Western democracy) and a security buffer. Therefore, any attempt to undermine Russia's influence in CA is considered as a threat to its security.

Both interests are vital for the Russian foreign policy and both of them require integration. Integration needs sound economic, political and cultural basis, but it also needs an appropriate understanding of CA countries as a part of Russian cultural domain that should be adopted by policy-making community and ordinary citizens.

Chapter 4. Central Asia in Western and Russian geopolitical pictures of the world

Introduction

This chapter analyses geopolitical theories which implicitly inform the US and Russian policies in Central Asia. The aim of the analysis is to discover how Western and Russian geopolitical scientists view the place of their respective countries in international system and how these views of the state 'self' shape the perception of the 'others' within international system. In this context the discussion would focus on the way geopolitical theories shape the perception of Central Asia in the USA and Russia.

In order to address the question I would examine two schools of thought: the Western realist geopolitics and the Russian Eurasianism. Within the Western geopolitics I would focus on theories of British geographer Halford Mackinder and American geostrategist Zbigniew Brzezinski. These writers have been chosen for analysis because they provide a comprehensive analysis of the role and place of Central Asia (Eurasia) in world politics and propose detailed geopolitical strategies for Western (Atlantic) states to pursue in the region. Also their geopolitical assumptions are worth of analysis because the US policy-making community reveals perception of CA which is partly informed by these theories.

Within Russian geopolitical thinking there are two academics whose works represent interest for the dissertation. Lev Gumilev, Soviet historian and ethnologist, and Alexandr Dugin, Russian geopolitical scientist, are crucial figures of Russian neo-Eurasianism. Their idea of Russia as the unique Eurasian power enjoys popularity in policy-making circles.

The chapter starts with a discussion of basic assumptions of Western geopolitical theories. The issues discussed include how geopoliticians define the role and place of Western powers in global politics; how these theories view Central Asia and, finally, what policy prescriptions they propose to policy-makers. The paragraph on Russian Eurasianism follows the similar pattern:

discussion of Russia's and CA's place in the Eurasianist picture of the world is followed by policy recommendations provided by theoreticians.

From the Heartland to the Grand Chessboard: Central Asia in Western geopolitics

Halford Mackinder wrote on a variety of issues and never considered himself as a geopolitician but ironically the Pivot area concept brought him reputation of the 'father of modern geopolitics'⁶ (Kaplan 2009). Mackinder introduced the *Pivot area* concept, which later was renamed the *Heartland*, to the Royal Geographical Society (Mackinder 1904). He laid the concept in the context of the Russian-British rivalry in CA (so-called Great Game) and increasing British concerns about Germany. He later reasserted his ideas in the 'Democratic Ideals and reality' at the peak of the World War II (1944). According to Mackinder the world in political-geographic aspect consisted of three domains: the Pivot area (Russia, Russian Central Asia, Mongolia and parts of Iran and Western China), Inner crescent (Germany, Austria, Turkey, India and the rest of China) and Outer crescent (Britain, South Africa, Australia, the USA, Canada and Japan; Appendix 3). He also stated that the main axis of conflict lay between maritime and continental powers.

Mackinder argued that the Heartland, land-locked territories of Central Eurasia, had long been inaccessible for maritime powers and difficult to manage for Russia. However, changes in technology and railroads' development brought mobility of power for land powers. Russia, Germany and other potential land-locked aspirants for hegemony might benefit from new opportunities. Land powers could exploit rich natural resources of 'the closed heart of Asia' to strengthen their economies and finally supplant oceanic commerce: 'it is inevitable that a vast economic world [...] will there develop inaccessible to oceanic commerce' (ibid, p.14). Resources of the Pivot area could be used to increase military strength, and, then 'the empire of the world' would be in sight (ibid, p.16). In case Germany and Russia allied they could undermine the sea supremacy of the British Empire and pose a danger for 'the free world'.

⁶ However, the term 'geopolitics' was introduced by Friedrich Ratzel and developed by Rudolf Kjellen (Flint 2006)

Therefore, Mackinder insisted that Britain should prevent a potentially powerful Russo-German alliance, and establish balance of power in the region by keeping the British presence to the north of India. The Heartland was too crucial to leave it for rival powers.

Mackinder's legacy informed subsequent geostrategy in the XXth century. Thus, the balance of power system which characterised the Cold war period could be affiliated with Mackinder's idea of necessary balance. The sea power vs. land power dichotomy could be related to the US-Soviet global rivalry. Blouet noted that 'Mackinder's view was present in policy-making circles until the end of the Cold War' (2001, p.11).

The majority of subsequent generations of geopoliticians adopted similar patterns of labelling and placing Central Asia in the global political space⁷. They tend to label CA as a vast territory which importance for great powers is defined by interests great powers might have there. The USA and Russia (sea power and land power) are often seen as primary rivals and antagonists in the region (New Great Game debate). Finally, CA countries in some geopolitical writings represent rather passive participants in regional politics; they are pictured as a board for major powers' global games.

In this regard it is worthy to note Zbigniew Brzezinski's representation of Eurasia as the Grand Chessboard on which 'the struggle for global primacy continues to be played' (1997, p.31). In his famous book Brzezinski states that after the collapse of the USSR the USA gained the status of the first truly global hegemon. The American hegemony has not been seriously challenged since then, but its sustainability depends on how the USA manages the 'geopolitically axial' Eurasia. According to Brzezinski Eurasia is the chessboard which contains possibilities both to sustain the US supremacy and to undermine it.

He divides Eurasia into four big spaces where the game is played: West, East, South and Middle space. At that he divides Central Asia by including Kazakhstan to Middle space and the rest of CA to the South along with Middle East and South Asia. The US grand strategy in 'the

⁷ This regards mainstream geopoliticians, those who reveal the conventional realist approach to geopolitics. Emerging minority of critical geopoliticians (O'Tuathail, Megoran, Heathershaw) might not share these trends.

game' should be aimed to control four parts of the 'Chessboard' and to prevent the emergence of any challengers. In Eurasia's West the US should expand the democratic zone as far as possible; in Eurasia's Far East the US should achieve geostrategic consensus with the local central power China. In the Middle space of Eurasia the US would have to deal with 'the geopolitical black hole' – Russia which is still unsure about its identity and strategy. Finally, the South represents what he calls 'Eurasian Balkans'.

Eurasian Balkans includes parts of southeastern Europe, Central Asia, parts of South Asia, the Persian Gulf area, and the Middle East (Brzezinski 1997, p.123). This is unstable, multiethnic, conflict-prone territory whose rich energy supplies and weak state system attract great powers. Eurasian Balkans contains a potential to become a global conflict zone where the struggle for primacy between regional powers would take place. The major US goal in this unstable region is to keep the delicate regional balance so that newly established countries could survive the transition period and integrate with global economy and act as independent players. This implies that the US should make the region a power-free zone. Though Brzezinski states that post-Soviet Russia is too weak to assert decisive influence he acknowledges the power of its imperial legacy which drives Russia to restore its domination over the region at any price (1997, pp.87-118). Therefore, his warning to protect Central Asia from excessive great powers' influence touches primarily Russia.

Brzezinski's policy recommendations seem to be taken to consideration by the US policy-making and academic circles. At least some of his prescriptions are actually inserted into official policy. Thus, his suggestion to keep Central Eurasia free of great powers rivalry was clearly stated in Talbott's speech of 1997. His concerns about potential dangers in the region perfectly fit into the danger discourse discussed in the first chapter of the given paper. Finally, his strategy of freeing Central Asia from Russian domination echoes in many recent academic papers (publications by Olcott, Blank and Starr). However, since 1997 the state of global affairs has changed drastically. Apart from the 9/11 tragedy and global WoT there has been another crucial

change: Russia has recovered from difficulties of the post-Soviet period and adopted a new assertive foreign policy.

Eurasian Great power and its constituents: the promise of neo-Eurasianism

As it has been argued in Chapter 2 Russian perception of Central Asia is affected by its domestic politics. A major shift in Russian domestic politics changed perception and policy in CA: pro-Western ‘internationalists’ were replaced by ‘derzhavniks’ who preferred Near Abroad to the West. The shift in the foreign policy priorities might have been influenced by neo-Eurasianism – a set of geopolitical ideas that views Russia as the Eurasian great power.

Neo-Eurasianism relies heavily on the original Eurasianist theory which emerged in the beginning of the XXth century within the community of Russian expatriate intellectuals in Europe (Smith 1999, p.482). Publications of such prominent Eurasianists as S.Trubetskoy and N.Savitskiy lay foundation of the theory. They divide the Eurasian continent into three parts: Western Europe characterised by coastal geography; Asia which represents continental landmass, and the territory in between – Eurasia. According to Savitskiy, Russia forms a unique cultural domain in Eurasia. Russia differs drastically from its Western and Eastern neighbours; Western materialist culture is especially alien to Russian spiritual culture (in Dugin 2002b, pp.266-279). Therefore Russia cannot adopt alien European development path but should follow its own way. Moreover, Russia’s geographic location and cultural affinity with Eurasian peoples preconditions its global mission to unite minor Eurasian nations and lead them in the struggle against European hegemony (Laruelle 2004, p.116).

Eurasianism was condemned in the USSR for being ‘bourgeois’ (Dugin 1997, p.85). Eurasianist thought had been discreetly rediscovered in the late XXth century by Soviet historian and ethnologist Lev Gumilev. Gumilev argued that Asian history should not be considered through the prism of European history as it had been done during most of the XXth century; Asian history should be studied as independent subject which was especially important for Russia since ethnogenesis of Russians had been strongly influenced by Turkic and Mongolian

tribes. Also on the basis of his ethnogenesis theory Gumilev concluded that European ethnic groups had passed the peak of their development and Western civilization was approaching decline. On the contrary Russian ethnos was relatively young and as such had more energy to unite and lead neighbour peoples (Gumilev 1989, 1992, 1993).

Ideas of Eurasianists and Gumilev have been adopted, interpreted and popularised by Russian nationalist conservative writer Aleksandr Dugin. He revived Eurasianism, enhanced its geopolitical aspects, right conservative ideas and produced a full-fledged ideology which represents the most viable substitute of the Soviet ideology (Laruelle 2004, p.116).

Dugin's neo-Eurasianism has three basic features. Firstly, it reveals civilizational approach when says that the human history and political reality are characterised by eternal rivalry between continental and maritime civilisations. At less global level the world consists of multiple civilisations which differ by their cultures (Dugin 2002b, pp.495-497). Secondly, neo-Eurasianist theory displays a certain degree of geographic determinism since it is believed that climate and geographic location beget distinctive cultures: steppe shaped nomadic empires, desert formed Arabic (Islamic) culture, Russian-Eurasian civilisation is a result of forest-steppe fusion (ibid, p.80). Finally, neo-Eurasianism represents a utilitarian theory since it provides detailed policy instructions.

Policy recommendations proposed by Dugin could be divided into two groups: domestic policy recommendations and foreign policy prescriptions.

If domestic policy prescriptions would be applied to Russia they are likely to result in a closed authoritarian society. Thus, Dugin recommends new national ideology based on revived Russian traditions where community interests stay above personal interests and initiatives. Religious dogma, especially Orthodox Christianity, are said to be the basis: 'out of absolutely unquestionable truth of religion, i.e. Russian Orthodox faith, come the foundations of true ideology' (Dugin 2002b, p.118). In terms of economic development Dugin proposes to create autarchy, a closed self-sufficient Eurasian economic system. Capitalism and free market are

condemned for being Western and inappropriate for new Eurasian power. Dugin is so possessed with utopian state structure that he even draws an image of Eurasian 'ideal' who slightly resembles Nazi rhetoric about 'pure-blood Arians': 'strong, passionate, healthy and beautiful person ready for responsible activity, tests and victories' (ibid, p14). Further discussion comes to 'new Eurasian selection' in order to give the best ones access to decision-making and 'the fest of physical and spiritual health' (ibid).

Neo-Eurasian foreign policy strategy is penetrated with anti-Western sentiments. The '*Project Eurasia*' strategy states that Russia's mission is to oppose Western totalitarianism and change unipolar international system to multipolar one. Upon completion of this mission the world, according to Dugin, would consist of 12 big spaces-poles and the US-dominated region would be shrunk to the territory of the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK (Appendix 4). The accomplishment of the mission starts with Eurasian integration. Its first stage requires strategic reintegration of the CIS countries on the basis of global geopolitical tasks. The next stage supposes strategic alliance with Eurasian states which have vital interest in creating alternative to the US domination: Iran, India, China, and Middle East states. The last stage aimed to neutralise Europe and Japan, to free them from the US influence (Dugin 2002a, pp.90-108). The expected result of this grand strategy is multipolar, multicultural world.

Though Putin's and Medvedev's administration has not declared commitment to neo-Eurasian ideas it is often stated that neo-Eurasianism enjoys support of policy-making elite. Thus Laruelle assumes that neo-Eurasianists have 'successfully attempted to infiltrate decision-making circles, Russia's official administrative and economic bodies' (2004, p. 119). Dunlop gives a detailed account of Dugin's connections and consultations with high-ranking military officers, ex-KGB generals and such influential political ideologists as Gleb Pavlovskii (2004, pp.4-8). Dugin promotes his ideas by all possible means. His numerous books on geopolitics are considered as dogma and approved as textbooks for courses in civil and military higher education institutions in Russia. Dugin's 'Foundations of geopolitics' are used at the General Staff Academy which

means the forthcoming generations of military leadership would be taught the above-mentioned ideas (ibid).

It is interesting to note that some neo-Eurasianist ideas can be found in Putin-Medvedev's policy. For example, the basic assumption that Russian should follow its own path is reflected in Putin's concept of 'sovereign democracy' (Trenin 2006). The concept affirms that Russia is not obliged to report Western community about the state of Russian democracy since the West and Russia have different understanding of democracy.

The Russia's Foreign Policy Conception contains some neo-Eurasian ideas but in a moderate form. Firstly, it emphasizes the necessity of multipolar world order where 'collective leadership of world's largest states would be represented in geographic and civilizational regard' (Kontsepsiya 2008). Secondly, it prioritises cooperation with CIS countries and stresses the importance of 'shared cultural-civilisational heritage' as a basis of cooperation. It promotes integration within economic organisations (Euro-Asian Economic Community) and security alliances (SCO; CSTO). Moreover, it proposes Belarus and Kazakhstan to establish customs union which could be expanded to other CIS states (ibid).

This does not necessarily mean that Russian official policy is formulated by neo-Eurasianists. But it is adequate to suppose that neo-Eurasianism simultaneously informs, articulates and voices opinions which are spread among Russian political elite. In particular, it provides theoretic grounding for great power aspirations and explains why Russian policy should focus on CA. To a great extent it contributes to the inclusive perception of CA as kindred cultural space whose destiny is interwoven with Russia's destiny.

Conclusion

The Western realist geopolitics and neo-Eurasianism propagate opposing views about Central Asia. The Western classic geopolitics assumes that Central Asia represents a strategic interest for Western powers due to its geographic location and natural resources, and Western powers should secure their political presence and influence there. At the same time Western powers should

prevent the region from falling into single power's domain of influence. Meanwhile, neo-Eurasianists claim that this area is a historical domain of Russian influence and, consequently, oppose any Western presence nearby. They point to specific cultural and spiritual commonality of the Russians and Asians and emphasize the historic mission of Russia to unify and patronize Central Asian nations.

It has been argued here that geopolitical traditions of portraying Central Asia influence contemporary perceptions of the region in the high-politics and academic circles of the USA and Russia. Thus, in the Western geopolitical discourse Mackinder and Eurasianists laid the basic picture of Central Eurasia and outlined a regional strategy which should be pursued respectively by Western powers and Russia. Their ideas have been reformulated and enhanced by such geopoliticians as Dugin and Brzezinski whose policy prescriptions can be found in contemporary US and Russian politics. Thus, it is possible to say that geopolitical theories shaped the character of Western and Russian academic discourse and influenced global spatial images in the West and Russia.

Conclusion

The dissertation addressed the perception aspect in political geography. It has been argued here that depiction of the global space and its parts might be biased. It is affected by the standpoint of those who view it, by their interests and long-standing traditions of representing particular places. To prove this argument the dissertation examined the US and Russian perception of Central Asia. Since both the USA and Russia represent multilayered social structures the analysis has been conducted at two different levels within each society: respective chapters focused firstly on the high-politics domain and then proceeded to the grass roots level. Consequently, within each society it is possible to distinguish between two basic perceptions.

In the US high-politics domain until 2001 Central Asia has been perceived as a second-priority region which was closely associated with and shadowed by Russia. The US Department of Defence's Unified Command Map of 1996 illustrates the degree of disinterest in CA. On this map the region is not included to any area of responsibility; it is marked as a white spot. The popular perception of Central Asia in early 90-s, immediately after the collapse of the USSR, was characterised by the lack of knowledge and information about the region. To put it briefly ordinary US citizens were not aware of the existence of CA. Nevertheless, starting from the middle of 90-s the information gap started being filled with narratives of danger. Narratives of danger could be found in academic articles and some feature films which contained 'shadows' of CA – insignificant details and references to CA.

The 9/11 tragedy fuelled narratives of danger in political, academic and popular discourses. The construction of danger in the region reached its peak. Since then virtually every academic article would contain warnings or predictions of chaos and conflict in CA. This trend is also evident in popular culture; recent feature film contains direct depiction of danger in fictional CA country. In addition, post-Soviet CA has been attributed another feature – now it is also viewed as Oriental land. The latest perception of CA in the USA is stated in the Greater Central Asia

project paper by Frederick Starr. In this paper he includes Afghanistan to conventional concept of CA and offer to strengthen regional integration and lessen Russian influence.

Meanwhile, the Russian perception of CA remains the same in terms of geography; only 5 post-Soviet republics are included to the notion. Nevertheless, there is a shifting discourse of inclusion and alienation which has different dynamic at the high-politics and grass-roots level. After the collapse of the USSR Russian policy-making circles took a pro-Western orientation and literally abandoned relations with CA states. They preferred to view Russia as European power and distance it from Asian neighbours. However, as a result of disappointment with the Western politics and the shift in domestic politics to *derzhavniki*, who promoted the idea of strong, non-Western Russia, the Russian attitude to CA changed. Nowadays, Russian political elite prefers to use inclusive rhetoric claiming that Russia is not Western but Eurasian power. At the grass-roots level, this discourse has reverse direction. In the beginning of 90-s Soviet legacy of all-inclusive society was strong and people continued perceiving Central Asians as part of their Soviet identity. By the beginning of the XXI century these sentiments gave way to nationalism, xenophobia and alienation. The duality of the inclusion-alienation discourse is reflected in the concept of 'Near Abroad' and in Russian sketch-show 'Nasha Russia'.

The next chapters attempted to reveal underlying factors of these perceptions. In particular, in the chapter 3 it has been argued that the US perception is affected by its interests. Out of multiple US interests the War on Terrorism and Caspian energy projects closely link the US foreign policy with CA. The Russian perception is strongly affected by its recent interest in the great-power reconstruction.

Another factor which might shape the US and Russian perceptions of CA might lie in the field of geopolitics. Western mainstream geopolitical tradition tends to label vast territories with utilitarian names and view them through the lens of Western power's status of global hegemon. Russian geopolitical science witnesses the revival of Eurasianism. This theory asserts Russia's

status of great power and considers CA as a legitimate and exclusive domain of Russian influence.

Thus the dissertation revealed the US and Russian perceptions of CA and examined possible factors which might affect these perceptions. It should be noted that the discussion of perceptions in political geography could be continued with more examples drawn and might bring new insights to the field of international relations and geopolitics.

List of references

Primary sources

Kontseptsia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii 2008 (Conception of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation), approved with the Decree №440 of 12 May 2008 by the President of the Russian Federation, retrieved from the official website of the President of Russia

<<http://www.kremlin.ru>>;

National Security Council of the USA 2006, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, retrieved from <<http://www.globalsecurity.org>>;

Obama, BH 2009, *Speech in Moscow: remarks by the President at the New Economic School graduation*, the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, retrieved from the website of the Bureau of International Information Programs of the US Department of State from

<<http://www.america.gov>>;

Strategiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiyskoi Federatsii do 2020 goda, 2009 (National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation till 2020), approved with the Decree №537 of 12 May 2009 by the President of the Russian Federation, retrieved from the Security Council of the Russian Federation's website <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents>>;

Talbott, S 1997, *'A farewell to flashman: American policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia'*, US Department of State Dispatch, retrieved from <<http://www.finarticles.com>>;

White House, *The National Security Strategy of the USA*, the White House, Washington, retrieved from the Strategic Studies Institute <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil>>;

Secondary sources

Books and chapters

- Allison, R & Bluth, C (eds.) 1998, *Security dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Russia and Eurasia programme, London;
- Aron, L 1998, 'The foreign policy doctrine of post-communist Russia and its domestic context', chapter in Mandelbaum, M (ed.) 1998, *The new Russian foreign policy*, Council of Foreign Relations Books, New York;
- Atabaki, J & O'Kane, J (eds.) 1998, *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, Tauris Academic Studies, London;
- Banuazizi, A & Weiner, M (eds.) 1994, *The new geopolitics of Central Asia and its borderlands*, Tauris, London;
- Blouet, BW 2001, *Geopolitics and globalization in the Twentieth century*, Reaktion Books, London;
- Blouet, BW (ed.) 2005, *Global geostrategy: Mackinder and the defence of the West*, Frank Cass, London;
- Brannon 2004, 'Regional Security Cooperation and Foreign Policies in Central Asia: a 21st Century Great Game' in Burghart, DL and Sabonis-Helf, T 2004 (eds.), *In the Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia's Path to the 21st Century*, NDU Press, Washington;
- Brzezinski, Z 1997, *The Grand chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*, Basic Books, New York;
- Dugin, A 1997, *Osnovy geopolitiki* (Foundations of geopolitics), Arctogaia, Moscow;
- Dugin, A 2002a, *Evraziiskii put kak Natsionalnais Idea*, Arctogaia, Moscow;
- Dugin, A 2002b, *Osnovy Evraziistva* (Foundations of Eurasianism), Arctogaia, Moscow;
- Ehteshami, A 1994 (ed.), *From the Gulf to Central Asia*, University of Exeter Press, Exeter;
- Flint, C 2006, *Introduction to geopolitics*, Routledge, London;
- Glenn, J 1999, *The Soviet legacy in Central Asia*, Macmillan, London;

Gumilev, L 1989, *Drevnaya Rus' i Velikaya Step'* (Ancient Russia and the Great Steppe),
retrieved from the website 'The scientific heritage of Dr Lev N. Gumilev' at
<<http://gumilevica.kulichki.net>>;

Gumilev, L 1992, *Ot Rusi k Rossii* (From Rus' to Russia), Ekopros publishing group, Moscow;

Gumilev, L 1993, *Iz istorii Evrazii* (From the story of Eurasia), Iskusstvo, Moscow;

Hunter, Sh 1996, *Central Asia since independence*, Praeger Publishers, Westport;

Mackinder, H 1944, *Democratic ideals and reality*, Penguin books, Harmondsworth;

Malik, H 1994, *Central Asia: its strategic importance and future prospects*, Macmillan, London;

Menon, R 1998, 'After Empire: Russia and the Southern 'Near Abroad'', chapter in Mandelbaum,
M (ed.) 1998, *The new Russian foreign policy*, Council of Foreign Relations Books, New York;

O'Tuathail, G & Dalby, S (eds.) 1998, *Rethinking geopolitics*, Routledge, London;

O'Tuathail, G 1996, *Critical geopolitics*, Routledge, London;

O'Tuathail, G, Dalby, S and Routledge, P (eds.) 2006, *The geopolitics reader*, Routledge,
London;

Pain, R & Smith, SJ (eds.) 2008, *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life*, Ashgate,
Hampshire, England;

Rumer E, Trenin, D & Zhao, H 2007, *Central Asia: views from Washington, Moscow, and
Beijing*, M.E. Sharpe, New York;

Spykman, NJ 1944, *The geography of the peace*, The Yale Institute of International Studies,
Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York;

Journal and newspaper articles

Allison, R 2004a, 'Strategic reassertion in Russia's Central Asia policy', *International Affairs*,
Vol.80, No.2, pp.277-293;

Belkin, N 2005, 'Russian take no notice of their neighbors', National information service
Strana.Ru, viewed 14 August 2009, <<http://www.strana.ru>>;

Blank, S 2004, 'Infrastructural policy and national strategies in Central Asia: the Russian example', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.23, Issues 3-4, pp.225-248;

Blank, S 2006, 'Strategic surprise? Central Asia in 2006', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol.2, No.2, pp.109-130, retrieved from <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org>>;

Blank, S 2008a, 'Rethinking Central Asian security', *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol.6, No.2. pp. 23-39, retrieved from <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org>>;

Blank, S 2008b, 'Strategic importance of Central Asia: an American view', *US Army War College Quarterly*, Vol.38, No.1, retrieved from <<http://www.carlisle.army.mil>>;

Bohr, A 2004, 'Regionalism in Central Asia: new geopolitics, old regional order', *International Affairs*, Vol.80, No.3, pp.485-502;

Dunlop, JB 2004, 'Aleksandr Dugin's foundations of geopolitics', publication of the *Liechtenstein Institute of Self-determination*, retrieved from the Princeton University <<http://www.princeton.edu/lisd>>;

Edwards, M 2002, 'Central Asia Unveiled', *National Geographic*, viewed 2 August 2009 <<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com>>;

Edwards, M 2003, 'The New Great Game and the new great gamers: disciples of Kipling and Mackinder', *Central Asian Survey*, retrieved from <<http://www.informaworld.com>>;

Gleason, G 2001 'Foreign policy and domestic reform in Central Asia', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.20, Issue 2, pp.167-182;

Gudkov, L 2005, 'Smeshannaya agressiya:otnoshenie rossiyan k migrantam' (Shifted aggression: Russians' attitude to migrants), *Vestnik Obshchestvennogo mneniya*, No.6, Vol.80, pp.60-77;

Heathershaw, J 2007, 'World apart: the making and remaking of geopolitical space in the US-Uzbekistani strategic partnership', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.26, Issue 1, pp.123-140;

Kaplan, RD 2009, 'The revenge of geography', *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2009, retrieved from <<http://www.foreignpolicy.com>>;

- Klare, MT 2001, 'The new geography of conflict', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2001;
- Laruelle, M 2004, 'The two faces of contemporary Eurasianism: an imperial version of Russian nationalism', *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.32, No.1, pp.115-136;
- Laumulin M 2007, 'Bolshaya Tsentralnaya Aziya – novyi mega-proekt SShA?' (Greater Central Asia – new mega-project of the USA?), retrieved from the *CentrAsia project* <<http://www.centrasia.ru>>;
- Mackinder, H 1904, 'The geographical pivot of history', *The Geographic Journal*, April 1904, Royal Geographical Society, London;
- Misra, A 2001, 'Shanghai 5 and the emerging alliance in Central Asia: the closed society and its enemies', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.20, Issue 3, pp.305-321;
- Mitrokhin, N 2006, 'Non-Islamic extremism in today's Russia', *Global Affairs*, No.4, retrieved from <<http://www.eng.globalaffairs.ru>>;
- Olcott, MB 2003a, 'The War on Terrorism in Central Asia and the cause of democratic reform', *Demokratizatsiya: the journal of Post-Soviet democratization*, Vol.11, No.1, pp.86-94, retrieved from <<http://www.demokratizatsiya.org>>;
- Olcott, MB 2003b, 'Taking stock of Central Asia', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.56, No.2, pp.3-17, retrieved from <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications> >;
- Olcott, MB 2009, 'A new direction in US policy in the Caspian region', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, retrieved from < <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications> >;
- Sahadeo 2007, 'Druzhba narodov or second-class citizenship? Soviet Asian migrants in a post-colonial world', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.26, Issue 4, pp.559-579;
- Smith, G 1999, 'The masks of Proteus: Russia. Geopolitical shift and the new Eurasianism', *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers*, Blackwells Publishing and the Royal Geographical Society, Vol.24, No.4, pp.481-494;

Starr, FS 2005, 'A 'Greater Central Asia partnership' for Afghanistan and its neighbours', *Silk Road Papers Series* by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, retrieved from <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org>>;

Starr FS 2008, 'In defence of Greater Central Asia', *Policy Papers Series* by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, retrieved from <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org>>;

Tazmini, G 2001, 'The Islamic revival in Central Asia: a potent force or a misconception?', *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.20, Issue 1, pp.63-83;

Trenin, D 2006, 'Russia leaves the West', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006;

Tsygankov, AP 2005, 'Vladimir Putin's vision of Russia as a normal great power', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol.21, No.2, pp.132-158, retrieved from the Bellwether Publishing Ltd. <<http://bellwether.metapress.com>>;

Tuathail, G 1992, 'Putting Mackinder in his place: material transformations and myth', *Political geography*, Vol.11, No.1, pp.100-118;

Ulunyan A, 2008, '*Bol'shaya Tsentral'naya Azia*': *geopoliticheskiy proekt ili vneshnepoliticheskiy instrument?* ('Greater Central Asia': geopolitical project or foreign policy tool?), viewed 19 November 2008 at <<http://www.ferghana.ru>>;

Weitz. R 2006, 'Averting a New Great Game in Central Asia', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.3, pp.155-167, retrieved from <<http://www.twq.com>>;

Web documents and sites

International Eurasian Movement's portal, viewed 30 July 2009, <<http://www.evrazia.info>>;

Eurasian Home 2009, Information-analytical portal in Russian, viewed 18 August 2009, <<http://www.eurasianhome.org>>;

US Department of Defense website, viewed 29 July 2009, <<http://www.defenselink.mil>>;

US Department of State website, viewed 15 August 2009, <<http://www.state.gov>>;

US State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs website, viewed 15 August 2009, <<http://www.america.gov>>;

President of the Russian Federation website, viewed 21 August 2009, <<http://www.kremlin.ru>>;

Security Council of the Russian Federation website, viewed 23 August 2009, <<http://www.scrf.gov.ru>>;

Central Asian News Service 2009, viewed 27 August, <<http://en.ca-news.org>>;

EurasiaNet - Central Asia and Caucasus news website, viewed 13 August 2009, <<http://www.eurasianet.org>>;

TNT Television channel 2009, viewed 26 August 2009, <<http://www.tnt-tv.ru>>;

Reports, policy papers and conference papers

Blank, S 2002, 'Reconstructing Inner Asia', *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, August, retrieved from the Defense Academy of the UK at <<http://www.da.mod.uk>>;

Davis, JK & Sweeney, MJ 2004, *Central Asia in US Strategy and operational planning: Where do we go from here?* retrieved from <<http://www.ifpa.org>>;

Gatagova, L & Filippova, T 2004, *Strany Tsentral'noi Azii v rossiiskih uchebnikah istorii* (Central Asian countries in the Russian textbooks on history), conference material retrieved from *Mir Istorii* (the Word of History) website <<http://www.historia.ru>>;

Nickol, J 2005, 'Central Asia's Security: issues and implications for US interests', *Congressional Research Service report*, retrieved from <<http://www.opencrs.com>>;

Oliker, O & Shlapak, D 2005, 'US interests in Central Asia: policy priorities and military roles', *RAND Corporation monograph*, Santa Monica;

Olcott, MB 2001, 'Revisiting the twelve myths of Central Asia', *Carnegie Endowment Working paper* No.23, September, retrieved from <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications>>;

Maps

Defense Mapping Agency 1996, *Unified command plan 1996*, edition 1, series 1107, retrieved from the US Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division <<http://memory.loc.gov>>;

National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency 2008, *Unified command plan map 2008*, edition 8, series 1107, retrieved from US Department of Defense's website <<http://www.defenselink.mil>>;
The natural seats of power 1904 in Mackinder, H 1904, The geographical pivot of history, *The Geographic Journal* for April 1904, Royal Geographical Society, London;
Eurasian map of multipolar world 2004, International Eurasian Movement, retrieved from <<http://www.evrazia.info>>;

Published Interviews

Grozin, A 2009, 'Rol' vneshnih igrokov v TsA' (Role of external actors in CA), interview 20 May 2009, *Bishkek Press Club*, viewed at <<http://www.bpc.kg>>;
Naumkin, V 2006, 'Vozvraschenie Tsentral'noy Azii' (Return of Central Asia), interview of 19 May, viewed 13 June 2009 <<http://www.cainfo.ru/article/actual-interview/242>>;

Unpublished works

Bluth, C 2009, *Caspian project*, book, retrieved from Prof Bluth, University of Leeds, School of Politics and International Studies;
Heathershaw, J & Megoran, N 2009, *Endangering space: towards a critical geopolitics in Central Asia*, paper presented at the School of African and Oriental Studies, retrieved from Dr Megoran, Newcastle University, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology;

Feature films

Air Force One 1997, [Film] Directed by Wolfgang Petersen. USA: Columbia Pictures;
Aurora: Operation intercept 1995, [Film] Directed by Paul Levine. USA: Hess/Kallberg Productions;
Nasha Russia 2006-2009 [TV programme] TNT-TV Channel, <<http://www.tnt-tv.ru>>;
The world is not enough 1999, [Film] Directed by Michael Apted. USA: MGM Studios Inc.;
War, Inc. 2008, [Film] Directed by Joshua Seftel. USA: Millennium Films.