

Aniskin Anatoly Alekseevich

Eurasian Discourse of Russian Foreign Policy: Conceptual Value and Legal Components as a Factor of the Geo-economic Cohesion of the CIS

Aniskin Anatoly Alekseevich — North-West Institute of Management —
branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public
Administration (Saint-Petersburg)

Associate Professor of the Chair of International Relations

PhD in Philology, Professor

Contacts: aniskin.anatoliialekseevich@yandex.ru

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the value and legal factors of strengthening the Commonwealth of Independent States, the prospect and consequences of the declaration of the right to peaceful coexistence as the fundamental priority of this international political region.

KEY WORDS

CIS, humanitarian intervention, the right to peaceful coexistence, the unity of Eurasia.

An important condition for the effective protection of the national interests of the Russian state under current conditions stands the formation of a system of adequate reality concept of the main problems of foreign policy. The approval in it of the Eurasian direction as a key factor to the transformation of the Russian Federation as an independent pole of the modern model of a multi-polar world¹ requires the development of a new discourse of Russian foreign policy. This presupposes going beyond the conceptual dependence on Western developments, and the final break with ideologemes of the Soviet time, for the most part, that eclectically joined the opportunistic interpretation of the works of Marx and Lenin and the pragmatic considerations that reflected the interests of certain groups of the ruling elite of the USSR.

The most significant aspect of the development of an adequate discourse of Russian foreign policy seems to appeal to the spiritual roots that shaped the ideas of Russian identity as a particular set of distinctive signs of civilization, which synergistically reinforce each other and objectively oppose to the unifying effect of the hegemons of the modern model of globalization.

Among them a special place is accorded to the idea of the essential characteristics of the Orthodox civilization and theoretical developments that led to the emergence of the concept of Eurasianism in Russian philosophy.

The last of the above mentioned factors plays a special role in shaping a new discourse of Russian diplomacy. The collapse of the atheistic and materialist ideologies, in principle, cannot abolish positive experience of cooperation between the peoples of the Eurasian space, which was accumulated in the pre-Soviet and Soviet times, and is reflected in the historiosophical concept of Eurasianism.

¹ *Putin V. A new integration project for Europe — the future which is being born today // IZVESTIYA. October, 3, 2011. URL: <http://izvestia.ru/news/502761> (date of applying: 29.06.2013).*

As is well known, the concept of Eurasianism was born as the result of intelligent search of outstanding representatives of Russian spiritual culture, who were discarded from the process of modernization of Russian society as a result of the October Revolution, but retained the ability to adequate scientific understanding and articulation of genuine national interests of Russia's post-imperial state.

The conceptual foundations of the theory of the Eurasian civilization were laid by the representatives of the socio-philosophical and cultural school of the Eurasians, in which the leading role played N.S. Trubetskoy, R.O. Yakobson, G.V. Vernadsky, P.N. Savitsky, N.N. Alekseev, L.P. Karsavin, who significantly upgraded the historiographical developments of N.Y. Danilevsky and K.N. Leontief.

High heuristic potential given to the Eurasian concept by its creators, has provided its relevance up to the present days. Appeal to their heritage is very productive in resolving the issue of Russian civilization identity, and in being aware of its national interest in the establishment of a pluralistic multi-polarity.

Uniqueness and positive character of the pre-Soviet, as well as the Soviet experience of productive coexistence of various cultures and the people, is comprehended in the Eurasian concept not only through a prism of "reconciliation of metaphysical antitheses", the contrasts of the East and the West. This experience is exposed to a philosophical reflection of concrete forms of a political system and economic life of Russia, and culturologically is interpreted as the specific ethnopsychological Eurasian type which has developed historically under the influence of spiritual practices of the Russian Orthodoxy.

The fundamental nature of the basic foundations of the Eurasian concept determines its productivity, not only in historical perspective, but also in relation to the current realities, reflecting the specific occurrence of the peoples of the former USSR in the geopolitical realities of the 21st century.

The founders of the theory of Eurasianism have done much to show the unique,

Eurasian nature of the Russian people. Eurasians believed that the Russian should get rid of captivity of Western ideas, to realize that, in fact, they are not Europeans, and no one in Europe consider them as such. They should acknowledge their closeness to the eastern nations, and act on this basis in domestic and foreign policy.

The realities of the current state of relations between Russia, the U.S. and the European Union added to this postulate of Eurasianism some significant nuances. But modernity not only failed to deny, but even enhanced the main message of the Eurasian concept of Russian identity. It consists of recognizing the uniqueness and enduring value of historical, spiritual and cultural forms of life of the people that inhabit the Eurasian territory and their productivity as a response to the challenges of the 21st century.

The awareness of this aspect of the Eurasian experience of the historical co-existence of peoples from different historical, religious and cultural identity, is the imperative of the modern international perception of reality genuine elites of independent states of the former Soviet Union.

The idea of "Eurasianism" in these circumstances is beyond historiographical concept. It turns into a basic term of foreign policy discourse oriented historically and geographically to the whole world with the exception of the western sector of the world civilization, but spiritually and practically to the need for conservation and development of organic national, ethnic, religious and cultural traditions adapted to the threats and challenges of the modern globalization model.

In unifying the realities of westernized globalization Eurasianism supposes a conscious choice, combining the desire to preserve traditional forms of life with the desire to free the creative development of nations and peoples. "Therefore, Eurasians are not only the representatives of the peoples of the continent of Eurasia. Eurasians are all free creative individuals who recognize the value of tradition, culture and the rich spiritual heritage. Eurasians believe that every people of our planet — from those

that have created great civilizations, to the smaller, carefully preserving their traditions — is unique”¹.

In terms of the integration processes within the Commonwealth of Independent States, contemporary reading of meanings inherent in the concept of Eurasianism is an important aspect of the language of Russian foreign policy. This policy is all the more important at a time when substantial wealth of ideas consider them views on nature and character of integrative processes in the territory of the former USSR, the researchers are focusing on the economic and derived aspects of cooperation. In this logic the integration itself is seen as the initial stage of convergence, and the main purpose of economic cooperation of the CIS is “taking advantage of the interstate division of labour, specialization and cooperation, mutually beneficial trade to achieve their strategic and current interests”[3, p. 56].

However, such approaches limit the problem field of study of the integration processes of the CIS countries. Singular focus on the immediate and medium-term economic performance in solving problems that are expressed by the geopolitical nature conceptualized in Eurasian discourse, makes this kind of policy excessively expensive and as it seems strategically hopeless.

Experience in creation of any versions of the economic “co-prosperity” — from the colonial empires to the “unbreakable” USSR and the world socialist community shows rather convincingly that the reliance solely on the economic advantages of combining the carriers of different ethnic and social identities in the realities of the international division of labour is not a strong enough linking element of interstate integration.

This is especially true in situations where the benefits of the virtual future integration face specific temptations generated

by the instability of market conditions or a deliberate policy of undermining integration connections initiated by a third party outside. It can also be implemented in different versions of unequal economic exchange aimed to ensure on paternalistic redistribution basis on the inviolability of the geo-political borders.

The elite created by the collapse of the USSR in the territories of the CIS countries, cementing them criminal and trade and bureaucratic clans initially were less focused on objectively determined strategic interests of the new states, including economic and geo-economic. Especially because their advocacy in the context of globalization seemed, in the logic of the liberal anti-communist views, a historically meaningless and hopeless affair. It spawned a willingness to exchange and political ideals and values of their own history that formed the core of national sovereignty, for certain, for the most part — the illusory “benefits” growing into “civilized” community formed in the geo-political regions of the hegemonic state of the world system of modern international relationship [4].

In these circumstances, the value and humanitarian aspects of the integration of the former CIS countries, conceptualized in the discourse of Eurasia, become not only independent, but in many ways, determine the character of their nation.

The latter is caused by a number of circumstances. The most important of them is the manifestations of the growing crisis in the world economy, the deformation monetary and financial system, the erosion of the spiritual identity of the countries and peoples who have chosen scenarios of modernization on the basis of the ‘Washington consensus’, more and more large-scale distribution in the world political phenomenon of inconsistent statehood.

In these circumstances the possibilities of humanitarian values and choices for the states of the former Soviet Union outside the Eurasian vector are reduced to a limited set of targets lacking strategic vision.

First of all, it is about growing into value space of the liberal super-civilization represented by well-established interpreta-

¹ *Eurasianism: the history of the issue, topics and problems under discussion* // The Turkic and Tatar’s world: [online resource]. URL: www.tataroved.ru (date of applying: 13.06.2013).

tions of liberal freedoms and human rights. Outwardly, this path is the most organic, natural and appropriate for the 21st century realities. Moreover, the system of social relations of the Soviet type, challenging these values, suffered a devastating collapse.

However, the predetermination of this kind of choice faces a number of obstacles, including the ontological and metaphysical character generated by the historical memory and traditions of national culture. The most important ones are the historical memory of those elements that contain information about the positive experience of modernization within the framework of cooperation between the peoples of the Russian Empire and the former Soviet Union.

In conjunction with the realities of strengthening global economic inequality, embodying value arsenal of market fundamentalism and liberalism as a humanitarian reference does not contain the necessary integration potential as a universal spiritual value. Moreover, the aggressively destructive influence of Anglo-American version of liberalism as a value and humanitarian reference point on the national experience, tradition and culture of the countries and peoples of the former Soviet Union, has made such a choice only attractive for insular minorities, situationally represented in the national political and economic elite.

For a democratic majority of the population long-term results of the spiritual orientation on the atlanticist version of liberal values become increasingly dubious and strategically hopeless. This is shown as a negative experience gained in the implementation of economic reforms and diverse in its manifestation devastating impact on the social, spiritual and intellectual spheres of public life, which caused the crisis of family relations, the strain of legal representation, the prevalence of various forms of deviant behavior.

For all the visual appeal of the different versions of liberal values as a spiritual guide for the countries of the former Soviet Union, the introduction of a national culture of the peoples of the CIS did not lead to moral improvement of society, nor to the

cultural advancement of the inhabitants, or to enhance the creative potential of the intellectual elite. The latter has been clearly manifested in the destruction of the national research schools, the degradation of the system of higher education, the loss of human resources for the implementation of various programs of economic and social problems, a catastrophic decline in the prestige of occupations connected with skilled and creative labour.

The reasons for this are varied and are the subject of a special study. One of them is seen in the rapid vanishing of the spiritual and humanitarian component of the ideology of liberalism in the 21st century, a more consistent transformation of it into a version of simulacrum of political technology, designed to provide in certain spatial and temporal boundaries only an effective manipulation of mass and individual behavior. In this capacity, the Anglo-American version of the absolute priority of the liberal values of freedom and human rights is increasingly transformed into a spiritual analogy of "force-scientific worldview," which was stated as a value basis of the USSR at the stage of "developed socialism."

Best of all value crisis of modern liberalism manifests itself in the loss of its spiritual and religious grounds. The vanishing of sacred component, which is actively used as a source of conceptual notions of freedom and human rights, religious dogma and axiology, in today's global community becomes a decisive factor in reducing the attractiveness of moral values of the liberal mind.

For the peoples of the former Soviet Union, having undergone a negative experience of domination of state atheism, and finally got a real chance of finding adequate spiritual and moral guidelines that can unite the religious enthusiasm and faith in the values of freedom, dignity and human solidarity, militant liberalism of modern atlanticism contains too many repulsive things that cannot be reduced only to the substitution of the sacredness of efficiency. More significant is the nihilistic attitude to the values and historical experience, embodying the results of centuries

of searching and finding of national and cultural identity of the peoples of the world, a claim to the spiritual hegemony, and the lack of alternatives of a value choice, a willingness to impose it by the force of arms with the help of humanitarian intervention.

As an alternative to the spiritual surrender under the pressure of the liberal and atlantistic value standards can be considered attempts to shape the realities of the former Soviet Union or other options for establishing an authoritarian and paternalistic political regimes, focused on the use of elements of the value potential that has emerged in the Soviet era in the territory of the former USSR. The most striking example of this alternative is the Republic of Belarus, which was able not only to preserve and enhance the legacy of industrial and production capacity, inherited from the Soviet Union, but at the same time which is actively reanimating some positive elements of the spiritual experience of the Soviet era as the basis of gaining a modern state and national identity of the Belarusian people.

Among them, the central place is occupied by the value of patriotism, respect for their own history in the unity of its positive and negative experience, the credibility of honest work, the protection of social rights, the care of the younger generation. Characteristic for this is the desire of the Belarusian ruling elite not only to preserve the historical memory of the events of the Great Patriotic War, but also to transform it into an effective reserve replacement and upgrading of the national identity of the Belarusian people. This is actively demonstrated, in particular, by the inclusion in the program of secondary education as a subject of study of the course "The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people (in the context of the Second World War)" [1, c. 15].

However, it is humanitarian and value characteristics of authoritarian and populist and paternalistic modes that make them not only vulnerable to criticism from world leaders, but also devoid of strategic vision. One may admire the cleanness and order

in the streets of Minsk, by the scope of social programs and the realities of their content under the direction of A. Lukashenko's administration. However, the fact that his regime does not find a common language with the younger generation and relies primarily on the people of over 45 years of age, makes it historically doomed even without the intervention of the United States and the European Union¹.

In these circumstances, a creative reinterpretation of the concept of Eurasianism as a vector for the formation of spiritual and humanitarian foundations of integration of the countries of the former Soviet Union is largely converted into a separate area of cooperation of the republics of the former USSR. Without a solution to this problem any options to find the identity of the CIS as an international political region seem hopeless.

International political region [3, c. 29] constitutes itself within the international community, not only by the integrity of the system of trade and economic relations, stability of political cooperation in the area of world politics, but above all by the spiritual and value originality, that has a real impact on the content of political and economic relations. Nowhere this side of regional integration is more obvious than in the activities of the European Union, for which the values of European identity are prioritized with respect to those or other economic or political temptations or challenges.

Are the countries of the former CIS able to develop on the basis of the concept of the Eurasian system of strategic value and humanitarian targets, which would have the potential for stable integration of the peoples of the former Soviet Union? It seems that the political reality of the modern CIS provides sufficient grounds for a positive answer to this question. Although this process is implemented in a contradictory and unstable forms, due to the incompleteness of the transformation of the Eurasian discourse into the political lan-

¹ *Attack on Belarus // Zavtra. № 28 (921). July 2011. Page 2.*

guage of the description of threats, challenges, strategies for the protection of national interests, which is adequate to modern realities.

The most complete, this function of the Eurasian discourse is implemented in the justification of the assertion of the priority of the world as the highest human values, which is embodied in the achievement of sustainable harmony between peoples, citizens, ethnic groups, as opposed to any form of approval of various versions of the power of the political hegemony of the modernist or counter modernist character.

At first glance, the priority of establishing peace as a supreme value, the cementing operation of the CIS as an international political region has historically been limited and reflects the political circumstances of the collapse of the Soviet Union which gave rise to a process of territorial demarcation and ethnic self-identification of the sovereign territories. It is to this understanding that some external power, political elites and the CIS nations encouraged, speaking of the Commonwealth of Independent States as a form of some kind of “civilized divorce”.

However, this perception of the CIS is fundamentally contrary to the Eurasian concept. The substitution of the integration processes by the optimization versions of regional ethnic conflicts in the state and non-state forms, giving it a low intensity and, therefore, acceptable to a certain part of the world community character, has dramatically destructive impact on both the everyday politics in the region and the prospects for the strategic positioning of the countries members of the CIS.

With this approach, the CIS has become one of the enduring global zones of “controlled chaos” that is doomed to what would be constantly used as such as a strategic resource of world politics. In other words it will turn into a bargaining chip in geostrategic games of the new millennium.

To what extent does the approval of the international and civil peace as a fundamental value orientations of the CIS, con-

sidered in the future as an independent international political region in the area of world politics, require a radical break with the liberal value mainstream embodied in the atlantistic understanding of the priority values of freedom and human rights?

It appears that for raising this question there are neither compelling legal or historical bases, nor real-life scenarios of implementation. On the unbreakable bond of lasting peace, freedom and justice with the recognition of the dignity inherent to all members of the human family, their equal and inalienable rights, there is a direct reference in the fundamental international legal instrument of our time — the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹, in other sources of modern international law, defining the basic meanings of his theory and the extent of their implementation in practice.

However, the reason to rethink the content of these legal norms has become the practice of humanitarian intervention due to global geopolitical catastrophe — the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is important to note that in practice this form of peacekeeping is increasingly used for the implementation of various selfish national interests of the United States.

As Professor of Political Science of Svostorski College in the USA J. Kutz noted in this regard: “the achievement of a single superpower status of the United States has given rise to two approaches to the assessment of the political institution of humanitarian intervention. Proponents of the first approach, the neoconservatives and neoliberals call for the establishment of the American empire, which, carrying out military and humanitarian intervention would tend to globalization, the spread of liberal democracy, free markets and open societies around the world. The supporters of the other view, especially the activists of the civil rights movement, call for a “global governance” on the basis of international institutions, standing on the

¹ *Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Cited: URL: <http://www.humanities.edu.ru/db/mgs/60102>.

protection of universal human rights, as opposed to states abusing the rights of its citizens. The authors of the concept called for a massive humanitarian intervention through the international organization" [5, c. 142–143].

Thus, in the spiritual and evaluative arsenal of the modern version of the human rights of atlanticism in practice is embodied the idea of the former U.S. Secretary of Defense Alexander Haig, who back in the 70's claimed that "there are things more important than peace." Moreover, proponents of atlantistic version of human rights "insist that humanitarian intervention, in combination with the active U.S. military forces are the backbone of effective protection of human rights on an international scale. Director of the Centre for Human Rights Michael Ignatieff of Harvard University proposed the concept of the "American Empire", according to which the United States is charged with the duty to implement the idea of human rights around the world" [Ibid., p. 146].

In these circumstances, the introduction of a conceptual arsenal of Eurasian intellectual discourses delivering content of economic and socio-political processes in the CIS, as a legal novel of the right to peace as the supreme universal value of the peoples of the Commonwealth states, and their subjective right, acts as an actual direction of spiritual and value consolidation of the countries of this region. Through the implementation of such a political move, agreed by all members of the community, it is possible not only to enhance in the appearance of the CIS features of an independent international political region, but also to overcome the value gap with a positive spiritual experience of the people in the period of co-existence within the borders of the USSR.

Updating the priority right to peace and the unity of the international civilian components can also enhance the value-legal foundation on which to build the practice of conflict resolution and peacemaking in the content of the CIS.

This measure will also help to address such an important issue in today's reali-

ties of the Commonwealth of Independent States as ensuring information security of its peoples.

The proclamation of the right to peace as a universal priority of the CIS as an independent international political region will create a legal basis for the limitation in its borders of various kinds of information warfare. In the current situation, these wars go beyond the ideological and political confrontation between the elites and counter-elites, become the source of threats not only to civil peace and social stability, but also, under certain circumstances create a real basis for the outbreak of war in the region.

As noted in this connection in the statement of the Heads of the SCO Member States on international information security on June 15, 2006, "at present there is a real danger of the use of ICT (information and communication technologies) for the aims capable to cause serious damage to the security of the person, company and the state in violation of the fundamental principles of equality and mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-use of force, respect for human rights. In this case, the threat of use of ICT for criminal, terrorist and military and political purposes that are incompatible with international security can be implemented in both the civil and military spheres, and lead to serious political and socio-economic consequences in individual countries, regions and the world in general, to the destabilization of public life"¹.

The assertion of the right to peace as a value and legal right basis of the CIS, not only in the form of the specific content of intergovernmental cooperation, but also as binding legal norms of regional cooperation and the development of links, and

¹ *The Statement made by the leaders of the member countries of the SCO on the international information security* (Shanghai, June, 15, 2006): [Online resource] // the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. URL: <http://www.sectsc.org/RU/show.asp?id=107> (date of applying: 30.05.2011).

would allow to use yet unique examples of the global constitutional and legal practice, accumulated number of countries of Asia and Latin America [2, page 182], and as a factor in strengthening the international authority of the CIS in the world.

The area of economic and political cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States demonstrates the possibilities of strengthening integration relations in all directions while using a variety of sometimes unique because of their innovative forms of political interaction. Expanding the use of space for new forms of cooperation, extending it to value and humanitarian interaction component is designed to become a new factor to strengthen the integration process. The assertion of the right to peace as a universal value and legal norms of the Commonwealth of Independent States, organically related to the Eurasian discourse of articulation of national interests of Russia can be an effective coordinated response of its people to the humanitarian challenges and threats of the modern world.

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