

## THE INFLUENCE OF POST-SOVIET SPACE TRANSFORMATION ON GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL SCENARIOS

## ВПЛИВ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ ПОСТРАДЯНСЬКОГО ПРОСТОРУ НА ГЛОБАЛЬНІ ГЕОПОЛІТИЧНІ СЦЕНАРІЇ

*The purpose of the article is the research of underlying features and possible consequences of the world geopolitical shifts after USSR fall. The methodology of the research is based on principles of a geopolitical analysis using both realistic and constructivist approach with its development into a meta-geopolitics. The article analyses the possible geopolitical scenarios of post-Soviet space based on causes and results of the disintegration. The transition process from autocracy to democracy and backward is analysed. The feasibility of study is based on the increasing value of diplomatic relations with the former USSR and the assessment of geopolitical changes in the world after the Soviet collapse and the current geopolitical situation in Central and Eastern Europe and the world at the whole.*

**Key words:** Geopolitics, meta-geopolitics, New Cold War, democratic and totalitarian states.

*Метою статті є дослідження фундаментальних чинників та можливих наслідків світових геополітичних зсувів після розпаду СРСР. Методологія дослідження базується на принципах геополітичного аналізу з використанням як підходу реалізму так і конструктивізму з їх перетворенням в метагеополітику. Стаття аналізує можливі геополітичні сценарії пост – радянського простору, які базуються на принципах причинно-наслідкових зв'язків дезинтеграції. Аналізується процес переходу від автократії до демократії та навпаки. Актуальність обраної теми*

*підтверджується зростанням ролі дипломатичних відносин в колишньому СРСР та оцінці геополітичних змін у світі після колапсу СРСР та поточної геополітичної ситуації в Центральній та Східній Європі та світі в цілому.*

**Ключові слова:** геополітика, метагеополітика, Нова Холодна Війна, демократичні і тоталітарні держави.

*Целью статьи является исследование фундаментальных факторов и возможных последствий мировых геополитических сдвигов после распада СССР. Методология исследования базируется на принципах геополитического анализа с использованием как подхода реализма, так и конструктивизма с их превращением в метагеополитику. Статья анализирует возможные геополитические сценарии пост - советского пространства, основанные на принципах причинно-следственных связей дезинтеграции. Анализируется процесс перехода от автократии к демократии и наоборот. Актуальность выбранной темы подтверждается ростом роли дипломатических отношений в бывшем СССР и оценке геополитических изменений в мире после коллапса СССР и текущей геополитической ситуации в Центральной и Восточной Европе, и мире в целом.*

**Ключевые слова:** геополитика, метагеополитика, Новая Холодная Война, демократические и тоталитарные государства.

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**Problem setting.** Global geopolitical shifts are the main triggers of the macroeco-nomic dynamic and, at the same time, fundamental macroeconomic factors have great influence on global geopolitics. The result of finding causes and consequences of geopolitical transformation is a powerful tool for government politics and policy.

The purpose of the article is the research of underlying features and possible scenarios of the world geopolitical shifts and possible consequences of the world geopolitical shifts after USSR fall. The methodology of the research is based on principles of geopolitical analysis that uses both realistic and constructivist approach.

The authors of the research, using different sources prove that Ukraine independence was one of the key events for changing Russian geopolity towards democracy, which then was reoriented towards totalitarian. The role of key geopolitical figures in transforming former Soviet geopolitical space is also described. The main factors of macroeconomic dynamic, which has the direct influence on post-Soviet geopolitical structure space, are also determined. The article identifies differences and similarities between the factors that influenced the configuration of geopolitical scenarios of the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

In the 25 years since USSR collapse, the multi-pronged path of development, travelled by newly independent states appeared on USSR territory has been challenging, including de-democratization process compared with Restructuring (Rus. Perestroika) in the USSR [Hale, 2016]. Post-Soviet space primarily did not use the possibilities of transition to democratic values, except for 3 former Soviet republics – Baltic States. Geopolitical map of the world is formed at the moment, under the influence of such antidemocratic revanchism.

President and the government of Russian Federation are usually accused of redesigning of Yalta Conference and destruction of the world order, that is indeed the case. Actually, other 11 post-Soviet countries with their authoritarian or pseudo-liberal crony regimes also made a significant contribution in approaching of the world order to the state close to collapse.

Post-Soviet political systems mainly are reminiscent of today's Russia, appeared much earlier of V. Putin coming to power, though quite often not without an assistance of Kremlin. Moreover, the former democratic leaders could use autocratic models of governance (E. Shevardnadze, L. Ter-Petrosyan, and others) [2]. Also, there are significant variations in regimes towards democracy and vice versa.

The main factors of transition towards autocratic (semi-autocratic regimes) according to G. Hale are corruption, weak democratic institutes, patronalism resilience, and nepotism. Liberal democracy requires a full-scale assault on patronalism [6, p. 29] and the victory of political pluralism.

However, even more geopolitically significant was the undoing of the centuries – old Moscow – rules Great Russian Empire precipitated by the general socio-economic and political failure of the Soviet system, formally replaced by a vaguer entity – called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) [2, p. 96].

**Recent researches and publications.** Methodological and theoretical approaches to these problems solutions connected with USSR collapse are reflected in research papers of domestic and foreign researchers: Z. Brzeziński, Y. Gaidar, H. Hale, T. Hopf, H. Kissinger [5, 2, 6, 7], and others. However, the research of geopolitical shifts in the world after USSR collapse is still relevant.

**Task setting.** The main task of the research is the estimation of powerful states' role in regional and global geopolitics. The relevance of the study is substantiated by increasing importance of diplomatic relations development with post-Soviet countries and estimation of geopolitical shifts in the world after Soviet Union collapse and the modern geopolitical situation in Central and Eastern Europe as well as globally. The principal source of research is the Russian Federation as a country with the largest geopolitical potential of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Since the world is on the last peaceful phase before a new Cold War, the purpose of the research is an attempt to reveal the main historical factors, which have led to the pre-war situation and attempt to show the possible way out of this conflict.

That is why the main objectives of the research are:

- study of the causes, which led to an actual revival of the "Iron Curtain", which separated people of the former communist empire from the rest of the world and have been broken in the 1990s;
- study of new geopolitical centres' emergence and their influence on global macroeconomic policy;
- analysis of geopolitical processes with the application of realistic as well as constructivist approach with spilling over meta-geopolitics is the theoretical framework for research;
- determination of external direct and indirect factors, which determine the macroeconomic dynamics that affect the geopolitical structure of the former Soviet space

**Presentation of the main research material.**

Since 18 century, the Russian Empire and further the Soviet Union were the key objects of geopolitical struggle. After Soviet Union collapse, its different parts never ceased to be the arena of fierce fighting even at the time of Soviet Union collapse and incredible geopolitical disorder.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was the final stage in a progressive fragmentation of the vast Sino-Soviet communist bloc, which lasted roughly 10 years; the Soviet Union – about seventy [11, p. 87-89]. The frontiers of Russia had been rolled back to where they had been in the Caucasus in the early 1800s, in Central Asia in the middle 1800s, and revived strategic fears of resurgent Turkish influence; the loss of Central Asia generated a sense of deprivation regarding the enormous energy and mineral resources of the region and the anxiety over a potential Islamic challenge; and Ukraine's independence challenged the very essence of Russia's claim to being the divinely endowed standard – bearer of a common pan – Slavic identity [2, p 88–89].

Historical shock has been magnified by the fact that 20 million of the Russian-speaking population became the residents of foreign states, where the power is predominantly controlled by local nationalists' elites. Post-Empire syndrome made itself felt. "It's a decease. Russia goes through its dangerous stage. An appeal to post-Empire nostalgia, nationalism, ordinary anti-Americanism and even not for quite ordinary anti-Europeanism has been in vogue and even will get a norm. It is important to realize how it dangerous for the country and the world" [5].

The crash of the Russian Empire provided a power vacuum at the very heart of Eurasia. A weakness and a mess have emerged not just in the Newly Independent States, but in Russia as well; the uproar has generated the catastrophic system crisis, which had been facilitated by the fact that political upheaval was accompanied by simultaneous attempts of the former Soviet socio-economic model destruction.

T. Hopf marks that "Russia found itself between two different modern identities – soviet past and western nowadays" [7]. At the same time, the post-imperial syndrome has emerged. Nostalgia for spatially integrated empires is stronger and longer than for overseas. It is easy to persuade that the society, which collapsed so unexpected, would be likewise so fast recovered [5].

Russia's reputation just like the regional state of the third world with formidable nuclear arsenal has resulted in a strong resistance of great power class, which finally had led to the establishment of revanchist's pro-imperial system. The result has been the withdrawal of Yalta system of geopolitical agreements, which existed before 1945. This phenomenon indicates that the Russian Federation actually has not passed through the stage of decolonization as a metropolis and it can be expected for its relapse but in more painful format. Economic growth is impossible in this case or is complicated over the edge since the national political system has not passed through the process of transformation.

Social crisis in Russia, caused by dictatorships regimes repressions, civil and world wars was deepened by ecological disaster, demographic crisis, and appropriate duration of life decline.

Social conditions were actually typical for the middle-income country of the third world. Ideological crisis and pauperization had led the Russian Federation to the geopolitical crisis because clear vectors of identification have disappeared. The loss of large areas on the west after USSR collapse heavily influenced the changing geopolitical vector consciousness – from European-oriented values to diametrically opposite – Asian despotism with elements of European democracy.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the expansion of NATO by former Soviet satellites have become an additional factor that deepened the fear of the former mother country on its own existence. It is well-known that Russian Federation is nationally heterogeneous and also faces the problems of a possible internal disintegration, which is currently artificially constrained. The restore of Ukrainian independence has caused a serious blow to Russia's imperial ambitions.

The loss of land transit areas and seaports on the Black Sea, Baltic, and the Caspian Sea significantly worsened the economic position of the Russian Federation and its military-marine potential. Under the increased influence of Turkey and Iran to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The loss of Ukraine represented a vital geopolitical setback for the Russian state. Russia that retained the control over Ukraine could steel seek to be the leader of an assertive Eurasian empire, in which Moscow could dominate the non-Slavs in the South and Southeast of the former Soviet Union. But without Ukraine, any attempt by Moscow to rebuild the Eurasian empire would likely to make Russia inevitably less European and more Asiatic with each passing year [2, p. 15].

The loss of Ukraine was not only geopolitically pivotal but also geopolitically catalytic. It was Ukrainian actions – the Ukrainian declaration of independence in December 1991, its insistence in the critical negotiations that the Soviet Union should be replaced by a looser Commonwealth of Independent States, and especially the sudden coup-like imposition of Ukrainian command over the Soviet army units stationed on Ukrainian soil – that prevented the CIS from becoming merely a new name for a more confederal USSR. Ukraine's political self-determination stunned Moscow and set an example that the other Soviet republics, though initially more timidly, then followed [2, p. 15–15].

Ukrainian nationalism fuelled objectively by the consciousness of the new Ukrainian elite inferiority and generally all segments of Ukrainian people who came to move on the general economic and political scene. When Russian patriots, recognizing the Ukrainians part of the Ukrainian people do not want to hear about the Ukrainian language, they were painted in their quest to fix this inadequacy and inferiority forever [13].

The emergence of the independent Central Asian states meant that in some places Russia's south-eastern frontier had been pushed back northward more than one thousand miles [2, p. 93]. The new states now controlled vast mineral and energy deposits, determined their foreign policy and created a strategy for access to world resource markets, resources of other countries.

Supported from the outside by Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, the Central Asian states have not been inclined to trade their new political sovereignty even for the sake of beneficial economic integration with Russia, as many Russians continued to hope they would. For the Russians, the spectre of a potential conflict with the Islamic states along Russia's entire southern flank (which, adding in Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, account for more than 300 million people) has to be a source of serious concern [2, p. 95].

At the time of the collapse of its empire, Russia also faced an alarming new geopolitical situation in the Far East. Russia, at least in the military-political sphere, cannot ignore the fact that China has become a more advanced, dynamical, and successful state than Russia. China has grown already to the status of "great power" in the 21st century, together with the growing influence of the EU as a "normative power". Over the past decade, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has become a powerful global player interstate, which includes also the Russian Federation and many other post-Soviet countries. From the 1st October 2016, Chinese yuan has become one of the official reserve currency.

Political geography (modern geopolitics) of Russia is frozen at the level of the "Heartland" concept of the late XIX – beginning of XX century, which has already gone through Germany and some other countries. At the moment, there is a likelihood that resuscitation of "heartland" ideas at the same time in Russia and China will face the interests of these countries in the Far East and Central Asia and will make minor events at the East of Ukraine and in Crimea.

By the words of Vladimir Lukin "In the past, Russia saw itself as being ahead of Asia, though lagging behind Europe. But since then, Asia has developed much faster we find ourselves to be not so much between "modern Europe" and "backward Asia" but rather occupying some strange middle space between two "Europes" [2, p. 96-77].

Lost by Russia in the early 90s the monopoly right to free movement of goods, services and space management on the ¼ of the Earth's surface has led to a painful attempt of superpower resuscitation in the areas of institutional and foreign military expansion. As a result, the Russian Federation itself was surrounded by a number of explicit and imaginary enemies, which led to the respective conflicts (Georgia, Ukraine, Syria). The current geopolitical strategy of Russian Federation is also aimed at the active

development of the northern territories, including the Arctic and its natural resources; it is also a subject of heated territorial dispute between the leading political and military blocs, states and international economic actors with their own regional identity. The centre of Russian external intellection and planning moves to the Arctic, which has become a major geopolitical frontier of the country [9].

The collapse of the USSR and the “socialist camp” changed the bipolar sustainable world. Confrontation on the line “the East-West” still exists but transformed. An attempt to create a powerful economic bloc BRICS is nothing more than an effort to create a new line of confrontation in a hidden form.

There are the lines of collective distinctions in the polycentric world, which have emerged in the last decade. Objectively, by the law of polycentric distinction, it is pushing Russia and China to a closer partnership, encourages the political vector of CIS/BRICS for the creation of economic and political counterweight to the West [1].

The main military opponent – the United States for a time changed its geopolitical position, allowing to turn away, but not to eliminate the threat of the world nuclear catastrophe because of configuration changes of confrontation between the West and Russia. Democratic reforms and free market development have become defining features of the transformation of countries – from Europe to Latin America, from Africa to Asia. The configuration of geopolitical forces in the post-bipolar world has changed [14].

The actual victory in the “Cold War” has turned the United States for a time in the sole world leader – the only superpower in the political and military dimension that has the ability to intervene in the events taking place in any part of the globe. This “has given rise to the temptation to remake the world in the American image,” according to the well-known strategist Henry Kissinger. Such trends in US foreign policy became manifest with due dates of the “Cold War”. In the new world order decreases the value of military power and military-political factors, which previously determined the actual weight and influence of the certain state. This largely contributes to the emergence of new world leaders – “poles of attraction” – Japan, China, European Union, Australia, Taiwan, and others. Obviously, in a multipolar world order, Russia retains an important role.

In the context of the world multipolarity, the possibilities of preservation or the appearance of one superpower, capable of making self-control on the planet are significantly limited [8].

Relations between the US and its allies have also changed significantly. The traditional NATO allies added new NATO countries of Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries, as well as Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine. Communist threat was replaced by the threat of Russian neo-imperialism.

An increasing number of countries have come out of the scope of the rivalry of the great powers and acquire the ability to carry out independent policy, sometimes against their former protectors. The dividing of the world into three worlds loses a sense, as well as the concept of the “third world”. The number of newly industrialized countries is growing every year.

If during the “Cold War” at the first place were systemic, modular interests penetrated mainly by ideological essence, now on the forefront are the interests of individual countries, groups of countries, nations. The world is becoming more uniformed, but also more diverse.

At the same time, the disappearance of the bipolar confrontation and the entry of the world in the post-communist period were many circumstances that complicated the situation [4].

The situation was complicated by the appearance on the international stage due to the collapse of the USSR and Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, many new pseudo-states and puppet states (Republic of Abkhazia, Transdnester Republic, Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic, etc.). According to opinion of many geopolitical experts, the Balkans may also be included in a new military conflict through the actions of the Kremlin, including active participation in the referendum in Republika Srpska, attempts to create a Macedonian-Albanian conflict, and attempts to thwart Montenegro's accession to NATO [3].

Back in 2008, after the military aggression in Georgia, “the Russian leadership has already openly questioned whether it needs to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity. Russian leaders have also remarked that Crimea, a part of Ukraine, should once again be joined to Russia. Similarly, Russian pressure on Moldova led to the effective partition of that small former Soviet republic” [11].

**Conclusions from the research.** Local and regional conflicts of different scale and intensity in the anticipated term has become the most likely form of the power of solving territorial, ethnic, religious, economic and other contradictions. That is the present world is on the verge of a new “Cold War”, which can be more damaging or even catastrophic for humanity.

The new situation is on the territory of the former USSR. Former Soviet Republics became the subjects of international law and provided themselves a possibility to be involved in sovereign domestic and international affairs. But the hopeless attempts to return them to their recent “common unit” have not disappeared to give them almost an international status and recognition. CIS is no longer able to operate efficiently. It is not just going through the complex processes of the struggle between centripetal and eccentric forces, but also the process of disintegration, which actually began after Russian occupation of Crimea and Donbass separatists' support.

The responsibility for this lies now not on the sovereign states, but mostly on certain Russian political forces that are trying to get this states back into the past. Political consultant S. Belkovsky says: "In 2004–2008 years should be laid the foundations for the Russian nation. There is only one destiny for our nation – imperial." Russian President Vladimir Putin in his message to the Federal Assembly has called the collapse of the Soviet Union the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century [5].

These statements and corresponding actions deepen the new format of confrontation line now not only by the East-West but also on the new confrontation line East-East-West (the Russian Federation – China and Japan – the US and EU).

In the Russian Federation took place reconsideration and as a result a re-restriction of electoral rights of the population. It includes partially possible recognition of the Russian Federation Constitutional Court the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights decree. In particular, it is considered impossible on the part concerning the amendments to the Russian legal system and granting to the prisoners the right to vote [12].

Another law allows restricting extrajudicially the rights and freedoms only if accusations in actions and statements do not meet the "generally accepted in the social norms of behaviour."

Limitations of the colonies population electoral rights meet the realities of the XVI–XVII centuries when European empires began forming the world, XVII–XIX centuries, which prepared the preconditions of modern economic growth. However, it contradicts the notion of reasonable political system typical for the second half of the XX century [10].

There are also external direct and indirect factors determining the macroeconomic dynamics that affect the geopolitical structure of the former Soviet space:

1. Annexation of Crimea and intervention of the Russian Federation in Donbas

2. Oil price – revenues of exporters and importers' costs. Low oil prices in late 2015 led to the loss of the economy stimulation and worsening economic situation. There is a risk of lifting sanctions from Russia since it can compensate the losses for lower oil prices.

3. The war in the Middle East and refugees' problems – direct losses (Syria) and indirect (Germany and other EU countries).

4. The lifting of sanctions from Iran and turning back the powerful player on the oil market.

5. The direct intervention the Russian Federation in the Syrian conflict and re-restrained relations with the US and its allies.

6. The deterioration of relations between Russia and Turkey, including the is-sues of Kurdistan and Syria.

7. Policy changes in Uzbekistan and regional policy in Central Asia in general, aimed at improving relations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, including on the issue of supply (transit) energy.

Supporters of the Russian Empire revival appealed to the Russian Empire and the USSR. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union changed the global geopolitical system of the world. The former balance of power was broken.

First, global dual system (East-West, communism – capitalism) has gone and, according to bipolarity in international relations (confrontation along the lines of the USSR – the US, the Warsaw Pact – NATO), the weaker Soviet Union was defeated, which is again trying to revive itself as neo-imperial ambitions of Russia.

Second, the fuzzy multi-polarity has appeared in the world with the obvious advantage of the United States as the winner in the "Cold War" first phase (until about 2013) and large uncertainties in the future. This uncertainty should define the policy of the US president since the end of 2016.

Some geopolitical power centres (Russia, China, Japan, European Union, and others) require the revision of the world order that emerged after the World War II and advocate multiregularity of the world development.

Thirdly, Yalta Agreement System established in 1945 actually collapsed in 2014 after Russian annexation of Crimea. Ensuring stability in Europe, conflict resolution resulting in subnational motivations, active cooperation with the EU, OSCE, and the Council of Europe were the main activities of the North Atlantic bloc by 2013.

After the aggressive actions of Russia in Ukraine in 2014, NATO countries demonstrated a short-term confusion because of the new format of relations with the Russian Federation, which is in profound transformation for this moment.

Fourth, the tension in international relations, which was neutralized during the fall of the "Iron Curtain" in the 1990s and separated peoples of the former communist empire from the rest of the civilized world, is growing again.

Further developments of the research will continue towards forecasting the emergence of new geopolitical paradigm in transformational societies of the post-Soviet space and findings of external factors evaluation influencing the stability of economic and political systems in the region.

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### THE INFLUENCE OF POST-SOVIET SPACE TRANSFORMATION ON GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL SCENARIOS

Global geopolitical shifts are the main triggers of the macroeconomic dynamic and, at the same time, fundamental macroeconomic factors have a great influence on global geopolitics. The result of finding causes and consequences of geopolitical transformation is a powerful tool for government politics and policy.

Methodological and theoretical approaches to these problems solutions connected with USSR collapse are reflected in research papers of domestic and foreign researchers: Z. Brzeziński, Y. Gaidar, H. Hale, T. Hopf, H. Kissinger, and others. However, the research of geopolitical shifts in the world after USSR collapse is still relevant.

Since the world is on the last peaceful phase before a new Cold War, the purpose of the research is an attempt to reveal the main historical factors, which have led to the pre-war situation and attempt to show the possible way out of this conflict.

The crash of the Russian Empire provided a power vacuum at the very heart of Eurasia. A weakness and a mess have emerged not just in the Newly Independent States, but in Russia as well; the uproar has generated the catastrophic system crisis, which had been facilitated by the fact that political upheaval was accompanied by simultaneous attempts of the former Soviet socio-economic model destruction. Social conditions were actually typical for the middle-income country of the third world. Ideological crisis and pauperization had led the Russian Federation to the geopolitical crisis because clear vectors of identification have disappeared.

**Conclusions** from the study. Supporters of the Russian Empire revival appealed to the Russian Empire and the USSR. The former balance of power was broken. The global dual system has gone and according to bipolarity in international relations, the weaker Soviet Union was defeated, which is trying to revive itself as neo-imperial ambitions of Russia. The fuzzy multi-polarity has appeared in the world with the obvious advantage of the United States as the winner in the "Cold War" first phase and large uncertainties in the future. Some geopolitical power centres require the revision of the world order

Yalta Agreement System, established in 1945, actually had collapsed in 2014 after Russian annexation of Crimea. Ensuring stability in Europe, conflict resolution resulting in subnational motivations, active cooperation with the EU, OSCE, and the Council of Europe were the main activities of the North Atlantic bloc by 2013. The tension in international relations, which was neutralized during the fall of the "Iron Curtain" in the 1990s and separated peoples of the former communist empire from the rest of the civilized world, is growing again.

Further developments of the research will continue towards forecasting the emergence of new geopolitical paradigm in transformational societies of the post-Soviet space and findings of external factors evaluation influencing the stability of economic and political systems in the region.