



Russia in a Changing World

Edited by
Glenn Diesen · Alexander Lukin

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INTRODUCTION

Tectonic changes in the world are transforming the international system, which presents Russia with both threats and opportunities. The international distribution of power disrupts as the world transitions from a unipolar to a multipolar system, geoeconomic levers of power shift from the West to the East, global value chains are restructured, environmental degradation and water scarcity add additional considerations to foreign policy, green energy can disrupt the role of natural resources in great power politics, the sovereign state is challenged by secessionism and regional integration, and the crisis in liberalism is spurring a renewal of ideological rivalry. The emergence of new political, economic, and military realities can assist in overcoming flaws in the international system or merely exacerbate existing rivalries.

To understand how Russia endeavors to shape and adapt to the new world, it is imperative to assess conflicting views on the post-Cold War era as it is reaching its end. The collapse of the Soviet Union initially set an independent Russia on the path towards a partnership with the West. Without the bipolar international distribution of power supported ideologically by the communist-capitalist divide, Yeltsin charted a Western path and he believed that Russia was in a favorable position to continue Gorbachev's policies of constructing a "Common European Home." Yet, Moscow's "Greater Europe" Initiative, aimed to end dividing lines and harmonize interests across the pan-European space was largely rejected in the West. The West preferred the "Europe Whole and Free" initiative, advocated by President Bush in 1989, which sought to integrate most of Europe governed by liberal democratic rules under the authority of the

US/NATO and the EU. The West proclaimed the new Europe would be inherently benign due to the inter-democratic structures of Europe, while Russia feared that liberal democracy would merely become instrumental to revive ideological dividing lines to marginalize Russia on the continent. New divisions emerged on the European continent as Russia was not included in the main institutions, and the former capitalist–communist divide was recast as a liberal democratic–authoritarian divide. The failure to reach a mutually acceptable post-Cold War settlement with Russia became the source of estrangement and conflicts ever since. Putin opined:

We did everything wrong from the outset. We did not overcome Europe’s division: 25 years ago the Berlin Wall fell, but Europe’s division was not overcome, invisible walls simply moved to the East. This created the foundation for mutual reproaches, misunderstanding, and crises in the future.¹

Russian and Western perspectives on the post-Cold War era are diametrically opposite. The mere reference to the “post-Cold War era” demonstrates conceptual ambiguity about this period by reference to the era that had passed. Moscow tends to refer to the era as the unipolar era, which from a realist perspective implies systemic incentives for expansionism and unilateralism as constraints on the West were removed and it became unbalanced. In the West, the post-Cold War era is commonly referred to as the “liberal international order”—denoting an era when liberal democratic norms would reign supreme and lay the foundation for perpetual peace. Moscow views the Cold War as having ended in 1989 with a compromise and engagement as announced by Bush and Gorbachev at the Malta Summit, which was then betrayed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In contrast, Washington argues the Cold War ended in 1991 in the form of a victory as the Soviet Union collapsed, and the subsequent leadership of the US would be undermined by Russian efforts to claim a seat at the table in Europe. Advocacy for a pan-European community as advocated by de Gaulle, Mitterrand, and Gorbachev is viewed with suspicion as another “peace offensive” to divide the West and demote the role of liberal democracy and the leadership of the US. From Moscow’s perspective, the opportunity to develop a European security architecture based on a mutually acceptable post-Cold War settlement was missed.

¹ Putin, V. 2016. “Interview to German newspaper Bild. Part 1”, January 11, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51154>

The point of departure from the West's perspective largely reflects Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis, which expected that the world would slowly move towards a liberal democratic peace under the collective leadership of the West. Liberal democracy was argued to be an intrinsic component of security, thus merging security and democracy into inter-democratic security institutions fit within a liberal ideology of perpetual peace. The marginalization of Russia in Europe was considered the price to pay for the new Europe, a problem that could be resolved within the framework of the collective primacy of NATO and EU. The West substituted its guiding policy of containing the Soviet Union with a pedagogic socializing role of civilizing Russia in a teacher-student relationship by rewarding "good behavior" or punishing "bad behavior." Russia was subsequently given the option of either accepting its marginal role in Europe as an object of security, or alternatively, reassert its interests and then be castigated as a counter-civilizational force to be contained again. When Russia began its recovery and reasserting itself in Europe after NATO's first expansion and invasion of Yugoslavia in 1999, the West depicted it as a return to Russia's imperial traditions and self-serving ambitions of its political class, which is personified by a vilified Putin. The rapidly deteriorating relations are therefore presented by the West as being caused by Russia's rejection of democracy, while Russia considers the West to use liberal democracy as a thinly disguised ideological veil for hegemony and unilateralism.

Moscow is increasingly moving towards a consensus that the post-Cold War era has been an untenable and failed experiment as Europe's largest nation has been demoted to the only non-European nation in Europe. European integration takes on a zero-sum format where the shared neighborhood must choose between the West and Russia, while the failure to make the correct choice is rectified with Western-backed color revolutions. The post-Cold War era did not merely produce a new unfavorable status-quo for Russia, rather a new status-quo cannot be established due to what is perceived as Western expansionism—manifested as relentless NATO and EU expansionism, incremental missile defense construction, and military interventionism. NATO and EU policies towards Eastern Europe suggests historical continuity due to the resemblance with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty imposed on Russia by Germany towards the end of the First World War, which called for the independence of non-Russian peoples in Eastern Europe—but was really to be cast under German rule.

An international rules-based system under the West's collective leadership becomes a contradiction as the West's collective leadership is dependent on "alliance solidarity," which will always trump consistent application of international law and Russia will therefore always be in the wrong. Success in the West is defined by the ability to demonstrate solidarity by extending anti-Russian sanctions irrespective of failed outcome, or the ability of the British to have its allies expel Russian diplomats without presenting proper evidence. The inherent contradictions of the West's "liberal hegemony" are caused by a growing rift between power aspirations and liberal democracy. As Kissinger aptly noted, when a system is built on power but lacks legitimacy, it eventually destroys itself.

The unraveling of the current world order entails several risks, yet, in crisis, there are also opportunities to remedy the weaknesses of the former world order. The rise of Asia has presented Russia with alternatives that were absent during the time of Primakov—regions that are prepared to establish greater autonomy from the Western-centric order. The emergence of a multipolar world is welcomed by Moscow as it imposes constraints on the West and enables Russia to diversify its dependence on the West. The relative power of the West is diminishing and its ability to coerce Russia militarily, economically, and politically will gradually wane. Russia's decades-long project for Greater Europe ended with the Western-backed coup in Ukraine and has since been replaced with the "Greater Eurasia Initiative" that is seen to be more feasible. China inevitably becomes Russia's main strategic partner due to its ability and intention to restructure global value chains to construct a post-Western and multipolar world. Moscow has subsequently become a leading supporter of China's Belt and Road Initiative, new trade blocs, and development of new financial instruments. Russia sees itself as a balancer and the Greater Eurasia initiative is, therefore, neither anti-Western or pro-Western, rather the objective is merely to impose constraints and make the West matter less. However, uncertainties remain over the birth of the multipolar world order. Will the multipolar order be established peacefully and will it impose the constraints and order as theorized? As the world transitions from the unipolar to the multipolar, the willingness to take greater risks grows and the possibilities for miscalculations heighten. How will Russia navigate its way into a new world order?

A WORLD UNDER TRANSFORMATION

This book aims to present a comprehensive view of leading Russian foreign policy experts on the changing structure of the new international order, the major political and economic disruptions, and Russia's place in this uncharted system. Russia is pursuing novel approaches to international security, experimental formats for global governance, and new sources of influence in the changing world. Russia's aspiration to integrate the entire Eurasian space in concert with China and other prominent powers is a comprehensive foreign and domestic policy.

The authors in this book assess whether Russia has the resources required to implement its ambitious goals. Can Russia transition from the dual periphery of Europe and East Asia, and establish itself as an independent power in the heart of a new Eurasian constellation? The analysis and expectations of the authors vary, albeit the consensus is that Russia has wedded itself to transforming itself to both shape and adapt to the new world. The authors here are affiliated with influential universities and think tanks, such as the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE); the Valdai Discussion Club, which works closely with the presidential administration and where President Putin often speaks; the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy (CFDP); and the *Russia in Global Affairs* journal. The political position of this school can generally be defined as centrist, which in the Russian context means criticizing both excessively pro-Western and extreme nationalist tendencies and proposals and supporting Russia's moderately independent course.

Most of the authors in this book are affiliated with the Higher School of Economics, a university established in 1992 with the objective of implementing liberal market reforms to bring Russia into the Western fold. Most of the authors have also been active in academic or political circles since the 1990s and were generally supportive of the course towards the integration with the West and its political and economic structures. Their turn to a more independent and national interest-oriented policy is an indication of the changing mood in the Russian academic community. The growing sentiment and consensus among the authors in this book are that Russia made some serious miscalculations in the early 1990s, and the current disruptions and transformation of the international system will work in the advantage of Russia, which is charting a new path for itself.

Chapter 1. The Military Underpinning of the Geopolitical Revolution

Sergey Karaganov, the Dean of Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, deliberates on the military basis of the contemporary shift in the international distribution of power from the West to the East. While the rise of Asia is widely recognized as a geoeconomic phenomenon, Karaganov argues that military power underpinned this phenomenon. The rise of Europe in the early sixteenth century and the subsequent 500 years of Western-centric world order were largely due to military superiority, which then laid the foundation for economic, political, territorial, and cultural expansion. Similarly, the rise of the Soviet Union as a formidable military power oversaw the deconstruction of European empires and Moscow constrained the West's ability to impose its rule on the world. This historical role of Russia appears to continue as Moscow now supports the rise of Asian giants such as China, and blocks the ability of the West to impose its rule by military force. Karaganov, therefore, posits that Russia has "mid-wifed" the return of a global balance of power and expanded the freedom of choice to the countries and peoples of the world.

Chapter 2. Prefabricated World Order and its Decline in the Twenty-First Century

Fyodor Lukyanov, Research Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics and editor of *Russia in Global Affairs* journal explores the decline of the post-Cold War world order. The New World Order was an inspiring notion right after the Cold War. A new stable international system was envisaged, which would be based on cooperation and mutual understanding instead of confrontation. It didn't happen for many reasons, but one of the most important was a profound shift in world balance from Euro-Atlantic to Asia. New World Order, as described in the late 1980s, was supposed to be based on Western experience and European achievements, which had to be expanded to the rest of the planet. But the Wider Europe concept failed to produce even an enduring European order, not to talk about its extension beyond European space. The inability to cope with Russia was one of the most vivid problems, which generated erosion of the whole project. And now, when Asian powers with their political cultures and traditions start to shape international politics, the "prefabricated model" of the post-Cold War era cannot be applied anymore. Future World Order will be created anew.

Chapter 3. Russia and the Changing World Order: In Search of Multipolarity

Alexander Lukin is Head of Department of International Relations and International Laboratory on World Order Studies and the New Regionalism at *National Research University Higher School of Economics*. Lukin explores Russia's search for a multipolar world order by constructing a Greater Eurasian region. The crisis in Ukraine in 2014 became a crossroads in world history as Russia decided no longer to follow the West and instead sought to embrace rival models. China becomes a key partner for Russia in the endeavor to create a multipolar world as China succeeded in doing what the Soviet Union failed to do—to create an alternative development model that did not follow the West. Supported by both economic and political interests, Russia has made formidable investments to rewire global value chains by linking itself to the Asian giants. With a growing number of states across the massive continent embracing some format for Eurasian integration, Russia is finding partners to enhance economic connectivity and develop new political realities. The growing sentiment among the Russian political class and society is that the West has less to offer and new opportunities await in Asia. Yet, a formidable struggle awaits as Russia is less experienced in the political, economic, and security environment of Asia and nobody is waiting for them with open arms.

Chapter 4. Russia's Economic Restructuring for the Fast-Changing Future

Leonid Grigoryev is a Tenured Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, and a former Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance. Russia has come through the heavy crisis of minus 44% GDP in the 1990s and “negative restructuring” in the economy. It had lost a lot of productive assets, a mass of the human capital. The restoration of the economic capability to produce certain sophisticated goods and services, to recreate its human capital may be considered as a miracle done the people of Russia. Now Russia, its people, and elites must prepare themselves for the long-term competition for the wellbeing of citizens, status of the great power, and national identity. There will be obstacles for Russian prosperity from sanctions and political rivalry in the foreseeable future. It will move along the difficult path of social development, financial stability, and modernization with the new global technological revolu-

tion, high-tech advance regardless to the level of oil prices. The success on this path is expected with rational utilization of the Russian tremendous human, natural, and productive capital with a completion of transformation to the effective market institutional basis.

Chapter 5. Securitizing Her Foreign Economic Policy: Evolution of the Russian Security Thinking in the 2010s

Maxim Bratersky is a Professor at the Department of International Relations at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, where he is also a Senior Researcher at the International Laboratory for World Order Studies and the New Regionalism. Bratersky explores how the goals of Russia's security doctrine shifted from assuring national security by integration and cooperation with the West to the idea of Russia's own independent geoeconomic project reducing the country's dependence on the West. This chapter contributes to the rich body of literature on Russian security perceptions and analyzes how Russian security thinking evolved over the last 20 years. Russia shifted away from the goal of assuring Russian security by integrating and cooperating with the West and instead seeks security by developing its own separate geoeconomic projects. The impact on Russian economic policies has been profound as security is now dependent on reducing economic dependencies on the West and establishing new centers of power.

Chapter 6. The Crisis in Liberalism and Renewal of Ideological Conflicts

Glenn Diesen, Professor at the Department of International Relations at the National Research University Higher School of Economics and editor at *Russia in Global Affairs*, opines that the crisis in liberalism is causing a revival in ideological rivalry. The post-Cold War era has largely been defined by the absence of rival ideologies as liberalism could reign supreme by informing politics, economics, and globalization. The return of ideological rivalry is caused by both international and domestic incentives to discover alternatives to rebalance liberalism. Liberal hegemony suggests that the ideological victory of the Cold War was linked to a national cause by perpetuating and facilitating global hegemony. Failing to adequately accommodate Russia and China in the new order creates systemic pressures for these great powers to reject liberalism to the extent it legitimizes

unipolarity and sovereign inequality. Liberalism is also failing at the domestic level as it implodes due to its own excesses. Liberalism has traditionally been balanced as political liberalism was countered by social conservatism, while economic liberalism was constrained by state intervention to protect society from unfettered market forces. The crisis in liberalism and reintroduction of ideological rivalry will have a profound impact on the world. Ideology is imperative to organize domestic and international society, identify allies and adversaries, and to mobilize resources to advance foreign policy.

Chapter 7. Green Transformation of the World Economy: Risks and Opportunities for Russia

Igor Makarov, Head of the School of World Economy at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, assesses the risks and opportunities for Russia as the world transitions to an increasingly green economy. The growing focus on developing a more sustainable greener world economy presents both risks and opportunities to Russia. The move towards green technologies undermines Russia's economic model that has been excessively reliant on oil and gas, although opportunities also emerge due to the abundance of natural capital in Russia. Embracing the green wave could be a key driver for Russian technological development and modernization, and concurrently position Russia as a champion of global environmental security.

Chapter 8. Energy in World Politics

Alexander Kurdin, Senior Research Fellow at Lomonosov Moscow State University and Associate Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics assesses the altering energy market in world politics. Kurdin argues the global energy landscape is changing under the influence of green and digital technologies, restrictive climate protection policies, development of much more competitive global energy markets. Nevertheless, traditional energy powerhouses—and Russia among them—still have a good chance to maintain their leadership. This chapter describes key external and domestic determinants of Russia's past and current positions in the global energy sector and identifies probable paths of future developments. Carbon-intensive energy scenarios together with the out-running Asian economic growth give to Russia the most favorable envi-

ronment in terms of traditional energy supplies, though preserving the conservative structure of energy and economics in general. Low-carbon energy scenarios together with the mild economic growth seem less comfortable; nevertheless, the Russian energy sector still has high-tech solutions to go ahead: for instance, unique competences in nuclear energy. The choice partially depends on the structure of global energy governance, which is still highly fragmented, and Russia's role in its institutions.

Chapter 9. Global Water Challenge and Prospects for Russian Agenda

Anastasia Likhacheva, Director of the Centre for comprehensive European and International Studies at the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, explores global water challenges and the prospects for Russia's agenda. Russia ranks first in Greater Eurasia and second in the world after Brazil by one of the most precious resources of the twenty-first century—renewable freshwater resources. A potential and demand for positive role in provision of water (as well as food and energy) security based on water-related advantages of Russia are rising across the whole continent along with water deficit. However, Russia still has not set any proactive water agenda on a regional scale (not even speaking about a global one). Even profound shifts in Russian export policies since 2013—from mostly agro-importer to one of the biggest exporters of water-intense cultures like wheat are still viewed from a purely economic angle. This gap between Russia-driven agenda and local demands of its neighbors leads to marginalization of cooperative water agenda in the region. As our analysis shows, most of the recent international suggestions are framed by monstrous infrastructure projects like water pipes from Baikal to China or redirection of Siberian Rivers to Central Asia. While modern best-practices of water use focus more on targeted water use (more related to trade of water-intense goods and water technologies) than on possible rise of “raw” water supplies from Russia as it functions with oil. This chapter makes an attempt to systematize alternative opportunities for Russian water agenda based on modern concepts of efficient water transboundary management and various dimensions of water challenge across the world.

*Chapter 10. Integration and Separatism in Europe: A Chance
for Russia?*

Ivan Krivushin is Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of International Relations at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, and a leading researcher at the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Krivushin discusses two major trends in contemporary world politics—supranational integration and the disintegration of the nation-state—and analyzes their nature, causes, and significance. The author concludes that these processes have a different character within and outside Europe and that the multidirectional trends in different parts of the world, on the one hand, complicate Russia's foreign policy-making and implementation, but, on the other, widen Russia's room for diplomatic maneuvering and increase the opportunities to exploit the contradictions between old and new actors in international relations.



CHAPTER 1

The Military Underpinning of the Geopolitical Revolution

Sergey Karaganov

Among the reasons for the ongoing geopolitical revolution, unprecedented rapid change in the global balance of power away from the West and Europe and toward China and Asia—profound yet rarely noted shift of the military-political foundation on which world order is ultimately based. The world was “multipolar” until the sixteenth century, when Europe started to achieve military superiority that served as the basis of its economic, political, and cultural expansion and its ability to channel global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to its own advantage. This situation began to change after the Soviet Union, and later China, developed nuclear weapons. This increasingly deprived the West of its ability to impose its interests through military force. Seeking to ensure its fundamental security interests, Russia has become a sort of “midwife of history” by largely ushering in the current shift in the global balance of power and by expanding the freedom of choice available to the world’s countries and peoples.

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