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Enlargement or Non-Enlargement - Where's the Mistake?

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International relations, and geopolitics in particular, are a sphere that encompasses so many and complex subordinate factors that in any interpretation of what is happening, a picture can be constructed that "proves" or "rejects" one or another ideological thesis. China is coming, and ingloriously the West is going - what better occasion than a large-scale military parade to prove such a popular thesis!

The West has made many significant mistakes over the last quarter century to create truly favourable conditions for strengthening the geopolitical positions of China and the still loose geopolitical alliance around it. The first and main mistake of the West - specifically Washington - is the neglect of the main priority for guaranteeing Western geopolitical hegemony - control over Eurasia. Zbigniew Brzezinski warned the Washington elite that massive direct control over the huge continental mass of Eurasia is beyond the power of anyone, not even the hegemon of the 1990s - the United States. But indirect, flexible control over Eurasia through influence over key

Eurasian fulcrums - in Western Asia, Eastern Europe, the "greater" Middle East - is a fundamental prerequisite for exercising geopolitical hegemony over the world after the end of the Cold War. A key element of this selective control was the expansion of the West's geopolitical influence over Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space. NATO membership of the former Eastern Bloc and the expansion of strategic control over key sectors of the post-Soviet space - Ukraine, Moldova, and the South Caucasus - were defined as a framework strategy for indirect control over the Eurasian space. If this strategy had been implemented, Moscow would not have had the resources for geopolitical emancipation - such as it achieved after 2007. China would not have had the resources for increasing control over post-Soviet Central Asia and the Caspian Basin.

Unfortunately, the geopolitically mediocre Bush Jr. administration got bogged down in Iraq, pursuing secondary (though relevant after September 11) strategic goals, and this thwarted the deployment of key geopolitical

resources of the West in Eurasia. Putin declared geopolitical independence in 2007, and China entered the geopolitical scene directly (where until 2010 it had been present primarily economically). This was followed by aggression against Georgia, Ukraine, the intervention in Syria, the hybrid war against Europe, and the megaproject “One Belt, One Road”. The geopolitical potential of America and its key ally – Europe – is reduced to a strategy of using numerous bonuses to seduce and attract Putin to the strategic space of the West. Obama provided a re-set – an unconditional guarantee of friendship to Moscow after Berlin and Paris thwarted Ukraine and Georgia’s NATO membership (2008). Merkel and other European leaders have unconditionally allowed the expansion of Russian influence in Europe – energy, propaganda, destabilization of the EU’s eastern periphery. Putin was advancing quickly and effectively. Europe was saddened – for more than 20 years. Europe and America had only a “carrot” to persistently offer the Kremlin. There was no “stick” at all.

What is the reason for the Western flirtation with Moscow for

decades? Russia is a civilization with two faces – East and West. The Golden Horde and Peter the Great are the symbols of these two faces. Having irresponsibly missed the opportunity to exert powerful pressure on Moscow by controlling the post-Soviet space, America and Europe focused almost entirely on a “PR campaign” to win the “heart of Moscow” in favour of the West. Putin understood well that his will was being fought for – desperately fought for by the Western magi who were seducing him. He well understood another thing – Moscow’s geopolitical power is possible only through conquests on the territory of a “softened” Europe. The Kremlin cannot compete with China – for obvious reasons. Moscow cannot successfully compete with the turbulent world of Islam either – given its internal vulnerabilities. The geopolitical blow could be delivered by Moscow only on the “soft periphery” of a Europe that had completely softened up according to the postmodern model. From Europe to Moscow, temptations were coming. In the opposite direction, successive blows were coming – energy monopoly, propaganda war, systematic expansion of

corruption, against vulnerable Eastern European institutions of power. Conquering the propaganda centre space of the East-West debate: The West had done something very bad and unscrupulous – NATO expansion. This is an ugly threat to Russia... In fact, the West had failed to guarantee its secure geopolitical borders in the East by attracting Kyiv and Tbilisi to NATO membership. Geopolitics does not tolerate a vacuum. Where there is no control by one side, the other establishes control. If the West had presented Moscow with the fait accompli of control over the approaches to Eurasia, the politics of a Western, European Russian identity would have won in Russia. After the failure to establish such control – in Russia, the policy dominated by the Golden Horde legacy prevailed. Russia chose and fully implemented its direction of development as an Asian country – part of the Chinese hegemony over the East and Eurasia.

Today's battle is being fought over where the border will lie between the geopolitical alliance of the West and the geopolitical space of expanding Chinese control in the East. This battle is being fought on the territory of Ukraine.

If Ukraine is defeated in the battle, the geopolitical lines – the border between East and West will pass SOMEWHERE through Eastern Europe: at best through the Black Sea, in the most realistic case – somewhere through the Balkans, through the Baltic Sea, somewhere between the Dniester, Vistula and Elbe. Somewhere... If Ukraine wins – even partially, preserving its national independence at the cost of ongoing territorial compromises – the lines will pass somewhere through Donbass and the shores of the Sea of Azov – without Eastern hegemony over the Black Sea region. The West is in a geopolitical crisis, but it is too early to write off the West... What is happening in Washington has awakened Europe. It can be soft, tearful, compassionate and disoriented, but it can also be organized, mobilized and objectifying its vast geopolitical experience over the past five centuries. America may be temporarily disoriented, but it is unlikely to allow itself to be thrown out of the strategic balances for control over the global world as a result of the eccentric whims of one or another of its presidents and the entourage around him. Moscow is strongly

interested in conducting the “funeral prayer” for the soul of Europe and the West. Hence the talk of the “end of Europe”, of the “defeat of the West” ... The parade in Beijing was a humiliating reminder that geopolitical rivalry

knows no vacuum – the strategic mistakes of the West are immediately exploited as achievements of the authoritarian East. The “alarm clocks” in Washington and in the capitals of Europe have long been ringing.