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Geopolitics: Problems and Instruments Using the Example of Geopolitical Concepts in the Countries of the Indo-Pacific and the South Atlantic Regions

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Abstract. The study dedicates to the genetic problems of geopolitical doctrines associated with the attribution of institutional attributes to space. It analyses the ontological foundations of geopolitics and the possibilities of its effective use. The work demonstrates that the apparent instrumentality of the geopolitical method of research is based on myths taken on faith, that is, it lies outside the boundaries of scientific knowledge. Panideas, thalassocracy and tellurocracy, the concepts of Heartland and Rimland, etc., are used as basic mythologemes. The use of geopolitical argumentation in practical politics only serves as a cover for specific foreign policy actions. And that is why the study of geopolitics is of special interest to science. The article examines the category of additional space, which sometimes complements the concept of imaginary space and subsequently forms an important part of geopolitical theories. Examples of geopolitical constructs that have emerged in the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific and the South Atlantic are used to explore both their connection to classical geopolitics and the specificity of their own concepts. From this perspective, the Sinocentric concept of the world “Community of Common Destiny,” the geopolitical aspect of the Indian concept of Hindutva, Iranian and Turkish constructs based on panideas, the South African concept of the “Island of Africa,” the Japanese geopolitical projects of the “Great Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere” and the “Security Diamond,” axial constructs of Brazilian and Indonesian geopoliticians. The methodological basis of the study is critical analysis, which means correlating the methodological basis of geopolitics with specific concepts and doctrines. As a result, the author concludes that the spread of geopolitical ideas formed in Western countries outside the Old World has only expanded and diversified the scope of their application, without bringing something new to them. In general, geopolitical constructs based on imaginary spaces, despite a certain demand in the world of science and politics, do not give an acceptable effect in both areas.

Key words: theoretical problems of geopolitics, mythologemes of geopolitics, imaginary space in geopolitics, complementary space, instrumental problems of geopolitics

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


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Геополитика: проблемы и инструментальность на примере геополитических концепций в странах Индо-Тихоокеанского региона и Южной Атлантики

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Аннотация. Исследуются проблемы генезиса геополитических учений, связанные с приписыванием пространству институциональных атрибутов. В этой связи проанализированы онтологические основания геополитики и возможности ее эффективного использования. В работе показано, что кажущаяся инструментальность геополитического способа исследования основывается на принимаемых на веру мифологемах, то есть лежит за пределами научного знания. В качестве основных мифологем используются панидеи, талассократия и теллутократия, концепции Хартленда и Римленда и др. Применение в практической политике геополитической аргументации служит лишь прикрытием для конкретных внешнеполитических действий. Именно поэтому исследование геополитики представляет для науки специальный интерес. Рассматривается также категория комплементарного пространства, подчас дополняющая концепцию мнимого пространства и являющаяся в дальнейшем составной частью геополитических теорий. На примерах геополитических конструктов, возникших в странах Ближнего и Среднего Востока, Индо-Тихоокеанского региона и Южной Атлантики, выявляется как их связь с классической геополитикой, так и специфика собственных концептов. Под этим ракурсом изучены синоцентричная концепция мирового «сообщества единой судьбы», геополитический аспект индийской концепции хиндутва, основанные на панидеях иранские и турецкие конструкты, южноафриканская концепция «острова Африки», японские геополитические проекты «Великой азиатской сферы сопроцветания» и «Бриллиант безопасности», а также осевые конструкты бразильских и индонезийских геополитиков. Методической основой исследования является критический анализ, смысл которого заключается в соотнесении методологической базы геополитики с конкретными концепциями и доктринами. Автор приходит к выводу, что распространение геополитических идей, сформированных в западных странах, за пределы Старого Света лишь расширило и разнообразило сферу применения этих идей, не привнося в них что-то новое. В целом геополитические конструкты, основанные на мнимых пространствах, несмотря на определенную востребованность в мире науки и в политике, не дают приемлемого эффекта в обеих областях.

Ключевые слова: теоретические проблемы геополитики, мифологемы геополитики, мнимое пространство в геополитике, комплементарное пространство, инструментальные проблемы геополитики

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Introduction

The objective of the study is to identify and characterize the specifics of geopolitics in connection with the problems generated by the peculiarities of geopolitical thinking. As objects of research, we examine the geopolitical concepts of the countries of the Indo-Pacific region and the South Atlantic, which, defining space as the main instrument for understanding foreign policy processes, are in many ways consonant with well-known Western

mythologemes (panideas (see: (Naumann, 1915; Kjellén, 1920, p. 40)), geographical axis, Heartland and Rimland (see: (Spykman, 1944, p. XII; Mackinder, 1996, p. 106)), “blood and soil,”¹ thalassocracy and tellurocracy (Schmitt, 2008)), based on what we define as the category of imaginary space. They are complementary to these mythologemes: cultural, linguistic, confessional, etc. (Sorokin, 1996, pp. 31–32)

¹ Darré R. W. O. Um Blut und Boden: Reden und Aufsätze. München : Franz Eher Nachf., 1940.

and, in one of the Brazilian variants, even geological space.

The methodological basis of the study is a critical analysis, the meaning of which lies in correlating the methodological basis of geopolitics with specific concepts and doctrines used in the countries of these regions (Popper, 1983, p. 52).

Key Geopolitical Concepts in the Countries of the Indo-Pacific and the South Atlantic Regions

We will begin by examining the concepts of the BRICS countries, starting with the *Chinese school of geopolitics*, which is still in formation. This is due to the fact that geopolitics is recognized there as a product of Western thought. Therefore, there are certain doubts in the country as to whether it is worth including its views on the role and purpose of China in its problematic field (Zhang & Korolev, 2010, pp. 96–110). At the same time, China has its own ideas, dating back to ancient times, about how the hierarchy of the spatial organization of the political world should be built. The China-centric concept of *Tianxia* placed the center of the Earth in the emperor's palace. It is surrounded by several subordinate spaces: first the officials, then the lieges, then the vassal states, and finally the "outer" territories inhabited by barbarians — the foreign land (*hua wai zhi [de di]*). One of the ancient management treatises states that the Celestial Empire contains "everything under Heaven" and therefore "if you are all sailing in the same boat, then having crossed the river, all of you will benefit."²

A modern interpretation allows us to place the concept of *Tianxia* in a geopolitical context, where it is quite capable of replacing Mackinder's interpretation of the Eurasian space. It implies that the key to Eurasia is not in Russia, but in China, which, due to its location, is the true center. Accordingly, Northern, Central and Southern Eurasia function as the near periphery, and Europe, as a peninsula of the vast Eurasian

continent, is the far periphery (Hamashita, 1997, pp. 113–115).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping, is aimed at implementing communications, financial, trade, and military-political projects with the aim of dominating first the nearest periphery (Su, 2016, p. 19) and, in the long term, the distant one: "The joint construction of the Belt and Road is designed to unite and connect Asia, Europe, Africa, and the oceans washing them."³ Within the framework of this initiative, China seeks to build a harmonious combination of four networks of global significance: global governance, global partnership interaction, strategic communication, and regional cooperation (Yu, 2016). China's development of the maritime spaces in the Indian Ocean through the String of Pearls program has led to the conclusion of intergovernmental agreements on the construction of port infrastructure for Chinese merchant and military vessels (Li, 2011, pp. 162–172). Its contours consist of communication support lines: northern (ports of Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan), western (ports of Oman, Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique), southern (ports of the Seychelles and Madagascar). Note that these lines largely repeat the Anglo-Saxon chains — Hong Kong, Brunei, Singapore, Diego Garcia, Qatar, Oman, Nairobi, etc.,⁴ which clearly indicates their opposition to each other. The ultimate goal proclaimed by Xi Jinping provides for the construction of a

³ Tui dong gong jian si chou zhi lu jing ji dai he 21 shi ji hai shang si chou zhi lu de yuan jing yu xing dong // "Yi dai yi lu" guo ji he zuo gao feng lun tan chou bei wei yuan hui mi shu chu [Prospects and Actions for the Joint Creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road // Secretariat of the Preparatory Committee of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation]. April 7, 2017. (In Chinese). URL: <http://2017.beltandroadforum.org/n100/2017/0407/c27-22.html> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

⁴ Vorndick W. China's Reach Has Grown; So Should the Island Chains // Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative. October 22, 2018. URL: <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-reach-grown-island-chains/> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

² Wu-jin. Seven Military Canons of Ancient China. St. Petersburg : Evrazija publ., 2001. P. 76. (In Russian).

global “society with a common destiny,”⁵ in which China will play a major role. The practical implementation of this concept should lead to the development of first the Eurasian and then the global space.

The foundations of *Indian geopolitical views* are based on the concept of *saptanga* (seven elements of the state), which was developed in the treatise *Arthashastra* and is attributed to the authorship of Kautilya (c. 370–283 BC).⁶ *Arthashastra* shaped the Mauryan Empire for many centuries (322–127 BC) as the ideal in Indian scientific thought. This empire, in the creation of which Kautilya was directly involved, was located on the territory of almost the entire Hindustan. Modern Indian concepts correlate with it, which, at an explicit or implicit level, contain claims to dominance on the scale of the subcontinent and its land and oceanic periphery (Bajpai, 2014, pp. 115–149). It is also worth noting that the immediate predecessor of modern India is the British Indian Empire, which also included Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar. After liberation from colonial dependency in 1947, competition between the newly formed states arose on the Indian subcontinent. Consequently, the ongoing territorial dispute with Pakistan has constrained India’s ability to focus its resources exclusively on continental Asia and the Indian Ocean. This has led to a narrowing of the strategic potential within the framework of its declared geopolitical claims (Menon, 2021).

In recent years, a new geopolitical construct of Indian foreign policy has become increasingly apparent. The doctrine of *Hindutva*, put forward by V.D. Savarkar in the 1920s, has been proposed as a unifying concept. According to *Hindutva*, the Indian subcontinent is the original

space of Hinduism and other, partly related, indigenous religions: Buddhism, Sikhism, Ayyavazhi, and Jainism. Therefore, only those who profess these religions and for whom India is a “holy land” can be considered Indians. Their uniqueness lies in the fact that they embody the unity of blood, soil and religion.⁷ It follows from this definition that millions of Indian Muslims and Christians are denied ‘Hinduness,’ which gives *Hindutva* a specific geopolitical dimension. It consists in the fact that the starting point predetermines the confrontation of the Indian world with everything non-Indian.

Based on both ancient and modern constructs, Indian geopoliticians divide the world space into four concentric circles. The first circle includes the Republic of India itself. The second circle includes the states of the Indian subcontinent — Pakistan (with which there is a struggle for subcontinental supremacy) and Bangladesh. This circle also includes Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Afghanistan, the Maldives and a number of other territories that once belonged to the Vedic civilization and therefore are part of the zone of Indian interests.⁸ Interaction with these countries, now known as the ‘Neighbourhood First Policy,’ is common to all Indian governments since the country’s exit from British rule (Aryal & Bharti, 2023, pp. 225–230). The third ring, according to the “Look East policy” proclaimed in 1991 by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, included the countries of Southeast Asia. It was later expanded to include Central and East Asia. The fourth circle includes the rest of the world, in which India seeks to become a global power (Gujral, 1998, p. 15). In pursuing this goal, India, even concluding strategic partnership agreements with the United States and Russia, is pursuing a course of strategic autonomy, not wanting to tie itself too closely to any of the great powers (Suchkov, 2023).

⁵ Wang J. Six Principles of the “One Belt and One Road” Strategy // Boao Forum for Asia Conference 2015: Asia’s New Future: Towards a Community of Common Destiny. 2015. P. 3. URL: <http://english.boaoforum.org/u/cms/www/201503/25112018qw3q.pdf> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

⁶ *Arthashastra, or the Science of Politics*. Moscow; Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo AN SSSR, 1959. P. 292–362. (In Russian).

⁷ Maratha A. (Savarkar V. D.) *Hindutva*. Nagpur: V.V. Kelkar, 1923. P. 97–103.

⁸ Mohan R. *New Foreign Policy of India // Geopolitics*. Information and Analytical Publication. Issue XIX: India. 2013. P. 7. (In Russian). URL: http://www.intelros.ru/pdf/Geopolitic/2013_XIX/1.pdf (accessed: 14.02.2024).

Brazilian geopoliticians present their country as a core state, the basis of all integration processes in South America (Rivarola Puntigliano, 2011, pp. 850–861). The basis for Brazil's hegemony is its geographical size, demographic potential, and economic power. Based on M. Travassos's theory, according to which the Amazon basin represents the integration axis not only of Brazil, but of all of South America (Travassos, 1935), Brazilian geopoliticians declared the territory of the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso (Do Couto e Silva, 1981) to be the continental heartland (Buela, 2012, p. 522). For it is here that the axes of territorial integration and development of the South American and Caribbean regions converge (Teles de Lima, 2015, pp. 7–8). The creation of the South American Common Market (Mercosur) in 1991 actualized the importance of this space. As a result, the geopolitical importance of Brazil expanded due to the possibility of communication unification of the Amazon and La Plata systems with the Pacific and Caribbean basins (Roseira, 2011, p. 163).

A conceptual feature of Brazilian geopolitical thought is the desire to distance itself from both the Old World and the United States by presenting the country as an anti-colonial power. In this anti-colonial and anti-racist line is maintained the multi-level South Atlantic doctrine of Brazil. It is based on the concept of the 'Blue Amazon,' according to which the South Atlantic consists of the waters of the rivers of the Amazon region and therefore should be recognized as a zone of Brazilian interests. As a result, in 1986 Brazil organized the South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation (*Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul*). It included a number of South American and West African countries located on both sides of the 'Atlantic Gap.' The Portuguese-speaking African countries have the particular interest to Brazil. In an effort to develop their own version of transatlantic relations, competing with the North Atlantic version of the United States, the Brazilians are trying to show that the South Atlantic is their zone of responsibility. In

this context, the West African coast is treated as part of Brazil's defensive perimeter.

Another area of Brazilian geopolitical claims is Antarctica. According to T. de Castro, Brazil is the foundation that will decide the fate of Antarctica. This is especially true of the sector of Antarctica closest to Brazil (*Antártica Brasileira*), which "challenges the extent of its sphere of dominion" (de Castro, 1976, p. 24).

The South African school is the most interesting of the geopolitical schools currently emerging in Africa. According to statements by South African leaders, they see the continent as the 'island of Africa.' They view their role on the mega-island as the burden of leadership in the context of a changing foreign policy landscape. The responsibility of continental leadership is to ensure the protection of the African continent and its maritime space as a whole.⁹ However, South Africa considers the territory south of the Sahara to be its unconditional zone of geopolitical responsibility. According to South African President from 1999 to 2008, T. Mbeki, its main rivals here are the United States, which "does not take into account the interests of African countries," and China, which is constantly expanding its influence in the region, which is fraught with turning South Africa into a junior partner (Adebajo, 2008, p. 132).

It follows that the geopolitical claims of South Africa turned out to be invariant to the racial and ideological characteristics of the country's authorities. Following the victory of the African National Congress over the apartheid regime in 1994, the desire of the South African authorities for hegemony was not lost. The allies underwent a transformation. If the country's authorities had previously relied on the governments, armed rebel groups and white colonial associations of neighboring countries (Southern Rhodesia, South-West Africa, *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO)

⁹ Mthembu P., Kornegay F., Jr. Africa and the World: Navigating Shifting Geopolitics // Institute for Global Dialogue. 2020 (February). Iss. 135. P. 2–4. URL: <https://igd.org.za/publication/africa-and-the-world-navigating-shifting-geopolitics/> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

in Mozambique, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) in Angola, etc.), now their allies are their opponents who came to power: the Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front, the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) (Namibia), *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) (Mozambique), People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*, MPLA) (Angola), etc. Thus, the geopolitics of South Africa is based on the idea of dual leadership. Firstly, regional (African South), which it perceives as an integral part of its direct influence. Secondly, continental, which is considered as a natural primacy in terms of the totality of political, technological, and economic significance. However, some characterize this as hegemony (Alden & Schoeman, 2015, p. 201).

Iran, which recently joined the BRICS, is characterized by geopolitical polyvalence. Its geopolitical constructs are determined by three main concepts: pan-Iranism, pan-Shi'ite and, related to both of them, the doctrine of the 'Mother of Cities.'

Modern Pan-Iranism is associated with the activities of Mahmud Afshar (1893–1983), who sought to create a concept that would counter the claims of Pan-Turkism in the territories of Central Asia and the Caucasus. These ideas, developed in several publications,¹⁰ attracted the attention of Reza Khan in 1923, who, after ascending to the throne in 1925, raised them to the level of state propaganda with a certain neo-Achaemenid tint. Neo-Achaemenism increased pan-Iranist claims, since under the Achaemenids the country's borders stretched from Greece to India. However, this concept did not subsequently determine the country's foreign policy, neither under Reza Shah nor under his successor.

Pan-Iranism received a second wind in the 21st century, when the US intention to surround

¹⁰ Afshar M. Masale-ye melliyat va-vahdat-e mellī-ye Iran [The Problem of Nationhood and the National Unity of Iran] // Ayandeh. December 1927. P. 559–569. (In Persian).

Iran, which did not want to submit, with its satellites became obvious. The most indicative statement in this regard is the statement of commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in 1981–1997 M. Rezaee. At the end of 2020, he said: "If Greater Iran appears north of the (Persian) Gulf and the Sea of Oman, 15 countries will join Iran. If Greater Iran is formed, it will interfere in the development of global politics. Our duty is to return the glory, greatness and power of ancient Persia, and we will be able to fulfill this task."¹¹

In today's Iran, pan-Iranism is competing with the pan-Shi'ite concept. Its origins go back to the 16th century, when Shi'ism was declared the state religion of the country. In the modern world, the area of Shi'ism distribution roughly corresponds to the territory that was once subordinate to the Achaemenid Empire, and then became part of other Persian states (from Asia Minor to the Hindu Kush and from Azerbaijan to Oman). And although Shi'ism emerged many years after the collapse of the first Persian state, such a coincidence can hardly be considered accidental. In all likelihood, the roots of this strain of Islam among ethnic groups associated with Persian culture are value-based (Motahhari, 2008).

Until recently, however, the Shi'ite political paradigm practically did not exist, since among a number of directions of this movement there was a conviction that religion should not directly interfere in political processes. The situation changed with the Islamic revolution in Iran (1978–1979), which had a clearly expressed Shi'ite character. Its leader, R.M. Khomeini, argued in a few publications that religion and politics were one and the same.¹² This caused concern in neighboring countries, forcing them to suspect Iran of having a 'Shi'ite project',

¹¹ Al-Sulami M. Tehran's 'Greater Iran' Dream a Threat to the Region // Arab News. December 14, 2020. URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1777331> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

¹² Imam Khomeini. The Path to Freedom: Speeches and Testament. Moscow: Paleja publ., 1999. P. 214–215. (In Russian).

according to which Shi'ism is used in neighboring countries with a large number of adherents of this direction, as an instrument of political influence. These countries include Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, part of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen. On this basis, the term 'Shi'ite crescent' emerged among Egyptian and Jordanian politicians, which covers the Sunni countries of the Arab world from the northeast (Al Safi, 2021, pp. 653–656).

The third concept of Iranian geopolitics is a combination of pan-Iranian and Shi'ite ideas, which resulted in a pan-Islamic concept of the Shi'ite persuasion. It presents Iran as the core of the world Muslim community (*Umm al-Qura* — Mother of Cities). Initially, this idea, which was put forward at the end of the 19th century by one of the founders of pan-Arabism, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, assumed the return of the capital of the Islamic world from Istanbul to Mecca. A century later, one of the leaders of Iranian foreign policy, M.-J. Larijani reinterpreted it in the Shi'ite-Pan-Iranist context of the policy of exporting the Islamic revolution. The Islamic revolution, according to M.-J. Larijani, moved the center of Islam — *Umm al-Qura* — to the space occupied by the Iranian ethnic group. Since this fact cannot be accidental, it should be interpreted in the spirit of predestination about the special role of Iranian Shi'ites in the matter of uniting all Muslims within the framework of a single supranational entity.¹³ This position is closely linked to the thesis of Ayatollah Khomeini that the defense of the Islamic Republic is an extremely important issue 'obligatory for all Muslims.'¹⁴

Let us begin our review of other geopolitical doctrines with the *Turkish direction* of geopolitics. It is also characterized by

¹³ Larijani M.-J. *Kaavosh-haaye nazari dar siyasat khaareji* [Theoretical Explorations in Foreign Policy]. Tehran: Scientific and Cultural Publishing Company, 1997. P. 49. (In Persian).

¹⁴ Imam Khomeini. *Sahifeh Enghelaab. Ketaab 20* [Book of Revolution. Book 20]. Tehran: Publication of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 1368 SH. P. 13. (In Persian).

fluctuations between different dimensions. A distinctive feature of Turkish geopolitics (especially in its modern form) is the frequent change of the criteria in the perception of political space. The state approach is replaced by an ethnic one, which is then replaced by a confessional one, then again by a state one, etc. These approaches correspond to the concepts of pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism/ pan-Turanism, and neo-Ottomanism.

The foundation of Turkish pan-Islamism was rooted in the proclamation of the Ottoman sultans as caliphs in 1517. In this capacity, they served as patrons for the entire Muslim population across the globe. The idea of Ottomanism as a special form of geopolitical identity, uniting representatives of all the peoples and confessions of the Ottoman Empire, arose by the middle of the 19th century. The failures in the Balkan Wars and the First World War (1912–1918) resulted in the replacement of the failed Ottoman paradigm, with a pan-Turkic one. The initial attempt to oppose the Turkish population of the empire to other ethnic groups and to extend its influence on the Turkic peoples outside the Ottoman Empire led to a catastrophe threatening the collapse of the state. Subsequently, in 1924, the new leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, abolished the caliphate declared secular development, renounced claims to a number of non-Turkic territories, and embarked on a course of liberalism and nationalism. This was interpreted as a policy of complete Turkification of the remaining population of the country.

At the end of the 20th century, neo-Ottomanism replaced the previous geopolitical constructs. Its author is considered to be T. Ozal (President of Türkiye in 1989–1993), whose idea was to recreate the supposedly lost Ottoman macro-identity among the peoples of the Middle East (Hakan Yavuz, 1998, pp. 23, 40), in order to return Türkiye to the role of hegemon in the Middle East. In 2001, A. Davutoğlu's work *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position* (Davutoğlu, 2001) was published, where the need to rely on the entire complex

of previous constructs was defended, combining neo-Ottomanism, pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, and Atlanticism. This fusion of heterogeneous concepts became the basis for a multidimensional policy¹⁵ that allows Türkiye to implement different practices depending on the region.

In this interpretation, neo-Ottomanism was primarily intended for the Balkans and the South Caucasus. At the same time, the emphasis was not on nationalism (*milliyetçilik*), but on nationality (*milliyet*), thus allowing for the possibility of nationality being multi-ethnic (Hakan Yavuz, 2016). This was later expressed in the proclamation of the population of Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Northern Cyprus as one people. Turkish pan-Islamism was oriented towards the Middle East, pan-Turkism towards the North Caucasus and Central Asian countries, and Atlanticism towards the European Union (EU) (which, according to A. Davutoğlu, it is desirable to join).

This multidimensionality gave rise to fluctuations in Türkiye's foreign policy from pan-Turkism in 1992–1997, which implied the spread of influence from the Balkans to Xinjiang (the idea of a confederation of all Turkic peoples), to neo-Ottomanism in 2002–2009, which was characterized by close attention to the Middle East region, and again a return to pan-Turkism in 2011–2022. During the Palestinian-Israeli conflict of 2023, President R.T. Erdoğan shifted the emphasis to the Islamic component of Turkish policy.¹⁶ The multidimensional policy makes it possible, depending on the situation, to sharply change the geopolitical vector, but its inconsistency does not contribute to its effectiveness.

¹⁵ Öztürk A. Die geostrategische rolle der Türkei in Vorderasien // *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. 2006. No. 4. URL: <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/29958/die-geostrategische-rolle-der-tuerkei-in-vorderasien/> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

¹⁶ Aydıntaşbaş A. The Sultan's Ghost: Erdoğan and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict // *Brookings*. November 22, 2023. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-sultans-ghost-erdogan-and-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

For the *Japanese geopolitical school*, a distinctive feature is the competition between alter-Asian and pan-Asian projects. Both projects have in common their focus on modernization, development and foreign policy expansion in Asia.

The author of the first project was Y. Fukuzawa. In an essay entitled *Away from Asia*, or *Datsuaron* (1885), Fukuzawa calls for forgetting national traditions and replacing Japanese values with Western ones.¹⁷

The pan-Asian concept is best known in the version of T. Tanaka. Based on his own interpretation of a quote taken from one of the Japanese chronicles — “I will gather the eight corners and make them my home,”¹⁸ T. Tanaka constructed a doctrine of Japan's destiny for world domination. Since the late 1920s, this concept of the spatial design of the world with Japan at the helm took the form of an official ideology. In 1940–1945, the ‘angles’ began to be assembled within the framework of the ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere’ project (1940–1945). In accordance with the official statements, the goal of the project was to create an alliance of East Asian peoples free from Western influence.

The American occupation instilled Atlantic values in Japanese political scientists. Theoretically, this manifested itself in the adoption of the ideas of the Anglo-Saxon school of geopolitics, oriented towards helping the United States control the Eurasian coastline along its entire perimeter. There are two concepts of the early 21st century that have been maintained in this spirit. Circumstances did not allow them to be implemented, but they represent themselves the characteristic examples of modern Japanese geopolitical thought.

¹⁷ Sovasteev V. V. Geopolitics of Japan. From Ancient Times to the Present Day: Handbook. Vladivostok: Izdatel'stvo Dal'nevostochnogo universiteta publ., 2009. P. 68. (In Russian).

¹⁸ Wartime Slogan Should Stay Buried // *The Japan Times*. March 24, 2015. URL: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2015/03/24/editorials/wartime-slogan-should-stay-buried/> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

The first was the concept of the ‘Arc of Freedom and Prosperity,’ which was put forward by Foreign Minister T. Aso in 2006.¹⁹ The idea was to create a zone of friendly or dependent countries from Scandinavia and the post-Soviet republics to Afghanistan and India and all the way to Southeast Asia and Australia with New Zealand. When looking at the map, it becomes clear that the meaning of the arc is to encircle Russia and China. From which it follows that, firstly, Japan is trying to include significant territories of the Eurasian space, partially included in the ‘Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere,’ in the circle of its political influence.

Secondly, the concept of encircling Russia and China with its allies indicates that Japan still considers these countries to be its main geopolitical opponents.

Then the concept of the ‘Arc of Freedom’ was replaced by another one — the ‘Security Diamond,’ proposed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2012, which implied a maritime alliance between Japan, the United States, India and Australia to supervise all communications in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans.²⁰ Within the framework of this alliance, Japan is primarily interested in controlling the continental periphery. This aspiration has always been a distinctive feature of Japanese geopolitics. But if previous geopolitical concepts were oriented, first of all, towards direct capture and Japanese occupation, now a course has been taken towards Atlanticism, associated with the desire to solve its problems, relying on the capabilities of the Anglo-Saxon bloc.

¹⁹ Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International Affairs Seminar “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons” // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. November 30, 2006. URL: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech/0611.html> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

²⁰ Sato H. Japanese Geopolitical Concepts: The Significance of the “Security Diamond” Concept // Japan of Our Time. 2013. No. 1. P. 103–107. (In Russian). URL: https://lk.iccaras.ru/assets/components/dsgfileupload/files/jnd_15.pdf (accessed: 14.02.2024).

We highlight *the Indonesian concept* from the geopolitical constructs that are currently being formed. It is based on the concept of *wawasan nusantara* (archipelagic view) put forward by the founders of modern Indonesia in 1945. According to this concept, the Indonesian archipelago is indivisible (i.e. it includes the territories of other states) and is the core of *Nusantara*, that is, the Malay world, which also includes Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, and the Philippines. In 1953, the first president of the country, Sukarno, indicated the need for maritime dominance as the main geopolitical task, which would require building a large commercial and powerful military fleet. In 2014, this concept was supplemented by the new doctrine of President Joko Widodo — “Indonesia — the maritime axis of the world” (Hidayat & Ridwan, 2017, pp. 83–85).

At the first glance, the concept of Joko Widodo, developed by a group of Indonesian geopoliticians,²¹ is aimed at closely uniting first Indonesia itself, and then the world of Nusantara as a whole (as a collection of island and peninsular Malay peoples). But the potential of the concept is much greater, since its geopolitical component is a claim for a special place for the Indonesian region in the global political process, up to achieving world primacy. The concept marks a turn in the ‘archipelagic’ policy of the country, declaring the global significance of Indonesia as a maritime communication center of global importance (Simarmata et al., 2023, p. 357).

On the one hand, it is based on the fact that the center of world politics in its military-political and financial-economic dimensions is gradually shifting to the Indo-Pacific region. One indicator of this shift is that about a quarter of the world’s production of goods and a third of its oil passes through the Strait of Malacca between

²¹ Connelly A. L. Indonesian Foreign Policy Under President Jokowi // The Lowy Institute for International Policy. October 2014. P. 5. URL: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184801/indonesian-foreign-policy-under-president-jokowi_0.pdf (accessed: 14.02.2024).

Indonesia and Malaysia.²² On the other hand, the ‘archipelagic’ concept is a declaration that from now on Indonesia is the geographic center of the Indo-Pacific region. And we can conclude that the purpose of the concept is to declare the coming change in the world order based on the continental dimension of geopolitics. According to this, under the new conditions, the previous axis of history proclaimed by H. Mackinder (the Russian Heartland) is replaced by a new maritime axis — Indonesia, which will have a decisive influence on the geopolitical development of the world space. In this direction, Indonesia’s leadership has taken steps within ASEAN to promote the concept of the ‘Indo-Pacific Worldview,’ which implies a common perception of geopolitical space among the countries of the region (Liow, 2018, p. 177).

Conclusion

It can thus be concluded that the concepts we have considered contain virtually the entire set of geopolitical imaginaries. According to their proponents, their appeal is supposed to indicate or solve current foreign policy problems. As a foundation for political decision-making, they take on a very real content, albeit very different from the assumed one. Let us take the construct of global reorganization.

To illustrate, the Chinese concept of transforming space represents a response to American globalism. It was embodied in the concept of a world community ‘with a common destiny.’ The potential of this basically Sinocentric idea is no less significant than the American dream of globalization, a new neoliberal world order with the US hegemony. Tellurocratic ideas turned out to be close to South African concepts oriented toward dominance at the scale of the African continent. The influence of the thalassocratic teaching is noticeable in Indonesian doctrines, and the

current one is further complicated by the axial concept (the maritime axis of Joko Widodo). The axial concept has also influenced the geopolitical doctrines of Brazil.

Modern Turkish geopolitics employs the myth of pan-Turkism, which draws attention to a promising future, and neo-Ottomanism, where the glorious Ottoman past is indicated as a reference point. Iranian doctrines were initially characterized by a reliance on the linguistic and cultural dimensions of the political space. Subsequently, the confessional, the Shi‘ite component, acquired the greatest significance, and is currently dominant. In this regard, it should be noted that the conceptual difference between the Turkish and Iranian approaches is also determined by the idea of an ideal (in fact, imaginary) space. For the Turks, this space is formed under the influence of current political needs by the military-political leader (the sultan or his substitute). For the Iranians, especially after the Islamic revolution, the organizers of the political space are representatives of the clergy — imams who appeal to God.

An ethno-confessional variant, reminiscent of the constructs of representatives of the German school — Indian *Hindutva*. The *Hindutva* teaching attempts to link foreign policy with metaphysical processes of an ethnocratic nature (which resembles the provisions on the inseparable connection of blood and soil). The Japanese school initially emphasized the socio-Darwinian understanding of international interaction. It was expressed in the desire for excessive expansion, which was stopped with great difficulty during the Second World War. But it cannot be said to have been completely overcome, since it manifests itself in Japan’s continuing desperate disputes over border islands with almost all its neighbors. Although this is perhaps a phenomenon of a different nature, fitting into the context of the Atlanticist direction of modern Japan’s foreign policy, along with attempts to embrace the Eurasian coast (Spykman’s Rimland).

It can be stated that constructs based on imaginaries, despite their apparent instrumental

²² Ho Ting Hung. Can China Escape the Malacca Dilemma? // National Interest. May 30, 2023. URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/can-china-escape-malacca-dilemma-206505> (accessed: 14.02.2024).

utility in both scientific and political contexts, fail to yield the desired outcomes in either area. It is enough to point to the collapse of the policies of those states whose leaders based their policies on pan-ideas (pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism, pan-Arabism, etc.). It is a different matter if geopolitics is only a way of ‘spatial’ cover for real politics. And it is quite possible

that in a number of the above-described cases, we are indeed dealing with this phenomenon. It can be concluded from this that the spread of geopolitical ideas to regions located far beyond the Old World has not breathed life into old constructs, making them more fundamental, but has merely expanded and diversified the scope of their application.

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