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Theories and models of the European geopolitical space creation

Denisenko Kseniya - PhD in Political Science, assistant professor of the International Relations and Foreign Policy Department of Kyiv International Relations Institute, Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University.

Theories and models of the European geopolitical space creation. The article studies the peculiarities of European geopolitical space creation. The concepts and the ideas of European unification were studied.

Key words: Wider Europe, geopolitical space, state, European politics, integration.

The study of the European geopolitical space is essential in today's political and scientific discourse. The radical and rapid changes that took place at the turning point of the XX-XXI centuries made us to look in the opposite way on the process of European unification. In this context, the study of theories and models of European geopolitical space creation becomes extremely important. The aim of this paper is to study the peculiarities of the European geopolitical space creation. It is necessary to study all of these theories and models in order to give a flavor of the present spirit and methods in which the development of Europe is conceived.

The first theory of European geopolitical space unification was presented by Austrian researcher Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove Kalergi in 1922. The European continent was expected to be united on the basis of federation with its own constitution. Freedom, peace, culture and economic development were supposed to be the main principles of the united Europe. He believed that only united Europe in political and economic context could become the counterweight to the United States, Russia and Asia as well as to help prevent another world war. R. Kalergi was convinced that Scandinavian countries could take the initiative in the process of European unification, acting as a mediator between the conflicting European states. [1;38 – 42]

The famous speech of Winston Churchill at the University of Zurich on the 19th of September 1948 when he called upon to establish the United States of Europe on the grounds of partnership between France and Germany was the crucial moment in the process of European geopolitical space consolidation.

The instrumental method of European construction presented by Jean Monnet was the first practical step towards the process of establishing a single European geopolitical space. He believed that the economic unity based on the theory of large economic spaces must precede the achievement of political unity in Europe. These ideas were reflected in the Robert Schumann Declaration on the 9th of May 1950. Sectoral integration was supposed to create real solidarity and form the economic basis of future European federation. Such unity was called upon to ensure peace and make war even virtually impossible. Declaration of Robert Schumann became the impulse for the establishment of the European association of coal and steel, the European Economic Community for Atomic Energy and outlined the main directions of the integration process in Europe. [2;48]

The geopolitical projects of French President Charle de Gaulle such as “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals”, “Europe of states”, and the “Continental unity of Europe” gave the impulse for the development of modern theories of European geopolitical space formation.

The concept of “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals” made the great influence on the geostrategy France in the postwar years. It can be fully considered geopolitical and realistic because it contained the principle of detente between Western and Eastern Europe. Before his coming to power Charle de Gaulle said “ I am confident that it is Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, it is Europe, it is the whole of Europe, that will decide the fate of the world”. De Gaulle always considered Europe as the integral organism and didn't want to recognize its division.

Most politicians in Western Europe under the influence of “Cold War” had the vision of a Europe “from Brest (city in north-west France) to Brest”. In the geopolitical projects of de Gaulle Soviet Union never stopped to be the part of Europe. The multivalence of this geopolitical project allowed scholars and politicians to interpret it in different ways. The Soviet Union saw in this formula the desire of France to spread the influence of Western Europe on socialist states of Eastern Europe. It is therefore not strange that by the mid 60's the relationships between France and the Soviet Union kept on being very strained. [3;492]

However in our opinion the most interesting for the analysis is his project “Europe of states”. Charles de Gaulle was convinced that that Western European states should closely cooperate with each other without creation of supranational institutions and the loss of national identity. The formula of de Gaulle meant the cooperation of states based on the national interests of each. In closely integrated Europe with supranational institutions he saw the danger for one state to become dependent from another stronger in political and economic sense. “If it is not going to be the Europe of nations, if it will be given in use to technocratic institutions, more or less integrated, we will obtain narrow technical mission without scope and without future. The Americans will take the advantage to impose us their hegemony. Europe should be independent”. [4;208 - 303]

The Fouchet Plan based on the theses of Charles de Gaulle was the first practical embodiment of this concept. It was written by Christian Fouchet, France's ambassador to Denmark. The idea was to form a new “Union of States”, an intergovernmental alternative to the European Communities. Due to the success of the European Communities and the lack of enthusiasm of other states for this idea, the Fouchet Plan was never implemented.

Another not less important geopolitical initiative of Charles de Gaulle was his plan of “Continental unity of Europe”. This concept outlined structural, substantial, geopolitical and functional parameters of the united Europe. In a strategic context this project was aimed to overcome the division of Europe, “Yalta conspiracy”, “Cold War” and block confrontation. The project had to promote the convergence of Western ad Eastern Europe, the internal evolution of Eastern Europe, gradual formation of the grand united Europe based on “Western European core” (“the third force”) and restore its leadership in the modern world. [5;32]

Meanwhile, the multistage politics of building the European geopolitical space gained growing importance in the 1970's. Such theories as “Europe à la carte” and “Multi-speed Europe” emerged at this period.

Unlike other theories, the concept of «Europe à la carte» denies the need for all Member States to follow the Community as the destination of the integration process. It allows Member States to select policies as if from a menu and involve themselves fully in those policies. The concept of «Europe à la carte» was first proposed by German researcher Ralf Dahrendorf in the 1970s, but its popularity and further development was after the statement of the British Prime Minister - John Major. The English version of the theory gave the Member States a complete freedom of integration or rejection of it in any area except the Internal market. To sum up, Europe „à la carte“ is characterized by the political freedom of states to apply for membership or to become a member of an organization or arrangement; by the absence of an overarching common goal and institutional framework; and by the fact that, as a result of this conception, the „common“ law holding the states together is the „lowest common determinant“ agreed to by the respective states within the arrangements. This approach didn't resist severe criticism because it could put an end to the integration process and lead to uncontrollable situations. [6;284]

The concept of “Multi-speed Europe” was first presented in the report of Leo Tindemans – the Prime Minister of Belgium in 1976. This model of building the European geopolitical space was used to describe the idea of a method of differentiated integration whereby common objectives are pursued by a group of Member States both able and willing to advance, it being implied that the others will follow later. The purpose of the conception is not to dispense the Member States from the obligation of achieving ultimately the common goals and principles of the Union. But by granting transitory concessions to certain member states for certain specified action, it has the intention of enabling the goals to be eventually reached by all members within the time limit set. Examples can be seen in the various adaptation clauses granted in the Treaties of Accession or the conception according to which EU Member States (with the exception of Great Britain and Denmark) are legally obliged to participate in the third stage of the Economic and Monetary Union if, in their case, the relevant convergence criteria are fulfilled. [7;27-34]

The political changes that took place in the late 1980 – 1990's and the hopes of some post-socialist countries associated with the membership in the Community, became the new impulse to search for new theories and models for constructing the European geopolitical space. The project “Common European home” was proclaimed by Soviet President M. Gorbachev during his visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1987. During his main address in Prague he declared: “We assign an overriding significance to the European course of our foreign policy.... We are resolutely against the division of the continent into military blocs facing each other, against the accumulation of military arsenals in Europe, against everything that is the source of the threat of war. In the spirit of the new thinking we introduced the idea of the “all-European home”, which signifies, above all, the acknowledgment of a certain integral whole, although the states in question belong to different social systems and are members of opposing military-political blocs standing against each other. This term includes both current problems and real possibilities for their solution”. The conceptual aspects of the project were limited to the following provisions:

- Recognition of the civilization integrity of Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals”;
- Recognition of the ways to overcome the confrontation in Europe in terms of coexistence of states belonging to different political systems, reducing the confrontation between the two military blocs in Europe and increase the level of cooperation among the two systems in economic and humanitarian spheres;
- Reforming relations between the socialist countries on the basis of equality and mutual responsibility, the principle of freedom of choice and privacy. The idea of “Common European home” was warmly met by Western political circles. [8;308-309]

Along with M. Gorbachev the construction of the European geopolitical space also concerned the President of France - François Mitterrand. Taking into account the rapid changes in Eastern Europe in his New Year's Eve message Mitterrand proposed a two-stage process for Europe. First, as the EC had just agreed at Strasbourg, integration within the EEC must advance as planned. This according to the president, would provide Eastern European nations with a reference point, a stable union to look toward. The second stage, according to Mitterrand, remained to be invented. He proposed for the 1990s the creation of a European Confederation “that will unite all of the nations of our continent in a common and permanent organization for trade, peace, and security”. This confederation would be open to all nations that adopted a pluralistic political system. Confederation reminded many of de Gaulle's earlier vision of a united Europe: “Europe, the mother of modern civilization, must unite from the Atlantic to the Urals in harmony and in cooperation in order to develop its immense resources and to play, along with the United States, Europe's offspring, the role that awaits it”. Early in January, Minister of Defense Chevènement agreed to an interview in the pages of the newsweekly *Le Point*, an interview that reflected the developing views of many in government on a European Confederation, including those of the president. Regarding the changes in the East and the creation of a European Confederation, Chevènement stressed that in the Europe of the future Germany should not have access to nuclear weapons. When asked if EC integration was now impossible given the upheaval in the East, the defense minister said no, in part because Mitterrand's idea of a confederation permitted the construction of Europe from a truly European perspective. Moreover, a confederation would permit the EC to give a political, cultural, and human dimension to an enterprise in Eastern Europe that might otherwise represent the economic colonization of the eastern half of the continent.

The idea of European Confederation became the main geopolitical imperative of France's foreign policy in the late 1980 – 1990's. [9;218-223]

This period is also known for the theory of “Variable geometry”. It was used to describe the idea of a method of differentiated integration which acknowledges that there are irreconcilable differences within the integration structure and therefore allows for a permanent separation between a group of Member States and a number of less developed integration units. The term variable geometry was first used by French Commission for Planning in the context of VIII economic plan for technical and industrial areas and was later extended to other spheres including

defense. This model was expected to provide joint participation of all Member States of the Community in certain spheres, giving the opportunity for certain countries for partial or full exclusion from certain politics or spheres. It is to be understood and appreciated against the background of the common goals and principles and the common institutional framework of the Maastricht Treaty. Even though the components of the „variable geometry“ are parts of a common legal order, they are given a certain measure of liberty of action within the system. The following examples may be given for the „variable geometry“ method of integration:

- Social Charter, as far as Great Britain is concerned;
- Economic and Monetary Union, as far as the participation of Great Britain and Denmark in the third stage of the Economic Monetary Union are concerned;
- Exception clauses within the Treaty of European Union;
- Diverse projects submitted to the Intergovernmental Conference concerning reforms of the Second and the Third Pillar of the Maastricht Treaty.

Another notion that is used in political and scientific discourse is the model of a “Hard core of integration”. It means that by taking the „acquis communautaire“ as the base of integration, certain Member States (for instance Germany and France) may be given the chance of proceeding more rapidly in order to attract the others to follow their example. This idea was further developed by the French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur in his concept of “Concentric Circles“. According to his vision the first circle should be established within the European Union being the second circle of European integration; this inner circle might consist of different elements like the Economic and Monetary Union or certain military institutions. In turn, the first and second circle would be surrounded by a larger third circle embracing all those European states which are not willing or are not (yet) capable of becoming members of the European Union but are linked with the Union through special trade, military or other international agreements.

However, despite the existence of numerous projects the concept of “Wider Europe” occupied an important place in modern political and scientific debates on the further development of European geopolitical space. [10; 93-96]

In this context, the most interesting from the scientific point of view are the works of British researcher Michael Emerson and the director of Moscow Carnegie Centre Dmitry Trenin, who offered concrete, practical steps towards Wider Europe. According to M. Emerson, the term “Wider Europe” can be referred to a clearly defined space, uniting the members of the Council of Europe. This is Europe and all its peoples, who have reached a certain level of identification with its values, history and culture. Even the most disorganized and distant parts of Wider Europe, such as the Caucasus, with its European aspirations. At the level of regional policy framework the Wider Europe should cover all the different states in Europe that have not yet acceded to the European Union and are not involved in accession negotiations. Wider Europe is the space in which “Europeanisation” can be said to be the general objective, without overtones of cultural imperialism. Europe belongs to all these peoples. “Europeanisation” has become a special form of modernisation for the formerly communist and fascist dictatorships, as well as the still weak states of Europe. It is a process that all Europeans may consider that they own and with which they can identify. The distinction is made between accession to EU membership (as a formal legal and political act) and “Europeanisation” as a wider process of political, economic and societal transformation. The ideology of “Europeanisation” appears to be democratic, liberal (of a social-democratic colour), non-hegemonic, multinational, multi-cultural, inclusive and integrative. Europeanisation, as the driving force of the Wider Europe idea, may be seen as working through three kinds of mechanisms:

- precise legal obligations coming from preparing for accession to the EU;
- objective changes in economic structures and the interests of individuals as a result of integration with Europe;
- subjective changes in the beliefs, expectations and identity of the individual (regional/ethnic, national, European), feeding into the political will to adopt European norms. [11]

He exposes sharp criticism of the neighborhood strategy, which contains two different regions - eastern part of the Great Southern Europe and the Mediterranean and the Middle East, members of the Greater Middle East area and have no European destination. In addition, he defined seven spaces which can be organized in three main dimensions:

Political and human dimension. A European space of democracy and human rights. Here the Council of Europe is well-placed to work alongside the EU as a key partner in the Wider Europe. Priority should be given to the least-ordered states of the Council of Europe. A European space of education, culture and research. EU programs are rightly being opened to the Wider Europe. There should be no conditionality beyond quality, given that these investments are looking decades ahead.

Economic dimension. A European Economic Area (EEA) for trade and market regulations. The EU should propose an open-ended multilateral Pan-European Free Trade Area (PEFTA) and develop a modular approach for the progressive inclusion of the Wider Europe states in the EU single market, with a restructuring of existing EEA and European Free Trade Area (EFTA) institutions. A European macroeconomic and monetary area. The EU’s official documents have continued to ignore the inevitable extension of the euro into the Wider Europe. Its doctrine is excessively restrictive even in the conditions for the newly acceding states, whereas for non-acceding states and entities, the policy line needs to be more open and reasoned (some micro-states and sub-state entities are already fully euroised). A European infrastructure and network area. Pan-European networks in transport, energy (oil and gas pipelines and electricity grids) and telecommunications are being developed with financial support from the EU, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), for which the overriding condition should be the economic efficiency of the network as a whole. [12]

Security dimension. A common space of freedom, security and justice. The EU can offer powerful incentives to the individual states of the Wider Europe, by exchanging increases in the freedom of movement of persons (visas

and immigration) for improved border controls, and domestic law and order. For this exchange, the EU needs to clearly establish its benchmark standards for successive stages, first for visa-free status, and so on to Schengen standards. A space of cooperation in the field of external security. EU instruments of security and defence policy are developing and can support the Europeanisation process in the still unstable parts of the Wider Europe.

According to M. Emerson The Wider Europe needs an adequate, multilateral institutional structure, whose design is primarily the responsibility of the European Union. The European Conference may be usefully retained as a standing forum for dialogue on the Wider Europe agenda and more meaningfully renamed the Pan-European Conference. But this very thin, ad hoc arrangement should be reformed to be more effective. It should be opened to all the member states of the Council of Europe and to a degree linked to this organisation, with which the EU is increasingly developing practical cooperation already. Coordination arrangements with the other relevant multilateral organizations could also be structured within the framework of the Pan-European Conference.

Considering the formation of Wider Europe the researcher D. Trenin focuses on three main possible its dimensions, mainly political, security and humanitarian. The main idea of his thesis advocates the need to prevent recovery of any gaps between Russia and the rest of Europe. [13]

In general, D. Trenin says that in the XXI century, the EU and its geopolitical boundaries should look like multilevel construction. Under such circumstances, in the medium and long term perspectives the continent apparently will consist of European federation - a strong core of the European Union, the European Union of 27 - 30 States, United Europe, which includes the European Union, plus a group of countries, including Russia which will to some extent be associated with the EU.

Thus, having considered several major theories and models of the European geopolitical space formation, I have come to the conclusion that today when the European integration becomes more and more important all the concepts and ideas of European unification require deep scientific analysis and further study. In the evolutionary process of European integration taking place after the end of the Cold War, priority should be given to building a single European geopolitical space.

Notes

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