

Russia: Looking from 2007 to 2017

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Once Charles De Gaulle has observed that 'a politician endowed with will and last who has resources of a huge country and a steady system of allies will lose out if he fails to discern the nature of his time.' Thus, a pompous figure of Peter I was in B.N. Yeltsin's office that manifested the understanding of the content of his time by the President. But in the 90s it was not time of Peter by its nature. However, it is easy to judge about the matter after years and there is a kernel of truth in the comment of Brothers Strugatskie that a posteriori all attempts to see the future in detail looks ridiculous if not poor.

Notwithstanding this a large number of centers, first of all abroad, deals with the problems of future now. There is no any serious economic or political player in the world who does not take into account the results of the inquiries into the future as well as the past. There are players whose activity may without great reserve be called as 'building up future'. Such strategies, for instance, are widely spread in the world of financial markets or applied in the implementation of powerful scientific-technical and other projects, and in the performance of transnational corporations. It should be highlighted that such strategies proceed from a clear understanding of high uncertainty of circumstances of modern life, a multi-variance of possible events in principle and conditions to 'manage the chaos'.

A long-term project of the Future Studies Academy and the Institute for Economic Strategies 'Strategic Matrix of Russia in Space and Time' with the involvement of more than hundred leading Russian experts in key branches of science and using the same complex of computer simulation has allowed forming a system-based understanding of both retrospect and long-range conditions and factors in evolution of Russia.

The forecast results of the project consist of many possible scenarios of Russia's dynamics as a socio-natural open system. These scenarios are grouped by key factors of the strategic matrix model such as territory, natural resources, population, distribution of population, economy,

science and education, culture and religion, armed forces, foreign policy, and administrative system. The system of evaluations applied has allowed not only assessing the extent of development of each subsystem of the country against other countries throughout its history and forecasting horizon but also ensuring the comparability of such estimations. The summary estimation is nothing else than an integral index of development level, might and power of the country. Where the more balanced dynamics is and the level of development of all subsystems is higher then the development of the country is more sustainable, its political stability and level of wellbeing of its nationals. If a maxim volume of the state might makes 10 points, then it makes approximately 6 points for modern Russia. In other words, Russia is now on the lower boundary of the status of a great power, but with very unbalanced factors of integral power. Weakness of such parameters of might as a scientific-technological basis and the structure of economy, demographic potential, quality of life, socio-economic justice, efficient of state administration and social self-government, foreign policy, system of communications, armed forces and a number of others with a relative dominance, for instance, parameters 'territory' and 'natural resources' predetermines univocally the transit level of today's standing of the country. All with no exceptions similar unbalanced profiles of state power in Russia ended in the past throughout life of one-two generations either by socio-political collapses or vassalization of the country in this or that form.

Roughly, the essence of today's parting in the development of the country is exhaustingly described by three digits: 6; 7.5; and 2.3. There is an immutable fact behind them based on quality of strategic decisions to be taken by the state, business, society in 2007-2008, we may either rise to a sustainable position of a balanced great power (7.5 points) as a country or slide down to the level of a third-rate state of regional significance (2.3 points). We can't remain in today's position of inertia dynamics like 'it will be going like going' regardless of whatever 'chocolate illusions' can anybody cherish. In the near ten years we will rich the top with reliable security and large social equality and diversification of the structure of source of economic growth or degrade to critical levels of security, size and sovereignty of the country. How it looks on the surface of daily routine is another descriptive popular genre. The matter in question here is the content of a strategic choice where we are now. Obviously, the resultant figures look a little dry. But

quite particular contents are behind them by all parameters of integral force. Some scenarios should be specially mentioned.

I start with factor 'territory'. For near 10 years a risk of disintegration of this space or some losses exists but not that heavy as they put it in intellectual debates. The scenarios of wide and limited partnership (first of all in the near abroad) are equally probable in this period and the maintenance of status quo. Although it should be mentioned that if dynamics of the country by other parameters is close to inertia-based paths, then a risk of its disintegration is growing up sharply exactly after 2017. For understanding the acuteness of the issue it should be taken into account that we have identified more than 30 various programs for defragmentation of the country – administrative-legal, political, economic, information, confessional-ethnic, etc. These are not only talks at that, but strictly written scenarios, moreover – algorithms of actions. But mass public opinion believes so far that a real danger of disintegration of Russia is minor while nearly every fifth assesses such risk as serious.

Natural resources factor. The key problem here is not that in depletion of oil reserves or a shortage of a number of strategic minerals. A risk of loss of national control over fundamental natural resources that will include in future decade also forest, water and recreational potential looks more serious.

Population is the topic actively discussed. A range of scenarios of the future includes five alternatives. In actual fact one of them is being implemented now – a declarative policy of half-measures, important, but absolutely not enough and not reflecting the depth of understanding of a demographic catastrophe. When will it be realized in all its acuteness not only by individual figures or experts, but by all society, then one has to pass from today's demographic liberalism to very tough repressive demopolicy regardless of the face of the **then** power. Depopulation, health degradation, emergence of epidemics, old and new illnesses will occur against the crisis of distribution. Here the choice will also be made by the country represented by millions of its nationals – either in favor of the hyperurbanization scenario when a primary growth of Moscow and certain other cities will desolate the territory of the country and after nearly 20 thousand localities already disappeared for recent 15 years, tens of thousands more will pass into nothingness or a more harmonious structure of distribution will be formed.

In brief, the following may be said about economic development scenarios that they could be streamlined to two – innovative and inertia-based. Their implementation results differ many times. The accession to the WTO that is less under discussions is worth special mentioning. About 200 enterprises of 4.5 million corporate bodies carry on business now according to standards compatible with the WTO requirements. It is even politically declared about the desire to become a member of the OECD that is even more rigid organization. The scale of economic losses from the weakness in competence of the firms and the state with respect to capitalization of all assets, and especially intangible, exceeds considerably the losses from the flux of capital.

In relation to factor ‘Culture and Religion’ it should be noted that the country has in actual fact stratified in three categories of culture of behavior and ensuring their system of values. People who have used the opportunities of the last fifteen years make about 7%. These are not only well-known people from the Forbes list and 88 thousand official millionaires in our country; this is the whole strata of more than 10 million of our nationals. One third more has managed to keep the previous standard of life but at the cost of more intensive labor. More than a half can’t still adapt itself to a new life. This is not only a real stratification of society. These are behavioral patterns, these are three various types of culture, values and aspirations. These are exactly such structures instigate social crises where the ‘gentlemen stroke for freedom, moujiks struggled against gentlemen’. The main point is that the matter in question are three various looks of Russia! Throughout all our history it is observed a steadily operating fact – first culture rises, and only then a bound forward occurs in economic, military and technological development. This is a rigid regularity of our history. It means that against the background of degradation of culture no factors will become stronger. The same conclusions may be extended to system ‘Science and Education’.

From numerous subjects related to factors ‘Armed Forces’ and ‘Foreign Policy’ three points should be brought to notice. First – we can’t project seriously our military-strategic power to far border-lines and we have to clean the Augean stables in the near abroad of the post-Soviet threats to security. Second – in the near ten years even the scenario of unilateral nuclear disarmament does not seem unrealistic at all, although less probable. Third – a retrospect analysis has shown one steadier trend – in transitional periods the foreign policy indicator behaved much weaker

than an integral power of the country was objectively. A foreign policy range of today's choice – from a chance to become a sovereign center, today's cautious following the strategy of 'soft power' to turning the country into a foreign policy dwarf.

All this will be occurring against the background of struggling scenarios of global evolution – from rigid or moderate globalization to variants of regionalization and chaos. The acceptability of each of them is different for Russia.

Let's generalize this brief consideration of a set of evolution scenarios of Russia systemized by the major factor of state might in the near 10 years. First, de facto we may even hold our today's position of a nominally great country only as a part of a really possible Eurasian community in this or that configuration. This can be done only within coming ten years at that. The strategy of status quo, sedulous 'withdrawal', and more over pushing off the 'near abroad' is strategically losing. Second, fragmentary decisions of momentary advantage on the strategy of the country have become simply dangerous. Today is time of a strategic parting where it should be linked at least 45 possible paths of dynamics of various sub-systems to the package, 'road maps' of coordinated strategic decisions – smart, system-based, timely, far-sighted and meeting the interests of not only 7% of the Russian socium and not only of now living Russians. Today is time of patriotism that is inconspicuous.