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## Perception of Central Asia in selected currents of contemporary Russian socio-political thought

STUDIA I ANALIZY

**Keywords:** *Russia, Central Asia, China, Eurasians, Westernizers, neo-Slavophiles*

**Abstract:** *In this paper author examines the perception of Central Asia by contemporary Russian thinkers and scientists: “neo-Slavophiles”, “Eurasians” and “Westernizers”. Author established the existence of significant differences between three groups of experts in the assessment of Russia’s foreign policy in relation to Central Asian states. This conclusion applies equally to the attitude of selected Russian scientists concerning China, as well as to Russia’s prospects in the region.*

### Introduction

The conquest of Central Asian territory by Russia was finished in 1885. Until 1917 the region was a part of the Russian Empire<sup>1</sup>. After the fall of the monarchy and the end of the Russian Civil War, Central Asia became a part of the Soviet Union, which was created in the end of 1922. During period of the Russian Empire, level of Central Asian development was very different from the level of other regions, although Saint Petersburg made certain efforts to develop new territories. During

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<sup>1</sup> In the south of the region, a system of protectorates was created, which included the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva.

the Soviet era, the region had been rapidly modernized: many new industrial enterprises and modern cities with schools, hospitals, cinemas and libraries appeared in Central Asia, agricultural production was improved.

After the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, five Central Asian republics – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – gained independence. The former Soviet republics began to pursue independent foreign policy. Some countries have maintained close relations with Russia, while other states, especially Turkmenistan, have drifted away from Moscow. The attitude of the Russian Federation concerning Central Asia has changed over time. In the first half of the 1990s, Russia's foreign policy was aimed at rapprochement with western countries. From the second half of the 90s, and especially after the beginning of President Vladimir Putin's rule in 2000, the post-Soviet space again became one of the main priorities of Russian foreign policy.

The research hypothesis states that taking into account the historical conditions, Central Asia is considered by Russian socio-political thinkers and scientists as an important region from the perspective of restoring the status of a superpower to the Russian Federation.

The aim of this study is to identify the perception of Central Asia in Russia. To this end, author analyzed and compared selected works of Russian thinkers and scientists: "neo-Slavophiles", "Westernizers" and "Eurasians". Westernism and Slavophilia were the most powerful intellectual currents in Russian Empire of nineteenth century. Westernizers argued that Russia should follow the Western patterns of development, while Slavophiles believed that Russia has its own distinguish way. In the late USSR and in the Russian Federation, the Slavophile idea was represented by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. In contemporary Russia the most significant conceptual rival of Westernizers is Eurasianism – relatively new current of Russian socio-political thought, which was developed by group of white emigrant intellectuals. Contemporary Eurasians consider that Russia has to create the Eurasian state between Europe and Asia (territory of former USSR, except Baltic countries).

## **The perception of Central Asia in neo-Slavophilism**

Even before the dissolution of the USSR, the well-known Soviet writer and dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn published his essay "Rebuilding Russia". This publication contains the author's consideration on how to

revive the Russian state after the end of the communist era. A. Solzhenitsyn proposes to include only four of the fifteen republics in the “new Russia” – the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR, the Byelorussian SSR and the Kazakh SSR. Noteworthy is that author characterized Kazakhstan quite radically: in his opinion its present territory was “stitched together by the communists in a completely haphazard fashion”. Kazakhstan was assembled from southern Siberia, Southern Ural and deserts, which were developed by “Russians, prisoners and deported nations”. Only the southern part of the country is “Kazakh”, and A. Solzhenitsyn sees no problems in case of its seceding from the “new Russia”. In this case, the Russian Union will be formed – a state populated mostly by the East Slavs<sup>2</sup>.

A. Solzhenitsyn is a bright representative of the neo-Slavic current among contemporary Russian thinkers. He made a great contribution to the formation of the “white” conservatism – Russian right-wing political philosophy<sup>3</sup>. Noteworthy is that a plan to establish a Russian Union was difficult to implement. The creation of “new Russia” according to the thinker’s program would be possible only if accepted and implemented by the Soviet central authorities. After the dissolution of the USSR, formation of the “Solzhenitsyn’s Russia” is almost impossible.

## The perception of Central Asia by contemporary “Eurasians”

The most influential representative of neo-Eurasianism, leader of the International Eurasian Movement, Aleksandr Dugin, believes that Russia should strive to create a Eurasian Union in order to regain the status of a great power. From the thinker’s point of view, the world consists of four “meridional zones”: 1) the Atlantic zone (North and South America), 2) Euro-Africa, in which the European Union plays a major role, 3) the Russian-Central Asian zone, 4) the Pacific zone. Continuing the tradition of the classical Eurasians, A. Dugin asserts: “Central Asia is subject to integration into a single strategic and economic bloc with Russia within the framework of the Eurasian Union”. The function of this region is to be a “zone of rapprochement” between

<sup>2</sup> А. И. Солженицын, *Как нам обустроить Россию?*, «Комсомольская правда», специальный выпуск, Moscow 1990, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Н. В. Работяжев, *Александр Солженицын как политический мыслитель*, [https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2018-12-10/6\\_7459\\_ideas.html](https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2018-12-10/6_7459_ideas.html) (25.09.2020).

the states of continental Islam (Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Russia<sup>4</sup>.

In the book «Project “Eurasia”» A. Dugin gives additional details on the organization of Central Asia. According to the leader of neo-Eurasianism, Moscow, as Eurasian center, should “delegate” to Tehran the mission to form a strong Central Asian bloc capable of counteracting the “Atlantic influence” in the region. Author adds that the matter is the creation of the Central Asian Empire, which will be closely linked with the Eurasian Empire<sup>5</sup>. The territories inhabited by the Russian minority will come under Moscow’s control, and territories with a mixed population will be granted “special rights” based on “Russian-Iranian projects”<sup>6</sup>.

A. Dugin’s “Eurasian project” is very different from the plans of his interwar predecessors – classical Eurasians. In addition to the revival of “Russia-Eurasia”, author writes about the emergence of the Central Asian Empire under the Iranian auspices. A. Dugin’s project looks completely unrealistic. Difficult to imagine that the Central Asian states would agree to become a part of the Iran-led empire aimed at countering “Atlantic influence” and “resisting the liberal market sea civilization”<sup>7</sup>. A. Dugin perceives the countries of the region exclusively instrumental. The same applies to “Russia-Eurasia”, which, together with other Eurasian states, will, de facto, be doomed to fight the Atlantic world.

Worth noting is that the Russian Empire was included in the European international system. In both world wars among Russia’s allies were western countries – France, the British Empire and the United States. For this reason, the validity of Eurasian Anti-Western concepts, “proving” the existence of centuries-old rivalry between “Russia-Eurasia” and the West, remains unclear.

Experts of Izborsk Club<sup>8</sup> – Aleksandr Prokhanov, Vitaly Averianov, Aleksandr Dugin and Andrei Kobiakov – emphasize the great importance of Central Asia for Russia. In their publication “The Doctrine of the Russian World”, a group of researchers call Kazakhstan “the first belt of Russian civilization”. From the author’s point of view, the ruling elite of Kazakhstan “fears” the Russians less than the Chinese, radical Islamists and Americans which “threatens its existence”. Russians are

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<sup>4</sup> А. Г. Дугин, *Евразийская миссия Нурсултана Назарбаева*, Moscow 2004, p. 227.

<sup>5</sup> This term is used by A. Dugin regarding to Russia.

<sup>6</sup> А. Г. Дугин, *Проект «Евразия»*, Moscow 2004, pp. 398–400.

<sup>7</sup> А. Дугин talks about USA and its allies – “planetary Atlantic structures”.

<sup>8</sup> Izborsk Club is an association of Russian experts (mostly conservative).

represented in the state apparatus and act as allies of President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Among other countries of the region, Kyrgyzstan stands out where “Russian fort” exists<sup>9</sup>. Worth noting is that Middle Asia is described by researchers as “the second belt of Russian civilization”<sup>10</sup>. Izborsk club analysts argue that Russian civilization can strengthen its position in the region if Russia and Central Asian states develop joint integration projects<sup>11</sup>.

Dr. Sergey Luzyanin, Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences examines Central Asia in the context of Russian-Chinese cooperation in Eurasia. From the analyst’s point of view, Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China (PRC), as major Eurasian powers, are “natural allies in trade, infrastructure, and integration processes in Eurasia”. The two countries have “the same geoeconomic interests”. Conjugation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” can lead to the formation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. S. Luzyanin believes that American financial, economic and military initiatives in the region run counter to the interests of Russia and PRC and “lead to destabilization and aggravation of conflicts” in certain parts of Central Asia<sup>12</sup>.

Analyzing Russia’s policy in Central Asia, the researcher pays special attention to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. S. Luzyanin states that the Russia-Kazakhstan “tandem” ensures stability in the region and reflects a high degree of trust between both countries. Kyrgyzstan is “one of the outposts in Central Asia”: Russian aviation units are stationed at the Kant airbase. Successful cooperation with these countries creates an image of Russia as a partner state in the field of security<sup>13</sup>.

Elnur Mekhdiev, Konstantin Safronov and Sharbatullo Sodikov, researchers at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), analyze Central Asia with an emphasis on the development of Eurasian integration – “the most likely vector for Central

<sup>9</sup> This is what the authors call the Russian minority living in the north of the country. The Russian minority in Kazakhstan is called the “Russian frontier”.

<sup>10</sup> This gradation is associated with the number of Russians in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries.

<sup>11</sup> А. А. Проханов, В. В. Аверьянов, А. Г. Дугин, А. Б. Кобяков, *Доктрина русского мира*, Moscow 2016, pp. 81, 89–90.

<sup>12</sup> С. Г. Лузянин, *Большая Евразия: общие задачи для Китая и России*, <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/bolshaya-evraziya-zadachi/> (25.09.2020).

<sup>13</sup> С. Г. Лузянин, *Политика России и Китая в „классической” Центральной Азии и формирование их обновлённого имиджа в регионе*, «Китай в мировой и региональной политике. История и современность» 2009, № 14, pp. 53, 58.

Asian states development”. The researchers argue that the former Soviet republics need to integrate with Russia: high population growth rate increases the burden on economy of their countries. The results of such demographic situation are shortage of jobs and increase raise of poverty rate, primarily in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. For this reason, local elites are interested in “sending” their youth to other countries. The Russian integration project is much more profitable both economically and culturally for the Central Asian states than the Chinese one. Local societies speak with “great apprehension about the hundreds of thousands of Chinese” already living in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. At the same time, the Russian-speaking population of the region does not cause negative emotions for quite understandable reasons: it has long been adapted and does not pose a threat to the identities of the titular nations<sup>14</sup>.

Andrey Kortunov the Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council, together with Marlene Laruelle from George Washington University analyzed various aspects of Russian-US interaction in Central Asia. Experts note that Central Asia is a region of critical importance for Russian Federation. Moscow needs this region in order to establish itself as the “pivot” of Eurasia. In the same time Central Asia is not particularly significant for the United State. Russia’s interaction with the region is “unparalleled”: in 2015 President Vladimir Putin met with Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev at least 13 times at various international forums. At the UN General Assembly meetings Russia counts on the Central Asian states support<sup>15</sup>.

A. Kovtunov and M. Laruelle also emphasize that the Russian-American geopolitical rivalry in the region is not beneficial to either Moscow, or Washington, or Central Asia. Both countries have to stop perceiving themselves as adversaries and concentrate on joint projects aimed at strengthening security and developing the region<sup>16</sup>.

Some Russian researchers attach even greater importance to Central Asia. Viktoria Muzalevskaya, the researcher at Saratov State University calls this region a “strategic outpost of Russia in Greater Asia”, which always will occupy a leading position in Russia’s foreign policy agenda.

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<sup>14</sup> Э. Т. Мехдиев, К. Ю. Сафронов, Ш. Д. Содиков, *Постмайданные перспективы евразийской интеграции*, «Международная жизнь» 2016, № 4, <https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/1466> (25.09.2020).

<sup>15</sup> А. В. Кортунов, М. Ларюэль, *Россия и США в Центральной Азии: ограничения и возможности сотрудничества*, доклад РСМД, 2019, № 49, pp. 9–10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 32–33.

Expert considers that Central Asian republics still see themselves as one with Russia and are interested in a close relationship with Moscow. The EAEU is a necessary and timely format for Russia's relations with the countries of the region: it revitalizes the region's economies, attracts investment and reforms the legal and tax systems. V. Muzalevskaya identifies two possible scenarios for the development of relations between Russia and the Central Asian states: either Moscow will become an economic "locomotive" and leader in the region, or it will occupy an equal position with other EAEU countries<sup>17</sup>.

### Russian "Westernizers" about Central Asian region

Russian "Westernizers" perceive the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in some different way. Prof. Alexey Malashenko, analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center, believes that Central Asia is not one of the priority areas of Russia's foreign policy. The analyst writes about the "secondary importance" of the region both within the post-Soviet space<sup>18</sup> and within the Eastern world. From his point of view, the main dilemma of Russia's strategy is "the choice between the West and the East". Russia's interest in Central Asia is driven by the Kremlin's desire of "psychological" comfort: this is the last region, in which Russia can feel like a leader. The researcher agrees with the assertion of the American political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski that Russia is too weak politically and too poor to cut off the region from other countries and develop independently. The XXI century has not brought major changes: Russia still lacks the strength to establish a political and economic monopoly in Central Asia<sup>19</sup>.

Commenting on Russia's prospects in the "near abroad", A. Malashenko asserts that "modern Russia cannot fulfill the function of a civilizer". Central Asia takes an example from Western and Muslim countries and does not perceive Russia as a great and effective state. Russian integration projects, including the EAEU, cannot change this situation<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> В. А. Музалевская, *Россия и Центральная Азия: в поиске новых форматов взаимодействия*, «Современные евразийские исследования» 2016, № 3, pp. 80, 85–86.

<sup>18</sup> According to A. Malashenko, the post-Soviet space is also less important, "secondary" for Moscow.

<sup>19</sup> А. В. Малашенко, *Центральная Азия: на что рассчитывает Россия?*, Moscow 2012, pp. 7–8.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 15–16.

A. Malashenko is very skeptical about the possibilities of Russia and the prospects for its policy in Central Asia. Let's result citation from the Polish analyst Wojciech Górecki, who wrote a review on his book: "After reading A. Malashenko's book, one gets the impression of a retreating...weakening state. This impression often contradicts with what can be seen in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and especially in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan... Malashenko...either deliberately radicalizes his theses to make them sound more emphatically, or he sees more and deeper than others"<sup>21</sup>. It is difficult to disagree with the validity of W. Górecki's conclusions. Without questioning the fact that Moscow is no longer the only undisputed leader in Central Asia, it should be borne in mind that the Russian Federation remains a very influential country, quite effectively implementing its goals.

Dmitry Trienin, head of the Carnegie Moscow Center, assesses Russia's actions in the region in a similar way. In the book «The End of Eurasia», the researcher argues that the growing popularity of Eurasianism in Russia is connected with disillusionment with the West. D. Trienin comes to the conclusion that Russia will not be able to create a bloc of Orthodox states on the territory of the former USSR, and therefore will definitely be disappointed in Eurasianism. Central Asia is increasingly moving away from Moscow. The only exception is Kazakhstan, which has a significant Russian minority<sup>22</sup>.

In the book «Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story» D. Trienin emphasizes the huge importance of Kazakhstan for the Russian Federation, calling it "a key element in solving any problems in the region". According to the analyst, Russia still considers Central Asia as its sphere of influence, although the Central Asian states "have already learned to do without Moscow". D. Trienin emphasized that Russia must change its foreign policy, because the "nostalgic" course aimed at keeping Central Asia in its sphere of influence is doomed to failure<sup>23</sup>.

Temur Umarov of the Carnegie Moscow Center pays attention to the growing influence of China in the Central Asia. The analyst believes that over the past three decades, China has become the important partner for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Trade, investment, infrastructure projects and other instruments that are

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<sup>21</sup> W. Górecki, *Daleko od Moskwy*, book review of A. Małaszenki, *Центральная Азия: на что рассчитывает Россия?*, [www.new.org.pl/download/721](http://www.new.org.pl/download/721) (25.09.2020).

<sup>22</sup> D. V. Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*, Washington 2002, pp. 283–285.

<sup>23</sup> Д. В. Тренин, *Post-imperium: евразийская история*, Moscow 2012, pp. 176–177, 185–186.

used by Beijing create in this region the “basis for its future dominance in all areas – Pax Sinica”. From T. Umarov’s point of view, Russia needs to continue the development of the EAEU, whose members are Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. If the EAEU acts according to clear rules and does not depend on the dominant position of Russia, it can become a profitable alternative to Chinese projects. This scenario is in the interests of Moscow, as well as the interests of the Central Asian states, whose inhabitants do not want their countries to become heavily dependent on the PRC<sup>24</sup>.

In the book «“Great Game” with Unknown Rules: World Politics and Central Asia» Dr. Andrey Kazantsev at the MGIMO claims that Moscow is still developing a new understanding of its interests in Central Asia. The author divides Russian interests in the region into “positive” and “negative”. “Positive” interests include those that contribute to strengthening the geopolitical positions of Russia and can bring certain benefits. To this group of interests, author considers trade and economic cooperation, obtaining raw materials, the possibility of using military-technical facilities in the region, cheap labor, as well as the prospect of expanding its influence in the southern part of the CIS and in neighboring countries. Threats and challenges which are faced by Russia can be qualified as “negative” interests. The group of “negative” interests includes the fight against drug trafficking and countering religious and political extremism, whose victory could turn Central Asia into a region hostile to Russia<sup>25</sup>.

Dr. A. Kazantsev argues that a “new Great Game” – geopolitical rivalry between several states is taking place in Central Asia. Unlike the “Great Game” in the XIX century, which took place between the Russian and British empires, a “new Game” involves Russia, the European Union, the United States, China, Turkey and Iran. The author devotes particular attention to China, whose growing influence increases the geopolitical uncertainty in the region. The dynamically developing PRC can not only oust Russia from Central Asia, but also turn the largest country in the world into its raw material appendage. A. Kazantsev also emphasizes that the current Russian Federation cannot successfully resist China’s economic expansion<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Т. Умаров, *На пути к Pax Sinica: что несёт Центральной Азии экспансия Китая*, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/81265> (25.09.2020).

<sup>25</sup> А. А. Казанцев, *„Большая игра” с неизвестными правилами: мировая политика и Центральная Азия*, Moscow 2008, p. 193.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 209–211.

Andrei Ryabov, an expert of the Gorbachev Foundation, and journalist Svetlana Lolaeva analyzed the changes in the perception of the Central Asian republics by Russian society. Analysts conclude that in the XXI century Central Asia is perceived as a source of migrants who threaten Russian culture and the very existence of Russia. Russia “did not appreciate” that Central Asia, unlike a “native” North Caucasus, did not become a base of religious extremism. Given the growing antipathy towards migrants, people from Central Asia will try to look for work and study in other countries. Authors also emphasize that for some unknown reasons, the Russian leadership is still convinced that Moscow has a much stronger position in the region than the United States, China, and the EU. This way of thinking is “short-sighted and pernicious”. Experts note that China is gradually ousting France from its traditional zone of influence in Africa. Unlike the African continent, the Central Asian region is directly adjacent to PRC’s borders<sup>27</sup>.

Considering the development of integration projects between Russian Federation and Central Asian countries, A. Ryabov emphasizes that countries with the same level of development should become their members. From his point of view, Kazakhstan, like Belarus, is appropriate for integration. The analyst is more skeptical about other countries: he considers that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will become “kettlebells” for Moscow<sup>28</sup>.

Sergey Abashin, professor of the European University in Saint Petersburg, writes that many Russian politicians, especially those with nationalist views, perceive migrants from Central Asia as “strangers”, “black” people. The most heated discussions on migration in Russia took place in 2013, during the Moscow mayoral election, when all political forces – from pro-government to opposition – actively used the image of “Gastarbeiter” to increase their ratings. Gradually their culture, religion and race become “alien” to Russian people. Even a fact that during times of the Russian Empire and the USSR an intensive modernization was carried out in the region does not help to change this trend<sup>29</sup>.

At the same time, S. Abashin argues that any Russian government, even the most nationalist one, will be forced to establish normal relations with Central Asian countries. Negative attitude in relation to migrants

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<sup>27</sup> С. П. Лолаева, А. В. Рябов, *Средняя Азия в русском и российском восприятии*, «Неприкосновенный запас» 2009, № 4, pp. 171–174.

<sup>28</sup> А. Карев, *Политолог Андрей Рябов (интервью)*, <https://newizv.ru/news/society/18-10-2012/171531-politolog-andrej-ryabov> (25.09.2020).

<sup>29</sup> С. Н. Абашин, *Движения из Центральной Азии в Россию: в модели нового мироустройства*, «Pro et Contra» 2014, № 1–2, p. 82.

does not deny the existence of interdependence between Moscow and the region: Russia's economy needs labor force and foreign markets to sell its own production. In addition, Central Asia is an important element of relations with China, Afghanistan and Iran<sup>30</sup>.

The following conclusions can be drawn in the end of this research:

1. "Eurasians" attach great value to Central Asia. From their point of view, Central Asia is a region of strategic or even critical importance for Moscow; some experts even call it an "Russian outpost in Greater Asia". Kazakhstan is perceived by them as a key state, because the "Russia-Kazakhstan tandem" ensures stability in the region. Unlike the "Eurasians", the "Westernizers" do not attach such great importance to the region. A number of researchers argue that Central Asia is not among the main Russia's foreign policy priorities. According to prof. A. Malashenko Central Asia is a region of secondary importance for Russian Federation both within Asia and in the post-Soviet space. A. Solzhenitsyn, as a representative of neo-Slavophilism, was interested only in the East Slavic states. In Central Asia, he considered important only the northern and central regions of Kazakhstan, in which Russians constituted the ethnic majority.
2. "Eurasians" tend to have a more optimistic view of Russia's prospects in the region, than "Westernizers". From their point of view, China is Russia's ally and partner. Cooperation with Beijing has a beneficial effect on the development of all Central Asian states. The United States is considered the main geopolitical rival of Moscow. "Eurasians" emphasize that Washington is trying to bring Western-oriented elites to power and supports the anti-Russian course of some local politicians (for example, Uzbek President Islam Karimov until 2005). Experts predict that Russia can become a regional leader or occupy an equal position with other Central Asian countries. "Westernizers" are more critical of Russian foreign policy in the region. They claim that Russia has no possibilities to keep Central Asia in its sphere of influence, because of lack of political power and economic capacities. Experts draw attention to the fact that while maintaining the existing growth rates of the PRC, Russia will be almost completely ousted from Central Asia. The only fields in which Moscow will continue to be competitive are arms exports and security policy. If the Eurasian Economic Union develops successfully, Russia will be able to avoid

<sup>30</sup> P. Сагтаров, *Сергей Абашии о советской и постсоветской Центральной Азии*, <https://caa-network.org/archives/10400> (25.09.2020).

the most negative scenario. Noteworthy is that some “Westernizers” consider that only part of Central Asian states are appropriate for integration with Russia. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are described by them as “kettlebells”, which cannot be helpful for Moscow, because of low level of economic development.

3. “Eurasians” consider that integration with Russia is most possible strategy of foreign policy for Central Asian states. Russian-speaking minority in the region does not pose any threat to local nations. Millions of people from Central Asia are working in Russian Federation and local elites are interested in such state of affairs, because of the shortage of jobs in the region. “Westernizers” pay much attention to deteriorating of Russian’s attitudes towards labor migrants from Central Asia. They argue that in XXI century Central Asia is perceived as a source of migrants which pose a threat to Russian culture. Many Russian political parties, especially nationalist ones, use this topic to get more votes at elections. This issue creates additional problems in relations between Russia and the Central Asian states. The growing antipathy towards migrants may lead to reorientation of migrant workers from Russia to other countries.

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