

Ana Z. Jevtović^[1]
Institute for Political Studies
Belgrade (Serbia)

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Review
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When history falls silent, geopolitics starts speaking



Photo: Archives of Vojvodina

Review of the monograph *Eurasian Geopolitics of Security* by Aleksandar Gajić and Nikola Rajić, Novi Sad, Archives of Vojvodina, and Belgrade: Institute of European Studies, 2025

Geopolitical considerations of Aleksandar Gajić and Nikola Rajić, collected in the monograph *Eurasian Geopolitics of Security*, in a comprehensive, concise and reasoned manner, reveal dark corridors of power located in this part of the planet. A broad, inclusive and conceptually close interpretative framework offers readers a number of sharp-witted, astute and analytical texts, theoretically substantiated by series of relevant historical sources, diplomatic documents, intelligence data and political stratagems. Their sum should not be

[1] jevtovic.ana@gmail.com; <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3877-225X>

measured by the number of pages (310) but by the true depth of the meanings that point to the continuity of geopolitical projections and clashes of different interest spheres in the relatively unstable ethnic, religious, economic, ideological, historical, cultural and security region. This is a “strategic crossroads and security-vital territory” in Mackinder-like understanding of the importance of this region in struggles for world domination: “Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world” (Mackinder, 2009). Each chapter makes part of the synthesized, unique and functionally shaped thematic edition of separate texts which, in a layered and planned fashion, reveal the complexity and organization of geopolitical projecting in the era of cyber conflicts and weighing of technological supremacy.

The book *Eurasian Geopolitics of Security* consists of 11 thematic segments which structurally connect the complex architecture of problematic international activities in this part of the world. At the very beginning the authors consider the relationship between the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), particularly in relation to acting in the Eurasian region. Terrorism, separatism and religious extremism make the axis of evil characteristic of these territories, while the role of Western powers’ security services in organizing a series of “colour revolutions” (from 2005, in Ukraine, and then in Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan...) has never been clarified. Russia, China, India and Pakistan are not only the countries competing for economic leadership; they are also nuclear powers with a high potential in possible war confrontations,

which always draws sufficient attention of cautious strategists.

The surges of radical Islamism in which Afghanistan is still an active training base threatens with the infiltration of religious extremists and the opening of new crises, which must not be underestimated at all. The chapter about Turkish foreign policy historically in detail reveals hidden mechanisms of inherited instructions ever since the epoch of the Ottoman Empire and unexpected geopolitical alliances aimed at preserving and reviving the empire, which explains many political decisions of this country nowadays. The authors gradually and in a theoretically supported manner mark the moment of the secular state’s transition into the role of “the blocker of the Sea of Marmara strait”, whereas the specific alliance with the United States of America ensures the unhidden role in the processes of border alteration management in the Caspian region. The idea of the “Turkish realm from the Adriatic to the Chinese Wall” initiated the educational-cultural offensive towards the Caucasus and Central Asia, while the road of the active military cooperation was simultaneously paved by numerous bilateral agreements on economic cooperation. Ethno-linguistic and religious closeness, as well as growing Neo-Ottomanism, are the pillars of the “strategic depth”, but still insufficient for more efficient implementation of decades-long US interests in that region.

The future readers of this book will probably find interesting the comparison of the conflict paradigms regarding Nagorno-Karabakh and the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija. Analyzing the “frozen conflict” and the concepts of their interpretations in the inter-ethnic environ-

ment through the history of disputes and clashes of the confronted sides, Aleksandar Gajić and Nikola Rajić list numerous similarities and differences, emphasizing the geostrategic importance of controlling the region for Atlanticist, Oriental, Central European and Eurasian powers. What is pointed out on a smaller scale in geopolitical analyses is the religious dimension of conflicts because the oppressed are Christian nations (Serbs as Orthodox Christians, Armenians as Monophysites), while the oppressors are Muslim (Sunni Albanians and Shiite Azeris). The world public turned a blind eye to the destruction of 117 Serbian churches and monasteries, pretending not to hear the cries of the ethnically expelled population and pogroms it suffers every day in practice.

The research attention is also focused on the complex geostrategic frameworks of Russian-Iranian relations, which have been constantly in the stage of mutual understanding and harmony since the beginning of the 21st century. Former Persia has lost its crumbles of historical glory, but in the territory of the Middle East (West Asia), Iran is still “the key culturally and strategically dominant country”. The turbulent past of the century-long mutual conflicts has been replaced by increasing ideological closeness and cooperation at the military and energy levels, whereas with the implementation of the “Primakov’s doctrine”, Putin’s administration used the weaknesses of the geopolitical position of Teheran to offer a number of concessions in order to exit its international isolation. The two countries richest in gas worldwide rapidly transferred the cooperation in the field of energy into the military complex as well, including the controversial field of nuclear cooperation, which is particularly concerning to

the West. Energy geopolitics is constantly on the rise, while the territories of Central Asia need to be analyzed through an interwoven interest relationship between the Russian-Chinese condominium to the hub of multipolarity that may easily turn into a powder keg on the verge of explosion. There small step between partnership relations and a strategic alliance is easily taken in conflict situations, as indicated by the authors.

The spiral of geostrategic projections, tactical turns and unexpected changes of orientations points to the disturbance and vagueness of political-diplomatic communication, as well as the deep instability of the region that is of essential importance to the global peace. Gajić and Rajić explore the narrow manoeuvre space left to big players on the chessboard, aware that playing with identities, ideologies and geography may easily become a trigger for changes in international relations. A surplus of history, with numerous layers of religion, politics, economy, propaganda and culture, makes the framework of interests in the future of the strategically important regions of the South Caucasian and Central Asia, while both the East and the West are equally involved in considering the possibilities of their own influence and interest expansion. Behind declarative messages about partnership and cooperation, there is a hidden series of dynamic and precisely configured security procedures and plans with potential regional conflicts and escalation processes. Illusions of dialogue and hope regarding possible forms of cooperation are masked by the clouds of radicalization in the function of acknowledging military supremacy, with increasing technological investments in cyber weapons.

The book presented here is quite interesting from the aspect of the development of the new multipolar world. The observer's keen eye cannot overlook the fact that the Eurasian region is slowly freeing itself from the US influence, which China and Russia are skilfully using to expand the range of their own ambitions and initiatives. Asymmetry can be seen in the nuances of their respective influences – while China is financially stronger, Russia is more influential in diplomatic and historical aspects. It is also possible to see a gradual geostrategic change in the Turkey's orientation in foreign affairs, in which this regional power skilfully manoeuvres the consequences of dosed conflicts and legitimizes itself as a desirably without which there are no global geopolitical events. The "feeling of exceptionality" is increasing, but it is not sufficient to be established in the eyes of own public – it also seeks international

recognition of the new reality. This is a special virtue of this text: creative interpretation in the spirit of Mackinder-Spykman tradition, whereas foreign policies of big players on the chess table are analysed rationally, in the spirit of modern neoclassical realism.

This short review points to the theoretical foundation and empirical basis of the monograph offered by the authors. The credit also goes to the publishers – the Archives of Vojvodina from Novi Sad, which has in the past years become a respectable player substantially helping to bring books like this to our academic community, as well as the Institute of European Studies, whose target is the promotion of such current works. The dynamics of political power distribution in the modern world is changing every moment, but to those readers who are more interested in the Eurasian territory, the recommended book is the right choice.

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