

THE FATE OF A GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL ASSESSMENT

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In 1994, our well-known and recognized scientist, geopolitical thinker and professor Milomir Stepić presented the prognostic geopolitical theorem on the bloc structure of the world at the scientific forum of the Cultural Centre "The Students' City". At about the same time, in the important and unfortunately shut down journal *Ekonomika* at that time (No. 10-12/1994), the controversial article by Viorel Roman entitled „Imperium and Limes“ was published, which challenged our scientific community to carefully consider very important issues that it started. The strategic importance of the problem that Roman dealt with prompted many authors to give their views on the future of the power structure at global level. They were prominent intellectuals including Blagoje Babić, Tomislav Kresović, Drago Njegovan, Dragoljub Kojčić, Života Đorđević, Predrag Simić, Momčilo Spremić, Radovan Radinović, Miloš Sindić, Miloš Knežević, Dragan Simić, Waclaw Zajaczkowski, Jovan Ilić, Jovan Arandelović, Dušan Bataković, Miroslav Prokopijević, Zoran Konstantinović, Miroslav Ivanović, Žarko Vidović, Branko Bojović, Milorad Ekmečić, Željko Poznanović, then a young assistant at the Faculty of Geography of Belgrade University, Milomir Stepić and others.

The scientific paper by Stepić was originally published in the journal *Ekonomika* in 1997. Although there is an archive of the journal, it is not fully accessible to the scientific public. The author's copy of the mentioned number was destroyed in the flood in Obrenovac in 2014, and the copy has been recently found due to a combination of happy circumstances. This scientific paper has almost experienced the fate of many, not only lost, but also „forgotten“ scientific achievements. The modesty of the author has not prevented the writer of these lines from initiating the reprint of this scientific paper, in order to prevent its „loss“ again and, what is much more important – its „forgetting“.

We should bear in mind that this is the time of almost absolute domination of the United States in international relations, the only remaining superpower, which

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emerged from the Cold War as the undisputed ideological winner with unquestionable political, economic and military dominance in international relations. By a comprehensive structural analysis of cultural, religious, political, economic and geographical factors, Stepić designed the future structure of power centres in the spatial context (on maps made on the now forgotten tracing paper), which a quarter of a century later took quite recognizable forms in reality. The importance of the paper is convincingly shown by the fact that this scientist noticed the processes that would follow and performed the description and classification of future power centres, their internal properties and mutual relations and predicted the zones and essential reasons for potential conflicts. It is particularly important to note that he had „the courage and bravery“ to predict the inevitable decline of the US power and the character of inter-bloc relations based on the trade, migration and cultural barriers we are witnessing, but at the time the paper was written this was heresy in predominantly neoliberal thought based on free trade and the flow of people and ideas.

The almost prophetic analysis of future events and processes is not a consequence of providence, but systematic and creative implementation of an undoubtedly great fund of knowledge, which is a consequence of the indisputable personal potential and commitment of Professor Stepić, and also the entire educational system in which he grew up. This is just another proof that Serbia has high-quality scientific potential, but the question remains how much they are recognized, respected and used for the common good.

The social significance of long-term geopolitical predictions is a scientifically based foundation for designing all kinds of social and state strategies. One should single out the most important ones: national security, defence, foreign policy and economy. That is the reason and the main motive for republishing the paper by Milomir Stepić.

Professor Stepić also dealt with the Balkans and the fate of Serbian national interests. Unfortunately, his predictions about further „fragmentation of Serbian territories“ (the author often uses this phrase) also came true. The situation in the Balkans is still essentially defined by Roman's conception of *empire-limes-barbarians*. As Stepić stated a quarter of a century ago, „it is a view from a comfortable observation post – from the position of Western and Central Europe. They still define who barbarians are, where and how they will establish the Limes and who they will give the privilege to join.“

The author of these lines could not resist ending these introductory remarks for reading the paper by Stepić's words because they hide the very essence of the Balkans in international relations: „The historical constant is that all major changes in the world happen with the direct participation of Europe, that European movements are first registered by the Balkan seismograph, and that making the Balkan movements concrete is always *territorial*.“

The future bloc structure of the world**

Milomir Stepić, PhD

With the termination of bipolarism and the Cold War at the end of the 20th century, a unipolar model of domination of only one global power - the United States – has been established. The accelerated pace of development of the European and Far Eastern poles of power will make the inviolable primacy of the United States gradually limited, and multipolarity will become the main feature of the future structure of the world. Therefore, the global political and geographical structure of the planet will be shaped by a model of blocs and will consist of the US, Euro-Russia, Islamic Afro-Asia, Southeastern Asia with Australia, Black Africa and Antarctica. Within each bloc and between different blocs, there will be interest-motivated and hierarchically differentiated relations. The Islamic territorial expansionism, as a planetary phenomenon, can be of such proportions that it causes significant changes in individual blocs and a revision of the overall model. This will affect the future of the Balkans and Serbian countries, but their position will mostly be defined by the EU, Russia and the United States.

Key words: *multipolarity, poles of power, political and geographical structure, blocs, Serbian countries*

The obsessive need of thinking elites to „draw the line“ in the last decade of the 20th century is a consequence of the specific results of irrational and rational motives - the near end of the second millennium of Christian-centric world history and the end of the half-century bipolar formula of the world functioning resulting from the order established on the results of a recent war of planetary proportions. *The phenomenon of 2000* in the collective consciousness of humanity is designed as the *end* that requires an analysis of the travelled road, but even more as the *beginning* of the future, which requires the model and postulates on which it will function, directions of development and universal values on which it will be based, ways of formulating and promoting these new principles, mechanisms for their implementation and concrete levers of power that will materialize and implement them (impose!?). In the economic-geographical, political-geographical, geopolitical and geostrategic sense, the end of the second millennium was „early“: on December 2-3, 1989, at the meeting of Bush and Gorbachev in the waters of Malta, the end of the Cold War was symbolically announced without a winner (?). The destruction of the Eastern bloc (ideological-political, economic and military) also meant overcoming the balance of fear, and abruptly exposing the interests hitherto hidden in the shadow of friction between the two superpowers. This will inevitably result in their spatial concretization, i.e. *a new political-geographical projection of the world structure*.

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20th century – the era of geopolitical modelling of the world order structure

Ratzel's articulation of the relations between the geographical and the political (*Politische Geographie*, 1897) meant not only the constitution of a new scientific discipline, but also gave impetus to the understanding of the world order that would not be burdened by previous clichés. The metropolises of the great colonial empires or emerging powers, whose goal was to revise the existing possessions and spheres of interest, have broadcast various projects of the division of the world, pretensions and directions of penetration, mostly in accordance with the official geostrategic aspirations of their own political, economic and military establishment. The first half of the 20th century was the *belle époque* of geopolitics, a period of emergence and confrontation of theoretical settings of the authors, who would later grow into classics of the establishment of political-geographical and geopolitical schools (German, French, British, American), and different models of the world structure with territorial concretizations and cartographic visualizations of these models. Although after the Second World War the Cold War confrontation between the two great powers had a recognizable theoretical basis in the *Heartland-Rimland*¹ doctrine and the inevitability of thalassocratic-telurocratic antagonism, in the period of the balance of fear no original political-geographical and geopolitical ideas of greater importance appeared.² It was, however, apparent hibernation. Its end began to be sensed already during the arms race and became evident when the indications that the Eastern bloc „was losing condition“ became more and more obvious, so that, as the number of bricks in the Berlin Wall decreased, the number of promoted ideas, theories and models about the world recomposition based on a new order of forces on the scale of planetary power was becoming greater.

The removal of the Iron Curtain was immediately preceded by a brilliant analysis of the past period in which F. Fukuyama (summer 1989) drew a controversial conclusion from *the end of ideologies, the end of the revolution, the end of the Cold War, the end of bipolarism and the end of old geopolitics* and announced

¹ Mackinder's theory of Heartland from 1904 (due to new realities it was redefined in 1919 and 1943) was used by Spyknum to claim the exact opposite – the elements of the world power are not in the “heart of the mainland”, but in Rimland. The necessity to control that “ring”, preventing the USSR from perforating it and tightening the noose around its rival became the basis of the global strategy of the US after the Second World War, in which the ideological confrontation was camouflage for geopolitical and geostrategic rivalry.

² R. Hartshorne's ideas on centrifugal and centripetal forces affecting internal cohesion in the state and especially Cohen's hierarchical polycentric model, as a kind of critique of the Heartland-Rimland doctrine, can be considered to be exceptions. (See: Mirko Grčić, *Opšta politička geografija*, Geografski fakultet PMF, Beograd, 1989, p. 9; Mirko Grčić, Nikolaj S. Mironenko, I.S. Tolstoborov, Osnovni geopolitički modeli svetskog poretka u XX veku, in *Zbornik radova*, ed. B. Jaćimović, the Faculty of Geography, the University of Belgrade, Belgrade, 1995, pp. 48-49).

the end of history, which caused an avalanche of controversy about *endism*. And what comes after the end? Something new comes – *a new world order*. Only this thesis, promoted several times throughout history, with even more failed practical execution and catastrophic consequences, provoked the debate on visions and their concrete achievements. Huntington's thesis about the world that will be in the 21st century globally shaped by the relationship (confrontation) of seven or eight great civilizations (Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin-American and probably African) has met a great number of supporters, among other things, because at the time of its appearance (summer 1993) it was already empirically confirmed. The Roman's concept of *empire, limes and barbarians* (September 1994) is essentially the implementation of the *centre-periphery* model and unequivocally represents the Western attitude towards *the rest of the world*. These few theories developed in the period of geopolitical transition, i.e. in the unstable time of replacing the old world order with the new one, represent concrete views on the essence of the world functioning and its future structure. It is noticeable that the proposed concepts are mostly unambiguous and monocriteria, and therefore extremely simplified and black-white schematized. Their territorial projections and political-geographical concretization have vague and contradictory outlines, and sometimes are completely missing. Does this fit into the official interpretation that the importance of nationally, historically and culturally-civilizationally coded territories and borders, understood in the classical sense, belongs to the past and the alleged primitivism of those who oppose the unlimited movement of information and capital?

With the defeat of the Eastern bloc in the Cold War, its decomposition and the destruction of the USSR³, the West was left without a rival. The world, with the United States as its inviolable power, has become *unipolar*. A new world order began to be established on these premises. It was impossible to oppose the winner's mondialistic ambitions, total unification on the principles of Westernization and attempts at a general *melting pot* to turn the world into a „global village“ in the moments of its arrogant triumphalism and „muscle show“. The potential „dissidence“ was punished cruelly and preventively, and where it did not exist or had extremely benign proportions for the imagined project, the propaganda was intensified to the level of „the greatest danger for the future of humanity“, which, according to the potential damage, required adequate retaliation. The execution work was performed by the United States, its pseudo-sovereign Western European vassals and many instrumentalized military, political, economic, financial, humanitarian, guild and other international alliances. The monocentric model in

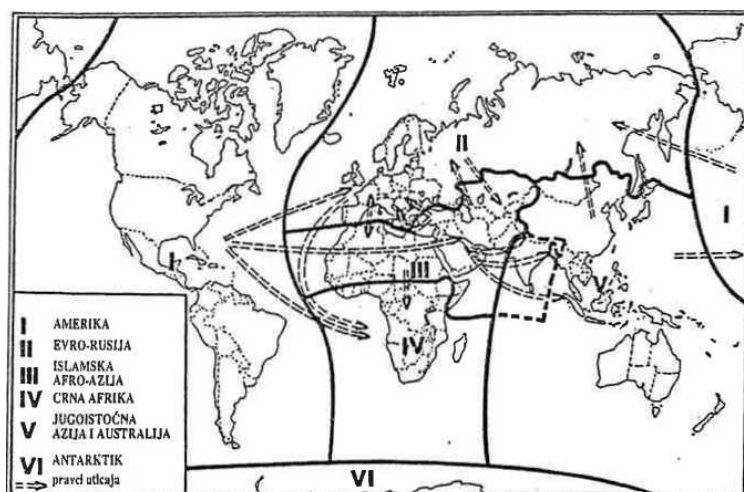
³ Can this whole process be interpreted as Russian „Kutuzov's“ strategic withdrawal, regrouping and consolidation, after which the recovered Russia will appear on the world stage as a re-born imperial power?

the first decade after the end of bipolarism showed a respective dose of monolithicity, and opinions that the initial phase of the 21st century could have exactly such features were quite numerous. The reality, however, increasingly confirms different trends. According to many indicators, the world unipolarity could be only a relatively short-term transition phase. In such a case, what would be the future structure of the world and what contours would its political and territorial structure have?

Poles of power and principles for forming blocs

If it is true that the United States emerged from the Cold War as the winner, then they are currently „the strongest dog in the city“⁴. However, the local „packs“ and their „leaders“ from „the city quarters“ will aim at such a „dog“, i.e. the strengthened regional forces of different strength, hierarchical position, the vastness of „neighbourhoods“ and the number of „packs“ they dominate. Given the number, power and spatial distribution of these US rivals, the global leadership of the United States will inevitably be limited, relativized and gradually reduced to the level and position of only one of several forces of the upcoming *multipolar world*. Although they do not have to be equally hierarchically ranked at all times, they will, either individually or in some form of integration with one or more compatible and geographically close forces, establish a *zone of immediate domination*, in which rival *poles of power* will maintain earlier directions of influence, though now substantially limited. The extensive areas without direct territorial participation of their poles of power will remain outside the *blocs* thus established. They will also have the status of *blocs*, but their openness to various forms of side infiltration and division of spheres of interest will be much greater. *De facto*, the position of pole(s) of power that will dominate in these fields will have the character of extraterritoriality. Politically and geographically, the global structure of the world at the beginning of the 21st century would consist of six blocs (variant 1), whose borders would not be that in the truest sense (internationally and legally verified borderlines). In specific cases, sectors or periods, they could have a high degree of barrier (in trade, geopolitical, geostrategic, migration, cultural and other sense), while in changed circumstances or between some other blocs they would turn into porous zonal borders, and even mobile transgression-regression frontiers.

⁴ An expression that figuratively defines the dominant and leading position of the United States in diplomatic conversation.

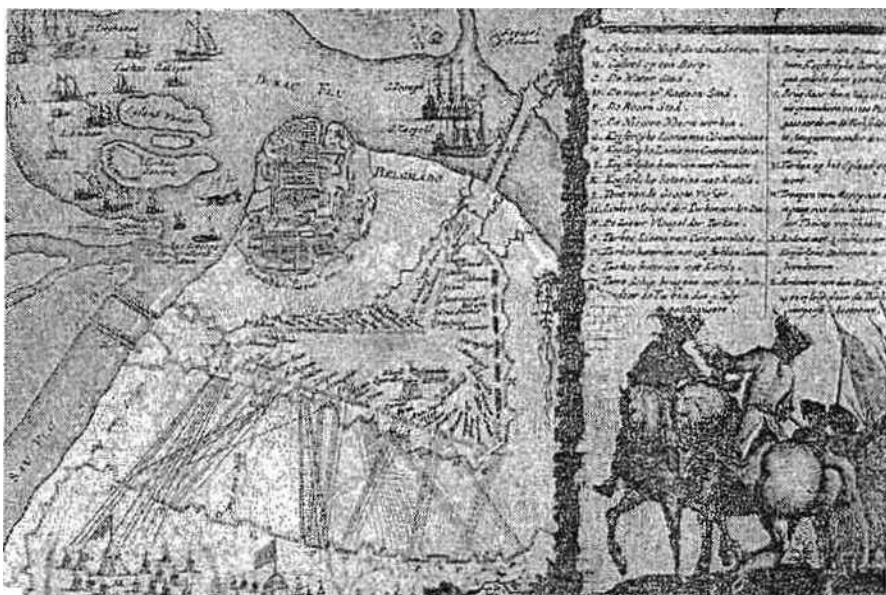


The world global organization at the beginning of the 21st century (variant 1)

The planetary mosaic would be established by blocs: US (I), Euro-Russia (II), Islamic Afro-Asia (III), Black Africa (IV), Southeastern Asia and Australia (V) and Antarctica (VI). In such a conceived spatial structure, the elements of Haushofer's pan-regions are recognizable (the US bloc is even completely identical to his Pan-America), which is not the result of accidental coincidence or deliberate uncritical mapping, but a historical analogy in the power structure (strengthening Japan in the Far East and Germany as „the giant in the heart of Europe“). In comparison with other pan-regions of the Haushofer's model (from 1931) and their meridian direction (along with Pan-America, also Euro-Africa, Pan-Russia and the Asian development zone), the model of blocs would be spatially different, primarily due to the necessary consideration of real changes on the political-geographic map of the world in the past six or seven decades. It would also differ from S. Cohen's relatively new model (1991) because, despite polycentricity as a common „golden thread“, it is territorially differently established.⁵ Although in some respects it could resemble the previous two views of the world organization, the model of blocs is not their artificial combination, it also differs from some visions developed in the last decade of the 20th century by a specific understanding of cohesion elements that integrate

⁵ S. Cohen singles out two main geostrategic spheres, each consisting of several geopolitical regions: the oceanic sphere consists of four regions (Anglo America and the Caribbean countries, Europe and the Maghreb countries; South America and South Africa; the islands of Asia and Oceania), and the continental sphere has two regions (*Heartland*, i.e. CIS countries; East Asia). Along with those regions, as a special geostrategic sphere, South Asia stands out, and there are two dividing zones: one, south of the Sahara and the other between the oceanic and continental spheres. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are singled out as gateways between *Heartland* and a part of the oceanic sphere. On the polycentric model of S. Cohen in more detail: Mirko Grčić, Nikolaj S. Mironenko, I. S. Tolstoborov, gen. quote, pp. 48-49.

the space separated as a *bloc* into an individualized whole and make it different from neighbouring blocs. The dominant integrative component will be pronounced religious and cultural-civilizational homogenization (Islamic Afro-Asia – bloc III), in the second case it is a functional-economic gravitational connection (Southeastern Asia and Australia – bloc V), while some blocs could be constituted on the principles of geopolitical and economic connection (Euro-Russia), the classical hegemonic attitude of the centre towards the periphery (US), and even neocolonial treatment (Black Africa and Antarctica).



The dominant cohesion elements on whose basis the blocs have been established and their conditional boundaries have been defined are insufficient to create highly homogeneous wholes from them. Heterogeneity in some periods or fields (especially in the zone of blocs contact) can reach the proportions of insurmountable internal antagonism, increasingly strong centrifugal processes and temporary or final spatial (and any other) recomposition. The multipolar essence of the world will consist of three pronounced poles of power on a global scale, and they will have their blocs and specific, sometimes variable, even regressive, but indisputably predominant influences. In bloc I (the US), the undisputed centre is already the United States (and Canada), and the near and farther *periphery* is the Latin American south. The European Union with its gigantic Germany at its core, is a pole of power in delicate and changeable relations with Russia, its military, energy, raw materials, cultural-civilizational, intelligent and territorial capacities, which it is not wise to marginalize by granting them *barbarian* status and isolating them with the *Limes*. The most specific is the Far Eastern pole of power, which cannot be in any way reduced to Japan

alone. Japan is, of course, the core and as a „head“ on the Chinese „body“ with „little dragons“ (Taiwan and Hong Kong reintegrated into China, South Korea, Brunei, Singapore, in the future Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia ...) as „children“, and Australia and New Zealand as close economic „relatives“, will establish „the family“ (bloc V), where little space will be left for the periphery. That status could eventually be given to Mongolia and parts of Indochina, and India would remain a subcontinent due to the specifics that have distinguished it so far.

The other blocs do not have a clearly separated centre in the military-political and economic sense. In Islamic Afro-Asia (bloc III), the leadership capacity and ambitions are expressed by Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Egypt in a sense, Pakistan and Libya in its way, and in the future Indonesia, Algeria and even Kazakhstan could become this. In Black Africa (bloc IV) the Republic of South Africa could have become this, but its transformation, according to current trends, will have more characteristics of reafrikanization and backward alignment with other parts of Central and South Africa than the tendency to increase the distance in development level so far and growth into regional pole of power. The current periphery of Antarctica in the future competition for the control of energy sources, drinking water reserves (polar ice deposits) and raw materials will be largely relativized, and its inherited and already disputed sectoral division will be subject to revision. It cannot be ruled out that the entire bloc (the Antarctic mainland, ice floe, surrounding sea and seabed) would become *terra nullius* for conflicting balance of powerful forces in the race for priority positions in access to natural resources.

Intrabloc and interbloc relations

The global structure of the world shaped by the bloc model will be characterized by multidimensional and hierarchically differentiated relations. The relations will retain many old features and gain a new, often atypical quality. Traditional and newly established directions of influence will be economic, geopolitical, military-strategic and propaganda-motivated, and accordingly directed in the following way.

– *The internal bloc influences* will have a two-way character - from the centre to the periphery, and also vice versa. The United States will establish inviolable hegemony in the US bloc (they have already done it), especially in the „connective“ Central American and Caribbean zone, where they will solve possible local troubles according to the model of Mexican Chiapas, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Grenada, Haiti and Cuba. On the other hand, they will continue to be exposed to violent Hispanic American immigration and black demographic expansion, which will rapidly change the racial, ethno-national, linguistic, religious and the overall cultural and civilizational identity not only of the southern states, but also of a great part of the United States. This can evolve into processes with destructive political and territorial consequences of unimaginable proportions now. The current European fifteen will be in a controversial position of an emerging state and gradually expanding or regionally differentiating according to the criterion of development, with an emphasis

on objectively operating ethnic, historical and geographical differences. Depending on the character and pace of changes that will be most affected by the relationship between Germany and its European allies (or rivals), the EU will establish ties with the Balkans and Serbian countries, the European East and, above all, Russia. The Far Eastern pole of power will focus on strengthening internal cohesion, Pacific littoralization, the establishment of a single highly developed zone from Manchuria and Hokkaido to New Zealand, and then the development of the backward *hinterland* – Indochina, the inland of China, Mongolia...

– *The relations between poles of power* will determine not only the essence of the multipolar model, but also its very establishment, which means reducing the current power of the United States and transforming the current unipolar world. In Europe, the United States, under the guise of NATO, will try to stay militarily despite the end of the Cold War, the removal of „the Iron Curtain“, the end of „the communist danger“ and the pushing (withdrawal) of Russia into the depths of *Heartland*. Using the dissolution of the former SFRY, inducing and controlling the war crisis, and determining its results, the United States are firmly stationed in the Balkans, and they will indirectly be able to monitor its increasingly powerful European competitor, primarily the speed and character of the integration process, the ambitions of Germany and potential Russian-German axis. Based on the Balkan side of the Adriatic, the only perforation in the control zone of the northern shores of the Mediterranean basin has been filled, „the sovereign“ European participation on such a „facade“ has been disabled and hampered by the NATO mediation, and the US ubiquity has been confirmed, mainly in relation to Middle Eastern oil deposits and the currently „dazed“ Russia. In the Far East, the United States will try to „hang over Japan’s and China’s head“, keeping them nailed down to the very shores of the Pacific. The chain for such containment will be the links of war and post-war acquisitions – military-political presence in South Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Philippines. Joining the possession of most of the Pacific archipelagos, military bases and training grounds on many islands, and continuous naval and air surveillance, the control of the entire and greatest basin on the planet will be difficult to leave to someone else. Although they have poorer starting positions for the future race, the European and Far Eastern poles of power will undeniably use their trump cards in an effort to suppress the US advantage (Japanese capital, organization, technology, labour cult; Chinese energy, raw materials and numerous, cheap and highly disciplined workforce; dynamism and entrepreneurship of „small dragons“; the Australian vastness, natural resources and inherited British systematicity; financial power, economic traditions and highly professional attitude towards work in the EU with invaluable resources of Russia). In such a process, some forms of anti-American alliance are not excluded, which could be indicated by the increasingly intensive contacts between Germany and China, China and Russia, Germany and Russia.

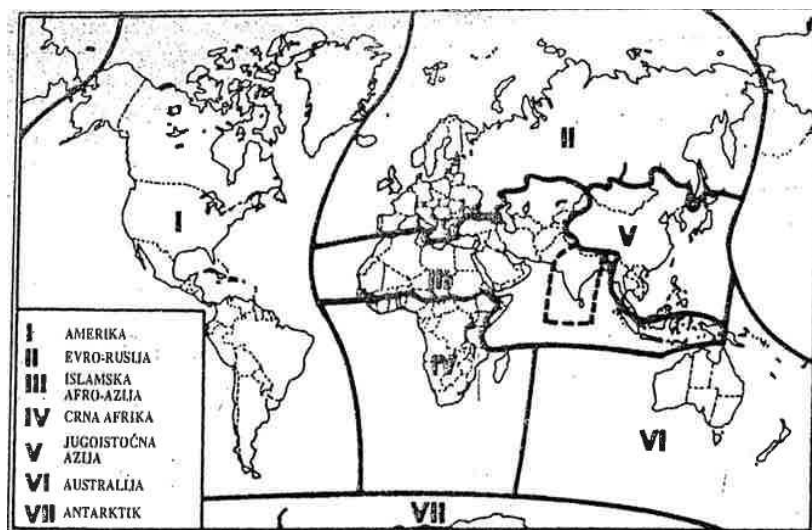
– *The directions of influences of poles of power* can be directed towards the parts of other blocs that have their own pole of power, but are peripheral, poorly connected and potentially centrifugally oriented in relation to it. For pole of power of the ne-

ighbouring bloc, they are geographically closer and very attractive due to their potential. These are spaces in which the revision of contours, boundaries (conditional) and morphometry of the existing blocs (according to variant 1) could be expected.

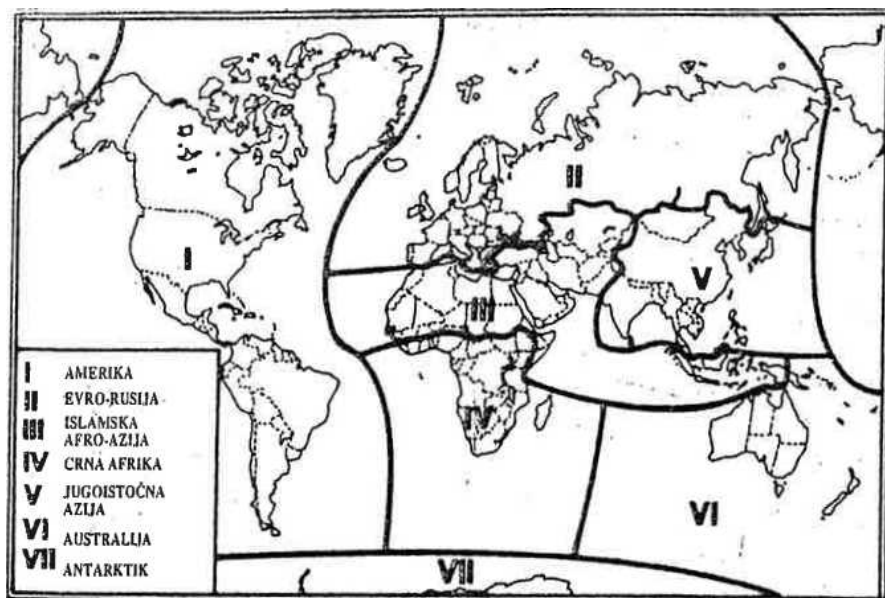
1. The Siberian part of Euro-Russia (especially its eastern part) is demographically poorly covered, more and more loosely gravitationally connected with the European part of Russia, and rich in natural resources, which are necessary for the Far East as an impulse for even faster development. The Eastern Siberia also attracts the US (geopolitical, military-strategic, economic motives), so three-way confrontation of interests is possible in that area.

2. The Pacific Islands, especially those in the western part of the basin, together with adjacent waters, are important for the Far Eastern pole of power not only as testing ground for irrational proof of their increased military-political and economic strength, but also for timely repulse of the US from the eastern Asian shores and reaching a sufficient level of security.

– Poles of power will more directly and with less consideration orient the directions of their interests towards blocs that do *not have* their own poles of power. It will be difficult for Black Africa to get rid of the neocolonial treatment from the former European metropolises, which will be joined by the currently seemingly not particularly interested United States. It will, in all likelihood, retain the role of a raw material base, and in the pessimistic view of the future based on harsh reality, isolation can be intended for Black Africa, as well as other models of localization and containment of demographic explosion, emigration to the developed countries in Europe and the US, epidemics (which can be artificially provoked), political instabilities and wars, and also the growing awareness of the common origin, identity and racial homogeneity of the black population in Africa and the one in the US.



The world global organization at the beginning of the 21st century (variant 2)



The world global organization at the beginning of the 21st century (variant 3)

Oil reserves and energy dependence of poles of power have conditioned a different position of Islamic Afro-Asia. Financial power, demographic expansiveness, territorial dimensions and religion-based compactness in attitudes toward the non-Islamic part of the world have made this bloc a respectable political factor. Therefore, although without its clearly separated pole of power, it establishes its directions of influence towards the surrounding blocs and shows more or less pronounced expansionism towards them. The religious integrative component is so dominant that it pushes cultural, ethnic, economic, social and physical-geographical barriers into the background. The Islamic territorial transversal from the Sunda Islands to the West African shores of the Atlantic is a sufficient reason for a possible political-geographical correction of *variant 1* of the bloc model, according to which Islamic Afro-Asia did not include the most populous Muslim country – Indonesia. By including it, bloc III would get changed territorial-morphometric features – in *variant 2*, it would include the populous and mostly non-Islamic India (it would preserve its sub-continent), and in *variant 3*, India would remain a part of Southeast Asia (bloc V). In both the second and third variant, the expansion of bloc III and the „wedging“ of Islamic Afro-Asia to the east would separate Southeast Asia and Australia, form two blocs from the single bloc V (in *variant 1*), and separate the potentially strongest pole of power on the planet and significantly reduce its chances in competing with rivals. The transgressive orientation of this bloc, despite the antagonisms within itself (Shiite-Sunni polarization, conflicts of fundamentalist and seemingly secularist currents,

the struggle for primacy and leadership in the Islamic world ...), does not end this eastern *Drang*. The Islamic expansion is a global process that does not have to possess the characteristics of spatial gradualness and a step by step approach. This is indicated by the increasing number and concentration of Muslim immigrants in the neighbourhoods of major cities in Europe and the United States. However, in the territorial sense, the Islamic expansion is directly executed mainly on two fronts - towards the south, in the so-called sub-Saharan Africa, and to the north, in Europe and the southern part of Russia. Infiltration into Europe (together with the European part of Russia) has three main directions – Maghreb-French, Asia Minor-Balkans and Caucasus-Caspian. Each of them has its own specifics, but the goal is the same – spatial expansion.

Instead of conclusion: the Balkans and Serbian countries in the bloc model

What will be the position of the Balkans and Serbian countries in the global bloc political-geographical world structure? Their status will be defined by relations within Euro-Russia, the proximity of the Islamic Afro-Asian border and the position of „the house on the road“ in front of the Asia Minor-Balkan branch of the green transversal, and the US ambition to extend their European presence by stationing themselves in the Balkans. In such a triangle there is the formula of survival and functioning in the forthcoming competition of present and future great powers. The fate of Serbian countries will be decided by internal processes in the EU (forced integration or fragmentation), its attitude towards the European East and Southeast (selective admission of new countries and simultaneous distancing from „the unsuitable“ or phased inclusion of all in „the European family“) and the evolution of Russia (further weakening, political-territorial disintegration and dealing with itself or its resurrection in force with ambitions to return the Balkans to the priority concentric circle of its geopolitical interests).

The present and near future seem to confirm Roman's conception of *empire-limes-barbarians*. However, it is a view from a comfortable observation post – from the position of the Western and Central Europe. They still determine who *barbarians* are (variant 3), where and how they will establish the *limes* and who they will give the privilege to join them. Croats have already promoted themselves to „the guardians of Christianity“, which the Catholic-Protestant West *de facto* tacitly accepts and practically supports. Has that zonal border been materialized in Croatia, with the horseshoe (boomerang) shape of its territory executed owing to the concrete and crucial help of the *empire*? Or will that rather be Bosnia and Herzegovina as an unstable three-confessional buffer zone between the Germanophile European Southeast and the Russophile Balkans? In that case, won't the „line of amputation“ of the *chaotic* Orient from the *organized* West be projected on the Drina? If, by the analogy of history („which does not repeat itself“), that border extends along the Sava and the

Danube to the East, then the obsessive cultural-civilizational division on which the influential Catholic circles of the European politics insist so much will be reactivated. Executing this scenario, the Serbian countries would find themselves in two different and mutually opposed spatial units, which would dramatically accelerate the process of their further fragmentation and territorial reduction. Traditionally confronted interests in „the Balkan geopolitical node“,⁶ changes in the scale of global and regional power, and the transformed scheme of „symbiosis of interests“, can, however, essentially redefine relations and redirect processes in the Balkans, and place the Serbian countries in new political-geographical coordinates. The historical constant is that all major changes in the world take place with the direct participation of Europe, that European movements are first registered by the Balkan seismograph, and that the concretization of the Balkan movement is always *territorial*.

Будућа блоковска структура света

Окончањем биполаризма и хладног рата крајем 20. века успостављен је униполарни модел доминације само једне глобалне сите – САД. Међутим, убрзани темпо развоја европског и далекоисточног пола моћи учиниће да се неприкосновени примат САД постепено ограничава, а мултиполарност постане главно обележје будућег устројства света. Стога ће глобална политичко-географска структура планете бити обликована моделом блокова и чиниће је Америка, Евро-Русија, Исламска Афро-Азија, Југоисточна Азија са Аустралијом, Црна Африка и Антарктик. У оквиру сваког блока и између различитих блокова постојаће интересима мотивисане и хијерархијски диференциране релације. Исламски територијални експанзионизам, као планетарни феномен, може имати такве размере да проузрокује значајне промене у појединим блоковима и ревизију целокупног модела. То ће утицати на будућност Балкана и српских земаља, али ће њихов положај већином одређивати ЕУ, Русија и САД.

Кључне речи: *мултиполарност, полови моћи, политичко-географска структура, блокови, српске земље*

⁶ On the essence of the Balkan geopolitical node, see: Jovan Ilić, Geopolitičke osobenosti Balkanskog poluostrva i srpsko pitanje, istorijsko-geografski pregled, in: *Osnovni principi razgraničenja država*, Zbornik radova, ed. D. Nikolić, Vojnogeografski institut, Beograd, 1994, pp. 65-115.