

Spatial Development of Russia and the USA in the 16-20th centuries as formation of the major unit of geopolitical constructs of modernity

Desarrollo espacial de Rusia y EE. UU. En los siglos 16-20 como formación de la unidad principal de construcciones geopolíticas de la modernidad

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Abstract

The article considers the spatial development of Russia and the United States and their geopolitical relations in the 17-20th centuries. It is noted that the movement of Russia to the east and the United States to the west occurred nearly simultaneously and led them to their territorial rapprochement on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. The spatial development issues that were resolved during this process became milestones in the formation of the geopolitical structures of our time, and are of great importance for the fate of not only both countries, but also the world. It is stated that during the entire period under review, up to the end of the 1980s, territorial relations between them were the most stable component.

Keywords: spatial development, geopolitical processes and relations, great powers, spatial rapprochement, contact zones, North Pacific, zones of development and tension.

Resumen

El artículo considera el desarrollo espacial de Rusia y los Estados Unidos y sus relaciones geopolíticas en los siglos 17-20. Se observa que el movimiento de Rusia hacia el este y los Estados Unidos hacia el oeste se produjo casi simultáneamente y los llevó a su acercamiento territorial en las costas del Océano Pacífico. Los problemas de desarrollo espacial que se resolvieron durante este proceso se convirtieron en hitos en la formación de las estructuras geopolíticas de nuestro tiempo, y son de gran importancia para el destino no solo de ambos países, sino también del mundo. Se afirma que durante todo el período que se examina, hasta fines de la década de 1980, las relaciones territoriales entre ellos fueron el componente más estable.

Palabras clave: desarrollo espacial, procesos y relaciones geopolíticas, grandes potencias, acercamiento espacial, zonas de contacto, Pacífico Norte, zonas de desarrollo y tensión.

Introduction

Spatial development of Russia and the USA, which occurred practically synchronously since the XVI century and which led to the formation of two great powers and in fact formed the main node of the geopolitical structures of our time, ceases to be a particular scientific problem. This phenomenon, one way or another affecting the fate of many countries, today is becoming a very relevant global problem. Russia and the United States, having a long experience in geopolitical interaction from strategic partnerships to unnaturally intensified rivalries, have not yet found a solution to the growing problems both in bilateral relations and have not found themselves as ones of the leading architects of global geopolitics. Therefore, in our days of growing tension in interstate relations, a retrospective study of the experience of spatial relations between Russia and the United States seems especially important (Ashmarov, 2018; Borisov, 2018).

Materials and methods

The used research materials include evidences of domestic and international geopolitical processes in the 17th-21st centuries, written statements and orders of a row of statesmen, selected statistical data and official documents. Chorological, comparative and territorial analysis methods were applied

The main results

Spatial relations between countries are an important part of the system of geopolitical relations (Baklanov & Romanov 2009). They solve the problems of demarcation between states, ownership of lands, waters, mineral resources and aero spaces, as well as acquisitions or concessions made on this basis.

The dialogue between Russia and the United States is one of the supportive geopolitical structures of the modern world. The system of their relations in the 17–20th centuries, during the period of their simultaneous formation as “superpowers,” is connected, *inter alia*, with spatial issues. Now it is already obvious that its discrete episodes serve as certain milestones in the formation of the geopolitical framework of modernity, both bilaterally and globally.

The analysis of the dynamics of the state territories of Russia and the USA shows that the vectors of their spatial convergence became visible nearly synchronously in the 16th century. At that time the Russian state began to advance beyond the Urals, and colonists from England

landed on the Atlantic coast of North America. Since that time, each side had expanded, respectively, to the east and west to their impending contact in the North Pacific.

Movement of Russia to the Pacific Ocean became one of the priorities of its foreign policy. In 1648, the Russians reached the Bering Strait, approaching North America. The decree of Peter I of 1724 on prospecting works on the north-eastern outskirts of the country “In finding America, there can be great benefit” was of decisive importance. In 1732, M.S. Gvozdev landed on Cape Nichta (Prince of Wales Cape now), and in 1741 the ships of V.I. Bering and A.I. Chirikov reached the archipelago of Alexander. As a result, in 1764 St. Petersburg announced the establishment of Alaska ownership on the peninsula of the same name, the mainland coast from Kenai Bay (Cook Bay now) to the Sigai Strait (Dikson-Entrans Strait now) and on all the islands adjacent to them. In 1782, Catherine II prescribed its expansion up the Yukon River and along the Coastal Range.

The movement of American colonists to the west initially proceeded under different conditions. The new continent with its vast and diverse resources attracted thousands of migrants. The “land famine” formed in this connection in the colonies pushed them farther from the coast. But the British authorities considered it as tax avoidance and forbade the passage beyond the Alleghany Mountains. The situation changed after the establishment of the independent USA (1776) and the purchase of Louisiana from France (1803). The expedition of M. Lewis and W. Clark, passing along the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean in 1804 – 1806, marked the beginning of a flood of spontaneous settlers to disputed lands with the British in the Columbia River drainage basin and to Spanish possessions in the West. It became the basis for genesis of the Manifest Destiny doctrine, the aspiration of a young country to reach the another edge of the vast continent (Anders, 1995). However, Russian-American contacts developed long before these events. The first of them took place in 1698 in London between Peter the Great and one of the leaders of the colonists, W. Penn. It had a cognitive character (Dvoichenko-Markov, 1953), but then the relations between Russia and the American colonies took on new facets. By the end of the 18th century, they showed a commonality of geopolitical interests. It consisted in opposition to British hegemonism (George, 1992).

The course of Great Britain (until 1707 - England) on world domination, manifesting itself at the end of the 15th century, became the leitmotif of its geopolitical interests for a long time (Ferguson, 2004). Moreover, British imperialism acted extremely harshly against its real and imaginary competitors until the beginning of the 20th



century (Barker, 1904). British efforts to contain Russia gradually embraced a number of regions of the world and the entire perimeter of its borders. The alliance against revolutionary Napoleonic France temporarily weakened this trend. But then it again gained strength, taking on the doctrinal nature as the Great Game (Hopkirk, 2001). And the United States had to fight for its existence against Great Britain in two wars of 1775 - 1783 and 1812 - 1815. Later, the subject of Anglo-American disputes was in the delimitation to the west of the Great Lakes. Therefore, "the anti-English tradition ... had a profound influence on American foreign policy until the last day (that is, until the forties of the XX century, when these lines were written – authors)" (Viton, 1943).

The Russian-American reconciliation that arose on this basis was quite logical. It took the form of an unspoken but obvious alliance. The starting point of its manifestation was Russia's refusal to request King George III to send troops to suppress the rebellion in the American colonies. Then, on the initiative of St. Petersburg, a coalition of European countries was formed to counteract British privateering on the routes of maritime trade with rebels ("Armed Neutrality"). On the other hand, American admiral P. Jones successfully fought against the Turks in the units of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in 1788 - 1789.

President T. Jefferson assessed the partnership in establishing Russian-American diplomatic relations in 1807: "Russia ... is the most sincerely friendly country to us" (Kabanov, 1959). This paradigm persisted until the middle of the 19th century. Within this paradigm a number of Russian territories (Fort Ross and Alaska) were transferred to the United States. In a "pure" form, these actions deserve a negative assessment since they narrowed the sovereign space of Russia. But they took place on a peaceful basis and were initiated by Russia itself. In addition, the decisions related to them were made on the basis of comprehensive assessments of the current geopolitical situation, defense capabilities and economic prospects, which differed significantly from those of later times.

In 1803 and 1808 Alaska's government agent, I.A. Kuskov sailed to Bodega Bay in California and set the Russian border signs at 41°38' N near the mouth of the Klamath River on the southern border of Oregon, which the UK considered its property. The British protest about this event was rejected. But then it turned out that American settlers were arriving in Oregon, which exacerbated Anglo-American relations.

Russia was in a difficult position since a clash between the friendly US and its ally in the anti-French coalition Great Britain was ripening in the

region. Therefore, it was decided to evade participation in the conflict and to search for another "fixation point". The choice fell on Bodega Bay in California, where in 1812 Kuskov founded the Fort Ross colony.

Since Spain was captured by Napoleon that time, its local colonial administration was tolerant to the California action of the Russians. That pushed Russia to more active actions. In 1821, Alexander I issued the decree on the transfer of the southern border of Alaska to 51° N to the mouth of the Bella-Bella River, which created the primary basis for Russian-American spatial relations. Their starting point counted from the announcement of the Doctrine of President J. Monroe in 1823.

It should be noted that the primary meaning of this document was substantially transformed by post-factum interpretations and amendments (Ivanyan, 2017). In its original form, it was a call to the powers of Europe to refrain from interfering in the struggle between Spain and the rebels in its American colonies on the side of Madrid, as well as from the attempts to make new territorial acquisitions in the Western Hemisphere under this pretext (Alanga, 2003).

The text of the Doctrine addressed to Russia had the most restrained tone with emphasis on the tradition of friendly relations and recognition of Russia's territorial rights in northwestern America. Negotiations in St. Petersburg accompanied its presentation. Most likely, the negotiations implied a request to repeal the decree of 1821 and a proposal to streamline bilateral spatial issues in the North Pacific to jointly contain Britain. For Russia, that was relevant since according to the tactful assessment of the Secretary of the Senate, N.P. Rezanov, its dialogue with London had already a clear "kind of rivalry" (Kabanov, 1959).

It was confirmed by the first territorial treaty between Russia and the United States of 1824 "On friendship, trade and fishing". The treaty approved the southern border of Alaska along the old frontier at 54° 40' N and fixed the obligation of the United States not to move north of it. This arrangement was "virtual" since the decree of 1821 on the transfer of the Russian border to 51° N had not been implemented yet, and the United States had not an access to the Pacific Ocean. But this agreement removed British claims for the coastal strip from Yakutat Bay to the Dickson-Entrance Strait. The recognition by the United States of its affiliation with Russia affirmed the latter's right to possess Alaska's "southern branch" internationally.

In parallel, the California crisis developed. In 1822, Mexico demanded to transfer Fort Ross to it. The legal basis of this claim was doubtful. Having gained independence, Mexico positioned

itself as a new state. That denied its relation with the Russian-Spanish treaty on Fort Ross. In addition, Mexico, like all the young states of Latin America, adopted the principle of "Uti possidetis" - the inviolability of the previously existing colonial borders between itself and with the possessions of European countries (except Spain). But based on these facts, the Mexican side ignored the arguments of Russia about maintaining the status quo in California.

A war was brewing in which the power potential of Russia was more powerful. But the disputed object was located at a great distance from it, and the Mexicans were promised the support of Great Britain. Under these conditions, the loss of Fort Ross was a foregone conclusion. Therefore, Russia undertook a flexible geopolitical maneuver, having sold Fort Ross to the US citizen J. Sutter in 1841. As a result, Mexico did not receive Fort Ross; and its difficult relationship with the American settlers in California had become even more complicated.

In 1846, the United States secured Oregon's concessions from London and began a war with Mexico. Then in California, American colonists revolted, whose base was Fort Ross. As a result of victory, the US doubled their territory and gained the access to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, they were aware of the role of Russia in achieving this success. A periodical close to the government, the Daily Evening Bulletin wrote: "Russia has one comrade in the future, one friend — the United States" (Kabanov, 1959).

The peak of Russian-American geopolitical interaction occurred in the middle of the 19th century. During the Crimean War of 1853-1856 President F. Pierce announced the possibility of the United States joining it on the side of Russia. That was prevented by the internal political crisis in the United States. But the latter provided a feasible help. 43 military doctors from the USA participated in the defense of Sevastopol; American whalers warned the defenders of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky about the approach of the Anglo-French squadron, and during its attacking of the city the whalers could manage to withdraw a part of the squadron forces away from the battlefield. In 1855, a volunteer rifle battalion was formed to be sent to Russia, and a privateer ship was equipped to attack ships of the anti-Russian coalition in the Pacific Ocean. The news of Russia's defeat in the war turned into a pogrom of the English and French holiday pavilions in San Francisco.

With the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1863-1864, against the backdrop of the threat of military assistance from London, the United States became the only country to support Russia's actions against the rebels. For its part, in connection with the outbreak of the US Civil War

in 1861, St. Petersburg officially declared: "The secession of the South will be considered by Russia as the greatest of all possible misfortunes" (Kabanov, 1959).

In 1863, Great Britain, preparing to enter the war on the side of the southerners, created joint strike naval groups with them. In response, Russian squadrons entered the harbors of New York and San Francisco with orders to join the battle at the first request of the legitimate American government. This demonstration played an important role in preventing the enemy from attacking the most important ports and political centers of the country (George, 1992).

The level and nature of the geopolitical rapprochement of the two countries achieved at that time largely became then the actual basis of the deal to sell Alaska. The reasons and results of this event, owing to the still existing interest in it, remain the subject of a separate consideration (History of Russian America, 1997). Therefore, here its analysis is proposed in a concise form.

At present, the negatives of this sale are obvious to Russia. The country lost 1.5 million km² and lost its presence on the American continent. Its exit to the Arctic and the Pacific Ocean had narrowed significantly. The diverse mineral and biological resources of Alaska and the surrounding waters were lost. But in the middle of the XIX century, geopolitical realities looked different. The population and development of Alaska at that time remained low. Only 2.5 thousand Russians and 60 thousand aborigines lived here, of which 50 thousand were militant Indians. Local economy was based only on the hunting and fishing sector.

The severity of the climatic conditions of Alaska and technical and technological capabilities available in the middle of the XIX century made impossible to examine in detail its mineral potential. In addition, some of its components (for example, oil and gas), even if discovered, would not have found demand in those years. The remoteness of Alaska from the historical center of the country was aggravated by the level of development of transportation and the "barrier" role of the vast and poorly developed Siberia. Finally, the Crimean War, without affecting Alaska, showed however the insoluble difficulties of its defense then.

That is, Alaska was one of the most problematic regions of Russia. And if the country had the necessary capabilities to defend interests in other "hot" areas (Poland, the Balkans, the Caucasus), then this was not applicable to Alaska. In addition, in 1858 and 1860, under agreements with the Qing Empire, Russia assigned a land with an area of more than 1 million km². The integration of this strategically more important territory for Russia into its composition required a lot of money.



Therefore, then there was a very serious geopolitical and geo-economic "problem of possessing Alaska" for Russia. In 1867, it was decided to sell this territory to the United States.

Under the Washington Treaty, the United States received all of the Russian mainland and island territories in North America. The border passed along natural boundaries - the waters of the Pacific and Arctic Oceans. But the demarcation was carried out with some carelessness, which both countries did not concern that time (Thomas 1930). The starting point of the delimitation was the point in the Bering Strait at latitude of 65°30' with equal distances from Cape Dezhnev in the west and Cape Prince of Wales in the east. From here, imaginary lines moved towards the North Pole and into the open waters of the Pacific Ocean. The last of them was laid between the Commander and Aleutian islands.

The US decision to purchase Alaska remains cryptic in a sense. The country just survived the Civil War; its financial system was upset. It was to integrate a de facto uncontrolled Wild West into its composition. A number of authors believe that the line of confrontation with Great Britain in American politics was strengthened in this way (Jensen, 1975; Naske & Slotnick 1994). Regular troops were sent to Alaska immediately after its purchase, and two warships were introduced into its waters (Agranat, 1962). The British did not have an equivalent army group in western Canada. This complicated the situation of their North American possessions.

It should be recognized that the purchase of Alaska and the acquisition of other coastal Pacific territories were a visionary and strategically important decision of the United States, which provided them with the formation of the living space of a superpower between the two oceans.

The sale of Alaska is the largest event in Russian-American spatial relations, marking the peak of the geopolitical partnership of the two countries. It seemed that the tradition of mutual support and containment of the ambitions of the "third" states would be the long-term one. These expectations were pronounced by Count N.N. Muravyov-Amursky: "In rapprochement with the North American United States ... an important subject for the future of Russia" (Kabanov, 1959). But soon the situation changed.

Since the end of the XIX century relations between Russia and the United States were mostly in a state of deterioration. The latter began with relatively insignificant ideological differences, which then escalated to the limit. They also contributed to the growth of contradictions in the fields of geo-economics and geopolitics. All these components supplemented and reinforced by each

other, were transformed into a state of mutual hostility.

The assassination of Alexander II (1881) induced harsh measures by the state against revolutionaries. Many of them then sought refuge in the United States, carrying in information about Russia as a country of civilian captivity. Among them were representatives of nationalist movements that exacerbated the formation of this negative image as a "prison of peoples" (Powell, 2005). Gradually, public sympathy for political emigrants penetrated the US leadership, reflected in its official notes. In turn, Petersburg saw the latter interfering in own internal affairs. The active support of Japan by the United States in its war with Russia in 1904 - 1905 was a kind of symbol of the departure of Russian-American geopolitical sympathies into the past (Oldenburg, 1991).

The 1917 revolution in Russia and its subsequent transformation into the USSR provoked a negative reaction in the USA, after which the mutual rejection of the two states on the basis of ideology only intensified. This trend could temporarily weaken, for example, during the Second World War. But then it went to an even higher level. As a result, the US-led bloc of Western countries actually declared the Cold War against the USSR. But at this stage of the complicated Russian-American dialogue, spatial relations between them were the most stable component. That can be partly explained by the presence of nuclear arsenals in both countries since the USA and the USSR got these arsenals after the Second World War only, but they took measures to prevent direct military clashes from the very beginning of the alienation and subsequent confrontation.

The fact that both countries did not have claims against each other based on territorial seizures committed by force of arms was of great importance in this case. They considered the Washington Treaty of 1867 as the final one defining the spatial relations between them. This position has long been undeniable for both Russia - the USSR and the United States. Moreover, there were two examples of how the United States refrained from situational attempts to move away from it.

Thus, in 1820 - 1824 Russian geographer F.P. Wrangel established the location of a large island in the Chukchi Sea. Having landed on it in 1867, the American T. Long named it in honor of the discoverer - Wrangel. In 1881, Long's compatriot, C. Hooper, raised the US flag on Wrangel Island. But the United States did not lay claim to it, as well as to the islands discovered in the East Siberian Sea by the American captain W. De Long, since they are all located west of the

demarcation line in the Arctic under the Washington Treaty. In 1911, the United States agreed to the Russia's ownership of these islands, and then in 1924 to the Soviet Union's ownership. Obviously, despite the cooling of relations, the United States acted on the principle of maintaining the previously existing positive spatial relations; long-term geopolitical interaction with Russia has not yet been forgotten. And that led to respect for the existing agreement on bilateral delimitation.

In another episode related to the events of 1917 – 1922 in Russia, the United States proceeded from other motives. The Entente Council, having decided to intervene in Soviet Russia in 1918, defined Siberia and the Far East as the zone of responsibility of the United States and Japan. Tokyo invited Washington to annex and divide these regions. The answer was negative. American troops in the Far East were forbidden to intervene in the internal Russian conflict and prescribed a "friendly" behavior to all its parties (Graves, 1941). One of the leaders of the Bolsheviks of Primorye S.G. Lazo wrote: "America's interests are completely different ... it (unlike Japan – authors} does not seek to capture this territory" (Paskov & Paskova 1990). In 1920, the Americans, having completed the evacuation of the Czechoslovak Corps through Vladivostok, left the Far East, while the Japanese stayed there until 1922 fighting against the Red Partisans.

This position was explained mainly by the fact that the USA saw in Japan the most obvious geopolitical competitor in the Pacific basin that time. Therefore, they were interested in the preservation of the territorial presence of Russia in the Far East regardless of what regime was established in it as one of the counterbalances to the growth of Japan's vast spatial ambitions.

Another peak of Russian-American geopolitical interaction occurred during the years of World War II and the implementation of the Lend-Lease program, the construction of airfields, port and road infrastructure in the far North-East of the USSR and Alaska. The scale of Soviet-American interaction of those years can be judged by the fact that 17.5 million tons of arms, medicine and food, worth 11.1 billion dollars, were sent from the USA to the USSR. Counter deliveries from the USSR to the USA were made 2.2 million dollars (300 thousand tons of chromium ore, 32 thousand tons of manganese ore, a significant amount of platinum, gold, wood). That interaction vital for both countries became possible due to the presence of direct spatial contact between them in the Bering region, through which 47.1% of the total Lend-Lease supply volume passed (Levis & Mewha 1955).

The turning point in the geopolitical relations of the USSR and the USA to a negative direction

occurred immediately after the end of World War II. That is largely explained by the fact that the United States, emerging from it as the economically most powerful country in the world (against the backdrop of the destroyed Old World), saw the USSR as the most obvious geopolitical competitor. The Fulton speech of the former British Prime Minister W. Churchill had acted as the external factor that prompted them to radical changes in geopolitical relations with the Soviet Union. The foreign policy program (the Truman Doctrine) announced by the President of the United States a year after this event divided the world in two.

At the same time, the cooling that arose between the former allies of the Second World War for a long time did not affect the bilateral spatial relations between them including in their contact area, the Bering cross-border region. But M.S. Gorbachev's course towards "new political thinking" declared in 1987, turned into a series of cessions of the USSR foreign policy positions. A number of countries took this advantage including the United States as a country aspiring to world leadership.

The gaps of the Washington Treaty of 1867 were the reason of it. The maritime demarcation line was stipulated in it without proper geographical and cartographic locations. Therefore, the Soviet side proceeded from the fact that the demarcation line of the Bering Sea was drawn according to the loxodromic projection adopted in compiling maps in Russia and the USSR. The United States believed that this water area was divided according to the orthodromic projection they used, and therefore the demarcation should be much farther west than the Russian (Soviet) version.

Thus, an extensive zone of overlapping water possessions of the two countries appeared in the Bering Sea. Negotiations on it have been conducted since 1976. But their sluggish character indicated that the parties did not pay special attention to this problem. The USSR and the USA were occupied with more pressing issues of bilateral and international relations, and did not want to create additional difficulties in this regard. It all came down to the discussion of proposals to divide the disputed zone in half.

The conclusion of the agreement between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR E.A. Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State J. Baker in 1990 violated this stalemate by accepting the American version of the disengagement. As a result, the Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation, lost 31 thousand km² of the exclusive economic zone and 46.3 thousand km² of the continental shelf in the open portion of the Bering Sea, the Navarinsky and Aleutian fields with reserves of 200 million tons of oil and 200 billion cubic km of gas as well as the annual catch



area of 200 thousand tons of fish (Palamar, 2009). Neither in the USSR, nor then in the Russian Federation, the highest state authorities ratified this agreement. That is, it is concluded between a country, as an international legal entity, and an individual person from another country, which deprives it of strength. But the US coast guard has introduced a border patrol regime for the "assigned" waters. That de facto means its annexation and for the first time presents a precedent for such an unceremonious attitude of the US in spatial relations with Russia. Currently, Moscow's call to review the outcome of the Baker-Shevardnadze agreement remains unanswered.

The Russia's course towards restoring its international position and strengthening its defense capability at the beginning of the XXI century has put the architectural geopolitical efforts of the United States in a precarious position. It resulted in a new round of exacerbation, in which for the first time a prominent role was assigned to bilateral territorial issues. The Arctic became a place of clash of the respective interests of both countries.

The sectoral section of the high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere adopted by the circumpolar countries (except the USA) in the 1920s, does not comply with the UN Convention on International Law of the Sea. In this regard, the problem of the interstate division of the Arctic has arisen, where new opportunities for the development of shipping, fishing and the extraction of mineral raw materials have been opened up recently due to climate change.

Acting on the basis of the aforementioned Convention, Russia insists on its belonging to the Northern Sea Route and the Arctic shelf in the area of the Mendeleev, Lomonosov and Gakkel ranges. That will allow it to possess one of the most promising ways of global commodity transit and 1.2 million km² of the Arctic water area with potential deposits of 5 billion tons of hydrocarbon raw materials in its bottom bed.

The United States is the main opponent of this expansion of Russia's sovereign rights. Without making their own direct claims to Russian aqua-territorial water claims in the Arctic, this country appeals to international interests, which in its interpretation are as follows:

- The Arctic as a unique region should have a neutral status;
- The Northern Sea Route due to its promising significance for world trade is subject to internationalization.

Insisting on these positions, Washington is actually promoting its interests: the "nationless" status of the Arctic waters and the

internationalization of the Northern Sea Route will deprive Russia of the opportunity to control and use the vast space that anyone who wants, including the United States, will have an access to.

Russia in this situation proceeds from the fact that the Northern Sea Route is its historically established national transport artery, which has been gradually opened, mastered and equipped for hundreds of years by many generations of Russians (Shvedov & Romanov 2019). Its application for possession of a part of the Arctic shelf is based on UN regulatory documents. Therefore, its second edition, submitted in 2015, is likely to be fully satisfied in the sector of the Mendeleev Ridge, the zone of aqua-territorial contact with the United States.

Currently, the disputes over the geopolitical arrangement of the Arctic have entered the stage of militarization: Russia and the United States are creating modern military infrastructure on their northern flanks and regularly conduct army exercises. But the consequences of an armed conflict by its potential participants are nevertheless recognized; moreover, no one ruled out its peaceful alternative. Therefore, the United States, bearing in mind the firm position of Russia, the second option - the "National Strategy of the Arctic Region" adopted in 2013. It consists in the fact that if the plan for the internationalization of the Arctic is not implemented, the United States will claim to have its own sector of the Arctic shelf with a length of 965 km (600 nautical miles) north of the coast of Alaska. Obviously, the transition to it is hampered by the already declared ambitions of American geopolitical prestige in the Arctic. But Washington's adoption of precisely this plan seems to be the optimal solution to the problem of the future international arrangement of high latitudes. At the same time, it may become a compromise completion of the next stage of the conflicting Russian-American spatial relations.

Conclusions

The formation of two great powers was the main result of the simultaneous spatial development of the United States and Russia over vast expanses from ocean to ocean. One can call the preservation of the principle of mutual territorial integrity between these states for three centuries as one of the aspects of this process, which should be maintained in the future as the main condition for their peaceful coexistence.

The US 'unnaturally intensified recent rivalry with Russia, in the context of the entry into the

political arena of “new ”and dynamic“ superpowers, ”significantly aggravates the geopolitical situation in the world. Meanwhile, the experience of interaction between the two great powers suggests that overcoming the confrontation in dialogue with Russia is quite possible for the United States. At that an important role belongs to the heritage of conflict-free spatial relations between them.

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