TRACECA as a Eurasian Organization

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Abstract

TRACECA is not only a transport cooperation among member states, further to that, it has a huge international political function. Especially newly independent states, after the disintegration of Soviet Union, had wanted to sell their exporting issues without Moscow's control. European forces always need more secure trade to buy raw materials directly with exporter countries. Although USSR had been dissolved, many of the Russian leaders did not imagine giving up the energy and commodity rich ex-Soviet states. Eurasian Strategy of some Russian elites was aiming to set up newly Moscow-centred organization over these regions. According to this strategy, none of the ex-Soviet countries could find relations with others against Russian interests. The main target of this policy was Atlantic powers. Nevertheless Russia never enjoyed Azerbaijani-Georgian settlement on building South Caucasian corridor. In this presentation, TRACECA is analyzed as a Eurasian organization not being seen as against Russian or another regional interest. Wherefore the regional countries have to participate and improve this organization.

Introduction

At the Cold War era, Iron Curtain name was used for disconnectedness between Socialist and Capitalist countries. As it had watched between the East and West Germany or between some European countries which had lived one within other in the history, we see this big barrier between the Caucasus and the neighbour non-socialist states. Further to that, from Kyrgyzistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine, there were no directly relations but all Soviet or Socialist republics were able to establish relationships among themselves via Moscow. This Moscow-centred system had weakened or even destroyed the historical importance of the Caucasus. Nonetheless, in the World War II, as far as known, that primary goal of Hitler was to pass to Middle Eastern oil areas via the Caucasus.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the historical importance of the Caucasus has gradually been revived. In my opinion, the Georgian-Azeri agreement on South Caucasus pass was the crucial milestone. The early Azeri oil of Caspian Sea had could been transported only by settlement with Georgia on Baku-Supsa Pipeline. TACIS (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States) was the precursor of TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia).

In this process, TRACECA is not only a transport cooperation among member states, further to that, it has a huge international political function. Also Baku-Supsa Pipeline was between only Azerbaijan and Georgia plus relative oil companies. But in the TRACECA organizations there are a lot of countries from the Central Asia to the Baltic littoral states. Especially newly independent states after the disintegration of Soviet Union had wanted to sell their exporting issues without Moscow's control. European forces always need more secure trade to buy raw materials directly with exporter countries. Although USSR had been dissolved, many of the Russian leaders did not imagine giving up the energy and commodity rich ex-Soviet states. Eurasian Strategy of some Russian elites was aiming to set up newly Moscow-centred organization over these regions. According to this strategy, none of the ex-Soviet countries could find relations with others against Russian interests. The



main target of this policy was Atlantic powers. Nevertheless Russia never enjoyed Azerbaijani-Georgian settlement on building South Caucasian corridor. In this presentation, TRACECA is analyzed as a Eurasian organization not being seen as against Russian or another regional interest. Wherefore the regional countries have to participate and improve this organization. So that, this corridor will be the heartland of more prosperous and more peaceable Eurasian countries within RF which would be an important member.

New Russian Global Hegemony Policy: Eurasianism

Eurasia, as Europe and Asia, is the most important region of the world in the past and today. The common name of this region was "old world". Because almost all big powers of the history were Asian, European or Eurasian (as Roman or Ottoman Empires in both continents) states. The USSR, one of the super powers of the Cold War era, was also a Eurasian state. By unexpected and sudden dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, the Russian leaders have been exerting to defend RF (Russian Federation) against the next dissolution. Some Russians (liberals) were thinking in 89 different administrative units, it was impossible to make so much different ethnical, religious, sectarian or linguistic people live in one state system. But some others (new communists or radical nationalists) were thinking to establish another Russian Empire which would be more powerful than the USSR and Charist Empire while some others were contemplating on Eurasianist strategy. According to the last contemplation it is impossible to have a new Russian Empire as dominant as USSR but they have to get experience of ex-unsuccessful regimes and to organize another Moscow-centered system. It was also a survival strategy of Russian power and named as Eurasianism (It is also used as Eurasism).

Indeed Eurasianism was became a current issue of shortly after days of Bolshevist Revolution. In these years Charist Empire had been collapsed and civil war was going on in some regions. Within those circumstances, Eurasianism might be a kind of solution for everybody. Almost as in 1920s, after the Soviet Union there was a seeking for coming powerful Russia. A.Dugin was studying on a new Russian Strategy: Eurasianist (Eurasist) approach.¹ According to this strategy, Russia will establish dominant relations on all neighbour countries against Atlantic powers. The Moscow administration must use influence on not only ex Soviet but also all Asian and European countries. If any state may go against Russian eurasianist strategy that state must be oppressed by a lot of policies. He writes that Abkhazia must directly been depended on to RF and all ethnical regions' separatist movements from Georgia and Azerbaijan must be supported.²

According to Dugin, against globalization and Americanization, the mounting resistance is Eurosianism. "We contribute to it as much as we can, and we must rise to the vanguard of this process not only in Russia, as also across the world."³ In this meaning Eurasianism brings an ideological foundation for post-Soviet imperialism. And there has not probably been another book on Euarsianist strategy in Russia during the postcommunist period which has exerted an influence on Russian military, security forces, and statist foreign policy elites comparable to that Dugin's one.⁴

However, who write, study on and see Eurasianism as an only way for emancipation is not just Dugin. Before and after Dugin we see a lot of academicians, politicians and statists not only in Russia but also in Turkey, in Kazakhstan, Tatarstan and in other Eurasian era.⁵ In this presentation Eurasianism is not an imperialist strategy of one Eurasia country to use against another, but a common relation and cooperation background of this area. When we mention TRACECA as a Eurasian organization, this means all Asian and European states which participated in this project will be beneficial.

The Geopolitical Features of the South Caucasus

The Caucasus is one of the most involved and complex regions of the world. Placing at the center of the passageways of Asia-Europe and Russia-Middle East, the Caucasus has been a conflict area among global and regional states. In the history, we see almost all global sovereigns had passed away from this region for several



reasons. Also in the ancient ages, it had not only geo-strategic importance but also economic one. As the title of this conference "silk road" was one of a few most important trade routes of the world. And the Caucasus was nearly in the middle of this line.

As it is indicated, the strategical and geopolitical significance at the Caucasus are not only by its placement but more than that its position among Caspian Sea and Black Sea, by the way Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and so on. In this perspective South Caucasus is inseparable part of Black Sea region. Three South Caucasian states, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia are Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) members. After the disintegration of USSR, Moscow organized Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) over the ex-Soviet countries. While the CIS has been Russian-centered organization, BSEC has been accepted a Turkey axes initiative especially by Russian leaders. However Russia is a founder member of the BSEC as well as Greece. There are some unfounded speculations that the Aegean is the continuation of the Black Sea and likewise the Adriatic Sea is somewhat tied to the Aegean. This idea is rather irrational since the Aegean and the Adriatic are commonly accepted as branches of the Mediterranean. Yet, when Turkey insisted on Albania's and Azerbaijan's accession, Russia instead suggested Greece and Armenia. Although it might be considered that the accession of the last two states was not in the interests of Turkey, it was also apparent that Russia has been efficient in the politicization of economic relations.⁶ As a matter of fact, during the formation stage of BSEC, while Russia was undergoing difficult times, Turkey could have been considered too realistic to accept Russia's suggestion for Greece and Armenia to be included. The problems which have been realized at the foundation stages of BSEC, may be perceived TRACECA process especially on the membership Russian Federation.

In the relations among BSEC members, there are common interests as well as clashing ones. In the organization pursues a cautious policy so as to harmonize the clashing interests and create integration, BSEC will continue to be viable. The transport routes of the region's oil and natural gas to world markets have been the main causes of conflict up to recent times. Russia has adamantly insisted on the use of Novorossisk for the transport of Caspian oil and natural gas and argued against the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. This was the major clashing interest within BSEC for quite some time. A similar policy of Russia may be observed with the Nabucco project as well as TRACECA. Russia will keep an eye on the economic and political progress in the ex-Soviet republics and consequently will try to prevent their efforts to leave its sphere of influence. Moscow politics must be against the attempts to create an international relations structure based on domination by developed Atlantic countries in the international community, under US leadership.⁷ In this context, Russia has entered into a natural and historic alliance with Iran. It might also be expected that the instability in and between the ex-Soviet states would persist and remain a threat to the regional and the world security. One of the most important examples is Azeri-Armenian conflict over Nogorno-Karabagh, and the other is Russian-Georgian battle. However under such an umbrella as BSEC, conflicts between Russia and these states can be avoided or any probable conflicts can be held under control. Moreover there is always a chance for addressing such conflicts through negotiation and cooperation. Yet TRACECA which would have Russian membership is an economic infrastructure project for political conflict resolution.

No doubt Russia did not welcome the realization of the South Caucasian Corridor which is going to bridge Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine between Central Asia and Europe. This route, defined as the New Silk Road paradoxically loosens Moscow's dominance over the ex-Soviet republics. Likewise, it is probable that Greece would not be very pleased with Turkey's improving key position in BSEC. Moreover it is most likely that BSEC's progress will inevitably reduce the importance of the CIS. Nonetheless if the CIS is based on realistic principles, the organization is seen favorably by its members and if Russia does not use the organization for its own benefits, CIS members might start seeing benefits in the membership and the organization will last a long time. However, if membership is seen to offer more risks than benefits, the organization could fail. In the case of BSEC and the CIS, these two organizations should not be taken as intersecting but complementing and adjoining each other, just as in the case of EU and other neighboring organizations. Regional countries which

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are members of both these will offer communication between countries those only members of one.

Nabucco pipeline project would also be important for the region, just as the BTC oil pipeline aided in the transportation of oil to world markets. These pipelines will certainly increase regional economic cooperation and contribute to regional peace and prosperity as well as offering vital relief for environmental concerns. Deprived of Russia's participation on a long-term basis expectations it is impossible for Nabucco to aid in regional peace and development. Accordingly, the attempts of Russian companies to join the project were welcomed by relevant countries. This improvement will give rise to a dispersed, collective and intense regional cooperation. All these realities are valid on TRACECA-Russian relations.

Georgia: Key State of the Corridor

As indicated above, Georgia is the key state of the region under the context of east-west relations after the Cold War era. It is not only for geo-strategic but also geo-politic necessities. In this respect, new Azerbaijani oil route which is out of Russian control may be the first attack. The Russian nationalists supposed that Georgian policy was excluding Russia from the Caspian oil and gas.⁸ But in my opinion, if there was a pro-Russian leader in Tbilisi in the 1990s, Russian Federation would have been disintegrated before 21st century. So that Georgian policy had a function of smoothing down against Moscow imperialistic past.

Development of Caspian oil and gas resources and export routes has been slowed by regional conflict, political instability, and lack of regional cooperation. Many of the feasible routes pass through areas where unsolved conflicts remain. The future of the Caucasus region has been determined by the pipelines passing through it. The western route for early oil was from Baku to Supsa. This Azerbaijani-Georgian route is also base item of the TRACECA. The 1999 natural gas discovery of Azerbajijan's Shah Deniz field appears to have boosted the region's natural gas export prospects. This field was being developed for export to Turkey and helped to renew international interest in the region's natural gas. Prior to 1997, the only option for exporting Caspian region natural gas, as oil of it, was via the Russian pipeline system.⁹

The proposed pipeline routes pass near several regions of Georgia that have been the site of separatist struggles, such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The so-called "western route" for Azerbaijan International Operating Company (AIOC)'s "early oil" has been pumped via Georgia. Specifically, oil has been flowed to Georgia's Black Sea ports of Supsa and Batumi. In 2005, ExxonMobil announced that it would begin sending oil by rail from its Azeri fields to the Black Sea port of Batumi. Since then, oil and refined product shipments have increased to 190,000 bbl/d in 2005 compared to levels of 134,000 bbl/d in 2004.

In 2001, Georgia and Azerbaijan cleared a major hurdle for implementation of their gas pipeline plan. The two countries' parliaments ratified the transit agreement in this issue. Construction of the Baku-Erzurum pipeline was scheduled to begin in late 2002, with the pipeline operational by the end of 2004. As oil production from the Caspian Sea region increased, the Caucasus region became an integral export route for oil and natural gas. By then, the only way for Caspian production to Europe was via Russian pipeline system. The US has supported the principle of multiple export options. These were BTC, South Caucasus Pipeline and Baku-Supsa. The US strategy may be relied on deactivation of Russia on its backyard, over near region powers, especially on ex-Soviet countries. So the success of these projects would end an almost century-old Russian stranglehold on the oil and gas resources of the Caspian region. The new pipelines are accepted to weaken the influence of Russia in the region and therefore these initiatives are regarded as hostile by the RF. So that against these developments Moscow might choose to cause more trouble in the South Caucasus. It has supported separatist movements and conflicts against Georgia and Azerbaijan.¹⁰ However a powerful Russian may be only possible by powerful neighbour countries. The Moscow-centred Russian administration which govern and control everything in the region will be doomed to disintegrate as in USSR end. But, none of those pipelines has passed through Armenia, however, this country is shorter than Georgian route for BTC. But the Armenian expansionist policy did not permit any cooperation in this issue. This hindrance is not only against cooperation between

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Azerbaijan and Armenia but also for more comprehensive integration policies in the middle of Eurasian region.

When Russia used its position as the primary supplier for many countries in Central and Eastern Europe to influence political and economic developments, it has met one of the biggest confidence problems against customer countries. Azerbaijan holds vast oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea, which it exports to Georgia, Turkey and Europe by three pipelines. The EU imports 50% of the energy it consumes, of which about 45% of imported gas comes from Russia. The 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia affected the traffic of the BTC pipeline and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum running from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Europe.

International Organizations after the Cold War Era

Since the end of the First World War, the number of international organizations increased around the world. By the collapse of Socialist System, the biggest and the most comprehensive one, UN, has increasingly been come under the influence of US. The 11th September attacks just gave to USA a gigantic occasion on this matter. Therefore, lawful and peaceful organizations had been more utopian. The need for development of this institutionalization in a justly and equivalently way, might been discussed. For a more peaceful world in the future, by the support, pressure and demand of "rich information societies", necessity for these organizations' role is very important. In such a society's governance, thereby, there will be less dis-informational based foreign policies and more just and responsible implementations on relations with international actors.

After the Second World War, the number and influence of international organizations have been increased so much that international relations may be understood as international organizational relations in one respect. In this context it is interesting that, while the 1969 Vienna Convention applies only to treaties between States, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between international organizations of 1986 applies similar rules to them.¹¹ Throughout the Cold War era, not only both of Socialist and Capitalistic blocs but also neutral countries in Non-Alignment Movement had organized their effect and power by means of the international organizations. NATO, Warsaw Pact, EEC, COMECON, GATT, OECD, NAM were or are some important examples of these kind of organizations. Today's globalization conditions rely on international organizations to an important degree such as WTO, WB, and IMF.

Because of globalization of central power influence, developing or underdeveloped countries have rapidly engaged in international organizations for regional or functional necessities. Such reactionary organizations may be seen throughout the world. Also as a responsive motion against influence of US, big powers have been getting control on the international organizations in which they are only an equal member. As examples of this trend, Germany and France in the EU, Russian Federation in the CIS, and the Egypt in the Arab League may be accounted. While it is generally been waiting that in the new century the world will be more systematic, more organized, the relations will be more developed and increased, therefore international organizations will be more independent and more influential. However especially after the 11th September, the "nationalization of international organizations" has frequently been observed.

After above mentioned remarks, the question for the future may be that: Is it possible, because of the cloudiness of Middle Eastern movements' future, to come again the conditions of the aftermath of the First World War? When, all the belligerent governments during the war had attempted to control ideas as they did economic production. Freedom of thought, respected everywhere in Europe (for the time being in USA) for half a century, was discarded. Propaganda had become more effective than any government, however despotic, than ever been able to devise. No one had been allowed to sow doubt by raising any basic question.¹² These pessimistic outcomes might be accepted, in some degree, just after the terrorist attacks of 11th September. For today, nobody knows where the public rebellion will be end. Ex-Soviet or Socialistic states are in anxious suspense in this matter. As a consequence of that an integrating rising will be more useful in the Eurasian region for all.



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As in the article of Wallerstein, the Putin has not been getting good press in the US or even Western Europe. He has been charged with being authoritarian, with attempting to recreate Russia's imperial control over its neighbors, and with reviving Cold War obstructionism in the United Nations. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) met on July 7, 2007 in Guatemala City to decide on the site of the Olympic Winter Games in 2014. Among three contenders, Sochi, a Russian city, arranged for Putin to come in person to argue its case. It was Putin's personal charisma that made this result. To be sure, victories in IOC decision-making may be gratifying and symbolic, but they are after all a secondary matter, reflecting rather than creating political influence. This is some Russianized of ICO, an independent international sportive, not political organization. So one must ask, is this the only place where Putin has been exercising his charisma? And the answer has to be no. There is first of all his internal political strength in Russia. Yes, he has upset a good portion of the intelligentsia, but there is every indication that he is quite popular with most Russians, unlike some other presidents of major states today. It seems that Russians see him as someone who has done much to restore the strength of the Russian Federation, after what they see as its humiliating deterioration during the Yeltsin era. In general, one person calls authoritarian tendencies another often calls the restitution of order. This is a conflict of interpretation that is widespread, even in the North Atlantic countries. Sarkozy has just recently profited from this double perspective. Even more important however are Putin's political accomplishments on the world scene. He has resisted, so far successfully, any and all attempts by the U.S. to obtain U.N. authorization of real punitive action against Iran, North Korea, and Sudan. He has held up any moving forward to independence for Kosovo. To be sure, Russia's positions have been China's positions on these questions, so Russia is not alone. But in the 1990s, such strong and so far effective Russian political stands were not thinkable. Then there are Russia's dealings with Europe. He has opposed U.S. plans to install anti-missile structures in Poland and the Czech Republic, and has gotten support for his stand from Western Europe. He has used control of gas and oil exports from Russia itself and from both Central Asian and Caucasian countries not only to obtain greater rent for Russia (and thereby greater world power), but more or less to impose his terms on energy issues on Western Europe. If a neutral referee were to assign points for Putin's actions on some scale of positive/negative consequences for Russia, I think a fair observer would have to say that Putin has done well as a geopolitical player.¹³ The problem of our study is that TRACECA is which part of this geopolitical plays.

Geopolitical Aspects of TRACECA

After the Cold War era which is symbolized by falling of the Berlin Wall, the EU has developed and supported number of multilateral infrastructure programmers for wider Eurasia. The Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), launched in 1993 to link the eight post Soviet countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus to Europe, has been developing transport alternatives on the East-West axis. With its EU-funded technical assistance, TRACECA has helped to attract international investments for vast transport infrastructure projects in the region.¹⁴

As a multinational transport system TRACECA has geopolitical and sophisticated importance in the Eurasian regions. The member countries are Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Romania and Tajikistan. If we look at the map, there is an area of from the Central Asia, Caspian Sea, the Caucasus, and Black Sea to Europe. Indeed it was established in 1993 for the development of transport initiatives between EU, the Caucasus and the Central Asian countries. In the foundation years Romania and Bulgaria were not EU members. Therefore we can not see any EU member state in this list, because EU is the founder and main sponsor actor of this initiative.¹⁵

In different regions of the world there are many international organizations which could not have notable activity among the member states. I call such organizations as stillborn foundations. In respect of TRACECA, it had inherently had a remarkable efficiency also in the foundation years. Although Russia is not a member of this Eurasian organization; we think it will gain importance and usefulness of this membership.



As in the formal page of TRACECA "Owing to efforts of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan there was held international forum for restoring and developing of Great Silk Route [TRACECA]oute, in which representatives of 42 countries of the world took participation, among whom were represented by presidents. As. H. Aliyeve noticed at this forum on September, 1998: 'Baku summit will play its historical role in decision of cooperation, provision with peace, prosperity in every country and all Eurasian space.' The Main purpose of developing Great Silk Route are expressed in the following: Developing of trade-economic relations of the regional countries; Developing of transport connections of international transportation of trucks and passengers; Creation of propitious conditions for transit transportation; Acceleration of delivery terms and saving of traxes; Coordination of relationships between different fields of transport; Tariff policy on international and internal tariffs on truck and passenger transportation; Development of the programs of coordinated actions for organization of multi-modal (combined) transportation."¹⁶

At the heart of this corridor which extended from Kyrgyzstan to Sweden and UK, there is Georgia and Azerbaijani negotiation. The Permanent Secretariat of TRACECA was established in Baku in 2000. In the first instance, as above-mentioned, "early oil pipeline" for Azerbaijani oil had been constructed from Baku to Supsa, Georgia.¹⁷ This was not only a pipeline itself but a geopolitical message of the new term to Moscow administration after the Cold War era. The main purpose of this pipeline was not hostility against Russia but for real political necessity of the new era. This real politics have placed milestone role of Georgia and Azerbaijan at the center of Eurasia. However, not only Azerbaijan as in the Nogorno Karabagh conflict with Armenia but also Georgia in South Osetia and Abkhazia problem have been under political and military pressure of the RF. Nobody can say this pressure is irrelevant with Georgia-Azerbaijani agreement reputed against RF.

Conclusion

After the disintegration of the USSR, many Russians thought that without underdeveloped Asian and Caucasian state RF would be a more prosperous and untroubled country. But only in a few years RF came up against a new disintegration process. Separatist movements and conflicts inside of the Federation have been supported by newly founded or revised international or regional organizations. At least many Russians were regarding all political and integrational developments in neighboring regions as anti-Russian oriented plots. According to some Russian politicians or thinkers the only way for Russian emancipation from vanishing was "New Eurasianism Strategy". On December 31, 1999 President Yeltsin announced that he was resigning from his post and handed over the powers of President to Prime Minister Putin. Since therefore Russia should enter the new millennium with new politicians, new faces, and new people who were intelligent, strong and energetic.¹⁸ That means, as a successor of ex-Super Power USSR, not only RF but also regional and global international politics should encounter new conditions and new strategies. 11th September gave a big opportunity to Russian leaders for new strategies against global powers and international organization.

However especially after the 11th September, 2001, the "nationalization of international organizations" has frequently been observed. Nevertheless by the Iraqi ill-success of USA will be an occasion for a new start on reorganization of international relations. Taking these facts into consideration, for a more peaceful world, international organizations must be more independent, active and effective as well as lawful and just in the new century. On this subject, the most dangerous factor, inherited from last century, is misinformation directed not only against domestic public opinion but also against world public opinion.

For a more peaceful world in the future, by the support, pressure and demand of "rich information societies", necessity for these organizations' is obvious. Hence, in such a society's governance, there will be less dis-informational based foreign policies and more just and responsible implementations on relations with international actors. It is obviously known that if the streets are more lightened in the evenings, less crime will occur in such a city. This situation is directly related to information level of not only domestic societies but also



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international society.

The problems which have been realized at the foundation stages of BSEC, may be perceived as TRACECA process. Nevertheless Russia is not a member of TRACECA in the developing stages of this project, dissatisfaction of Russia may be seen. However, as in the formation of BSEC and enlargement, Russia also adopted a more realistic attitude for TRACECA. I conclude that at the beginning of a new millennium, the human being, as main component not only of nation-state but also of international organizations, needs an international social contract. For an accredited and long life act, it necessitates enough and just information. As a result expected era's society may be named as international information society.

Notes

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