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## EASTERN DIRECTION OF THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AT THE TURN OF XVIII-XIX CENTURIES: THE GEO-ECONOMIC AND GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS

### *Abstract.*

*The article shows the main stages, trends, objectives and tasks of the eastern direction in Russian foreign policy at XVIII-XIX centuries. Its place and role in the international relations, its participation in solving the major international problems, mechanisms and development factors, causes and change effects in the world politics, the impact of these processes on the competition with the Great Britain, and Russia in Central Asia. The article also reveals the causes and circumstances of the Anglo-Russian rivalry and the main stages of the development of relations between Britain and Russia in the second half of the XIX century.*

**Keywords:** Sweden, Turkey, England, Russia, Central Asia, rivalries, colonialism, geopolitics.

### Introduction

In the XVII century Russia entered a new phase – the period of the imperial state. In the second half of the XVII century Russia, has joined Ukraine and Belarus, in the foreign policy started to address three important objectives: search for access to the Baltic Sea, the protection of the country's southern borders from the attacks of the Ottoman Empire and the settlement of Russian-Chinese relations. Historians Klyuchevskii V.O. and Solovyov S.M., describing the features of Russia's policy of this period, identified as the main features the territorial expansion and the development of the conquered lands [1].

Thus, the main reasons which have pushed Russia to territorial expansion in the second half of the XVII-XIX century, was the need to ensure border security,

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preservation of profitable ports, etc. According to the Swiss scientist A.Kappeler, economic installation by importance should be a priority of geopolitical factors [2].

### **The methodological basis**

of the article is the principle of historicism, scientific objectivity, systematic and integrated approach, and the use of comparative-historical, historical and systemic methods of knowledge.

Considering the works of Russian and foreign historians on Russia's foreign policy, the authors sought to objective analysis. However, they were guided by the principle of historicism, which allowed to consider the views of historians in their development and dynamics, identify the specific characteristics of the stages of their career, as well as to identify the factors that influenced the formation of these phases.

The principle of integrity allowed to systematize the various and heterogeneous views of domestic and foreign historians in specific stages of our proposed periodization. The originality and uniqueness of the different points of view of individual historians managed to substantiate through the using of comparative-historical method. This method helped to evaluate the contribution of individual representatives of national historical science in the Russia's foreign policy development of historiography at the turn of XVIII-XIX centuries.

System-structural method helped to identify trends in the understanding of the domestic historical science of Russia's foreign policy at the turn of XVIII-XIX centuries.

The historical-genetic method was so valuable to disclose the origins of the views of historians and the causes of some of their ideas.

The method of class analysis allowed us to determine the impact of ideas and views prevailing in their environment on the representatives of a particular historical period, the influence of their position in the social structure to their worldview.

### **Discussion.**

In the development of the chosen theme used documents, studies in Russian and English, which can be divided into five groups. The first – the archive materials and sources containing documents, laws and regulations related to the investigated problems, also the works of contemporaries of the scientific, statistical and memoirs events. The second – theoretical work in the field of world politics, history and theory of international relations. The third – the research and collections of materials on specific issues of political science, sociology and psychology. The fourth – the historical literature and reference.

## Results

At the end of the XVII century Russia stood before the objective tasks of the ensuring an access to the Black and Baltic Seas. Started with the Black Sea. In 1687-1689 Russia has made two unsuccessful campaign under the command of Prince Golitsyn against the Crimean Khanate. With all these unsuccessful campaigns, it was the first offensive actions undertaken by Russia against the Crimean Khanate. Peter I continued the hiking offensive in a southerly direction. And his first campaign in 1695 ended in failure, and the campaign of 1696 was successful. In particular, Azov was occupied where the fortress Taganrog was built. The war with the Ottoman Empire has set Russia the question of allies. However, a trip to the «Great Embassy» in Europe under the formal leadership of Franz Lefort revealed that Austria and Venice are not going to help Russia, while Peter I decided, first of all, to achieve an access to the Baltic Sea and postponed the Black Sea until better days. But in order to solve the issue of the North, it was necessary, firstly, to make peace with the Ottoman Empire and to stop fighting in the south. And it was done. Then it was necessary to form an alliance against Sweden, as Russia could not cope alone with Sweden at the beginning of the XVIII century. Northern Alliance was created as a part of Russia, Denmark, Speech-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Saxony. In November 19, 1700 the 35000th Russian army began the assault Narva. There was the 1.5 thousand Swedish garrison in Narva. The 12000th army of Charles XII came hastily to help the garrison. This 13.5 thousand army easily defeated the untrained Russian army. Russia lost 6000 people, and all the artillery. In addition, in this battle, the Russian army lost many of its senior officers. Considering that the Russians can not recover from these blows Charles XII began a military action in Poland, where he stuck. At this time, when Charles XII stuck in Poland, Peter I began training a new army and building military factories. At the same time, Peter I put the ships in Arkhangelsk, where tens of thousands of peasants dragged on Lake Ladoga. It should be noted that the quality of these ships was very low. The wood from which these ships were built, was not soaked for a long time, as it was done in the Netherlands and England at the time, because there was no time. The fortress Noteburg was occupied in 1702 (or not, after the capture, the fortress was renamed to Shlisselburg or «key city»). St. Petersburg was founded in 1703, as the shipyard was put there. All these preparations of the opponents made no impression on Charles XII. It was only in 1706, when finally Charles XII turned his attention to Russia, which rose, after setting his protégé Stanislaw Leszczynski on the Polish throne. Such calmness by Charles XII can be explained by the fact that the Swedish army from the time of the Thirty Years War (from the time of Gustav Adolf) was considered as the strongest and the best in Europe. Until the defeat in the Northern War. The first part of the Swedish army moved to Riga, the other to Moscow. As on the border of the Russian state, Charles XII met a stubborn resistance, he turned to the Ukraine. And it was a strategic mistake by Karl XII, because here he did not have any food or ammunition, no artillery, and the salvation of Charles XII was the approach of the 12000th General

Lewenhaupt's Corps which released from Riga. Peter I knew that it would be very difficult to fight with them, if someone helped Charles XII. Herefore the main task of the Russian army was not to drive them connect. The Russian army agreed to intercept the General Lewenhaupt's Corps. On September 27, 1708 the Russian army defeated the Swedish Corps in the village of Forest and captured the whole convoy. Peter I called the Battle of the Forest «the mother of victory march of the old military Regiments, not the Peter's new army, as well as the Gangut battle was won by the old fleet of sailing, and not a new fleet. Realizing the complexity of his situation, Charles XII went deep into the Ukraine, where he found an ally in Mazepa. In November 1708 Baturin and the troops under the command of Menshikov stormed the fortress, a stronghold of Mazepa. Attempts by Charles XII to make a trip to Moscow for Muravskiy gentry were won over by the Russian army. Then Charles XII decided to conquer the city of Poltava, where there was a supply of food, and unprotected road to Moscow was opened there. The city survived the three month siege, and the Swedes were defeated at Poltava on July 27, 1709. Charles XII fled to the Ottoman Empire. After Sweden defeated at Poltava, and lost the bulk of the land army military operations moved to the Baltic Sea and adopted a maritime character. In 1710 the Ottoman Empire declared a war on the Russian Empire. The troops of Peter I moved to the Prut river, and there Peter I made the same strategic mistakes that Charles XII made in his campaign against Russia. The fact that Peter I did not have enough ammunition, and the army was small (40 thousandth) and it was at a very great distance from the strategic bases. As a result, the 130000th Ottoman armysurrounded the Russian army, and the position of Peter I was heavy. It was necessary to make peace with the Ottoman Empire immediately. In such position, it was very difficult to make peace for Russia. As the Ottoman army could easily destroy the surrounded Russian army. The diplomatic skills of Shafirov P.P., a bright russian diplomat of the XVIII century and the jewelry of Catherine I to bribe the Turkish military commander played a great role. Peace made with Ottoman army was unprofitable for Russia, but thanks to it the Russian army broke out of the siege. The Ottoman military commander was beheaded for the conclusion of peace with the Russian after returning to Istanbul.

The military operations of the Russian fleet in the Baltic Sea were very successful. Here the Russian fleet won two brilliant victories over the Swedish fleet. On May 27, 1714 the Russian rowing fleet caused a devastating damage to the Swedish Navy at Cape Gangut, and on July 24, 1720 the Swedish fleet was defeated at Grengam. The Swedish King Karl XII died in the period of these two battles.

Battle Russian rowing fleet at Gangut in 1714, Ezelskoe naval battle in 1719, the victory of Russian rowing fleet at Grengam in 1720 finally broke the power of Sweden in the sea. A peace treaty was signed in the city of Nishtadte on August 30, 1721. Due to the Nishtadte peace treaties the Baltic Sea coast were returned (Riga, Pernav, Reval, Narva, Ezel and Dago, etc.) to Russia. It became one of the biggest European countries and since 1721 officially became known as the Russian Empire. Thus Russia finally settled the problem of the Baltic Sea.

In 1722 Peter I started moving in a south direction not towards Turkey, but in the direction of Persia, which was a weak power then. Baku and the southern coast of the Caspian Sea were captured as a result of successful military actions. In 1723, the Persian Shah recognized the territory of Russia. Taking advantage of the weakening of Persia, the Turks invaded the Caucasus, and Russia had no strength to continue the war. And in 1724, Turkey and Russia made peace. Turkey recognized the southern coast of the Caspian Sea as Russia's, which Anna Ivanovna gave back to Persia. Russia was forced to accept the Turkish conquest in the Caucasus because of the Turkey's military superiority.

We can conclude that the foreign policy of Peter I was successful in the north-west direction, but did not solve two important problems. First, relations with Poland, second, it could not provide an outlet to the Black Sea, which is even worse at the end of the reign of Peter I Russia was in complete diplomatic isolation in Europe, and Russia had no allies.

As for international affairs, Peter I left Russia a triple heritage, the Empire, a number of solved or half solved issues, and the group of diplomats of his school, where Osterman, Bestuzhev-Ryumin and Prince Dolgoruky. Stood out with regard to the Peter's problems of difficulties, the southern issue was resolved least. After the death of Peter I Russia once again turned their attention to the south-east.

A long-term controversy that existed in Russia with strategic rivals – Iran and the Ottoman Empire was a prerequisite for the conquest of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia.

The priority of geopolitical and geostrategic rationales upon the accession of a new land does not exclude the economic factor. «The priority of economic interest» has formed the features of Russia's economic expansion in Siberia, the Far East, Central Asia, as Russia has not received income from these areas in the near future. Russia's desire to mediate in the exchange of goods between Europe, South and South-East Asia was observed as early as the reign of Peter I (1689-1725). Soloviev S.M. wrote: «Peter, understanding the benefit of achieving the»Great Challenges «- outlet to the Baltic Sea, by Russia and realizing the need for mediation by Russia in the trade relations between Europe and Asia for the material welfare of Russia, did not take his eyes off the east ... Eastern states, from China to Turkey were under the close supervision of Peter «[3]. The develop directions of Peter's foreign policy were continued by his successors.

The foreign policy of Russia continued in the traditionally established directions in the second half of the X V III century during the reign of Peter I. Russia's strive to increase its territory has encountered a resistance from its neighbors – Turkey, Iran and Sweden, and eventually led to the long and endless wars. Leveraging the results of military successes, Russia took control of new lands problems of its geopolitics and geo-economics, embarked on colonial expansion. For Russia, the results of colonization had different consequences. On the positive side, the increase of natural resources, reduction of economic centers and settlement lands into a single, a convenient location geographically – from north to south, increasing the safety of the population, etc. If

you notice the negative side, it is the extensive nature of the use of natural resources, unequal distribution of demographic and social reserves, and other multi-ethnicity of the population.

During the reign of Catherine II (1762-1796) the westbound priority preserved in the foreign policy. Due to the inability to negotiate with Europe, from a «position of strength», and in order to maintain a balance between the need and opportunities, Russia was forced to restrain their ambitions.

As for the Russia's southern neighbors, the relations developed otherwise here. The southern policy of Russia in relation to the Ottoman Empire and Iran, has been associated, first of all, with an increase in the military might of the Russian state in the sea.

Russian-Turkish and Russian-Iranian contradictions characterized by the following features: starting from 1569, when there was an armed clash between the Turkish and Russians for the first time and Turkey tried to seize Astrakhan, a series of wars began between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in 1676-1681; 1695-1700; 1710-1713; 1735-1739; 1768-1774; 1787-1791; 1807-1812; 1828-1829; 1832-1833; 1839-1840; Years 1853-1856 (The Crimean War). In 1722-1723; 1804-1813; 1826-1828 Russia and Iran were on the brink of war [4].

Paul I, who inherited the throne, could not abandon the directions of the Russian traditional foreign policy. The geopolitical plans of Nicholas I (1825-1855), a follower of Paul's eastern policy were associated with the Ottoman Empire, moreover, a successfully ended war with Iran, provided an opportunity for Russia to claim the Persian Gulf. Realization of the set tasks started in the 40s of the nineteenth century [5]. The problem of border areas has exacerbated the Iran-Turkey relations – first and foremost, it is concerned the unresolved issue of the division of the territory beginning from Kurdistan till the Persian Gulf. Two peace treaties between 1823-1847 intended to resolve the boundary disputes between Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Under the contract, the mixed Commission [6] should be formed between Iran and Turkey to determine the exact boundaries. The commission was composed of the old rivals for the geopolitical influence in this part of the world – England and Russia together with Iran and the Ottoman Empire.

Russia, trying to solve the problem of the development of the Far East, and reinforcing the policy in the eastern direction in the second half XVIII – first half XIX centuries, showed that the geopolitical strategy is based on regional interests.

Russian relations with the East developed and evolved quite differently. The development of Russian statehood went in close cooperation with southern and eastern neighbors. We can say without exaggeration that the representatives of various peoples, especially the Turkic nomads, who have long lived on the territory of the present-day Russia were always involved in all the processes. Russia has historically been and remains not just Europe but also Asia. They gave rise to a kind of synthesis of a qualitatively new integration and collaboration of European and Asian principles. Berdyaev N. wrote: «Russia can not define itself as the East and be a contrast to the West. Russia should consider itself the east-west connector of two worlds, not the delimiter» [7].

Eastern direction in the Russian foreign policy has always been paramount. It can be viewed on the example of the Russian-Turkish relations.

The first attempts of the offensive war undertaken in 1687-1689 were unsuccessful. Moreover, the Turks had returned to the Russians previously seized Azov. The subsequent Russian-Turkish wars took a more successful shape for Russia. The simultaneous with the Russian-Turkish wars activation of Russia in the Caucasus caused a conflict with Iran. Further the wars with Iran moved away to the background. Mainly the Russian-Iranian wars were caused by the Georgians, Armenians and other peoples of the Caucasus strive to live in Russia [8]. The economic, geographic and strategic interests of the growing Russian Empire played the main role. Still, Turkey has always remained the main rival of Russia in the Caucasus. Gradually moving to the east, Russia became a multiethnic country.

In Central Asia, Russia tried to avoid wars. Existing long trade, cultural and diplomatic ties were strengthened in the XVI-XVII centuries. Fabric, dyes, medicinal plants were transported to Moscow from Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent. There was the transit trade between Russia and the Far and Middle East through Bukhara and Kazan [9].

Russian advance to the East could not but cause counteraction of the West. Especially Great Britain, strongly pushed the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Afghanistan, the Emir of Bukhara and Khiva and Kokand khans to confrontation with Russia. Along with the negative consequences of the conquest, Central Asia became involved in the national economic and social development.

The world arena has experienced the major socio-economic and political developments in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, which determined the alignment of political forces and the nature of the diplomatic struggle powers. The tsarist government had two main objectives. One of them – the «Eastern question» [10].

The emergence of the concept the «Eastern question» refers to the end of the XVIII century, although the term itself was introduced in diplomatic practice in the 30s of XIX century. Three main factors contributed to the emergence and further aggravation of the Eastern question: 1) the decline of the once mighty Ottoman Empire, 2) the growth of the national liberation movement against the Ottoman yoke, 3) sharpening of contradictions among the European countries in the Middle East caused by the struggle for the division of the world.

The decline of the Ottoman Empire urged the European powers to intervene in its internal affairs. Tenure covered the important economic and strategic areas of the Middle East: the Black Sea straits, the Isthmus of Suez, Egypt, Syria, the Balkans, the Caucasus part of [11].

The solution of the problem of the Black Sea and the Straits for Russia was connected with the southern borders of the security and economic development to the south of the country, with heavy growth of foreign trade of Russia via the Black Sea. Russian tsarism represented the interests of landlords – exporters of grain and the springing up Russian bourgeoisie.

In the 20-50-ies of the XIX century, the Eastern question acquired the greatest urgency. During this period, there emerged three crises in the Eastern Question: 1) at the beginning of the 20s due to the uprising in 1821, in Greece, 2) in the early 30s due to the war in Egypt against Turkey and as a consequence the threat and collapse of the Ottoman Empire, 3) in the early 50-ies in connection with the dispute between Russia and France, which led to the Crimean war [12].

In the nineteenth century, Russia solved its eastern problems with the help of several peace treaties:

Turkmanchay Peace Treaty (10 February 1826) – an agreement between Russia and Iran. Nakhichevan and Erivan khanate, Iran joined according to the agreement. Iran used to pay Russia 20 mln. rubles of contribution and granted a trade advantage for Russian merchants on its territory [13]. The contract allowed free swimming all Russian ships on the Caspian Sea, the prohibition to keep Iran in the Caspian Sea warships, freedom of the Armenian population resettlement in Russia. Turkmanchay Treaty was a major success for Russia.

Adrianople peace treaty (September 2, 1829) – Russia won the mouth of the Danube, the Black Sea coast from Anapa to the approaches to Batumi. The Ottoman Empire has paid 33 million rubles of contribution [14]. Smaller territorial acquisitions of Russia in the Treaty of Adrianople had a strategic importance, as it strengthened the position of Russia in the Black Sea.

The Unkiar-Iskelessi Treaty (26 June 1833) between Turkey and Russia has significantly strengthened of the Middle Eastern positions of Russia, but it has strained relations between Russia and Western European powers [15].

In the nineteenth century Transcaucasia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia went to the fore in the eastern areas of foreign policy. Russia turned to the East after the defeat in the Crimean War.

The basic provisions of the known concepts have been developed in an earlier geopolitical theories that studied Russian society in the framework of public-political trends. Two main groups can be noted in the framework of these concepts of geopolitical terms. The first group supporters believe that the principle of preserving the balance of power in the «European concept» lies at the basis of Russian interest in Europe. The representatives of the other point of view who did not take into consideration a risk of deteriorating relations with the countries – competitors, advocated the strengthening of policy in relation to Asia. The aim to adhere to the «European» view of the Russian policy was the justification for the approval of the European status of Russia. This position did not meet the economic and strategic needs of Russia as the Eurasian empire. Political pragmatism prevailed in the views of the supporters of the «Asian» plan. In their view, Russia had to in a short time catch up with the advanced industrial countries of Europe and the United States, and establish the entire power in the Middle and Far East markets. This objective met the three main areas – strategic military on the western borders; Central Asian and Siberian – on the outskirts of Russia; the assistance in the construction of the railway in the industrial economic plans in the European part

of Russia. The railroad in the direction of the Krasnovodsk-Andijan-Kushka Trans-caspian branch was built in 80-90-ies of the nineteenth century. The world-famous Trans-Siberian Railway was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century. In the opinion of Witte S.Y., «it was to provide every opportunity to the Russian Navy and become a strong support for the eastern ports. A coup in the relations between Europe and East Asia begins from this moment» [16].

Witte S.Y. paid a special attention to Russia's policy in the Far East as a region of influence for which the biggest capitalist powers in the world fought.

A crucial stage of China's division between the largest and most developed countries each in its favor began at the end of the nineteenth century. Witte believed the division of China unprofitable for Russia, because of the positions of Russia in the Far East and the division was carried out depending on the strength of the parties influence. The famous diplomat considered that Japan should not be allowed the partition of China, as it was profitable for Russia to have «fixed» China as a neighbour, than the fast-growing Japan. Witte S.Y. as the supporters of the «Asian» direction, showed the economic benefits the development of the border regions [17].

The important period in the history of Russia started in 1881. On the initiative of the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia has changed the way in carrying out the traditional direction – preservation of the balance of power in international relations. In the nineteenth century, Russia paid great attention to the mutual influence of the political and geographical factors in the foreign and domestic policies. Politico-economic interests of the Russian Empire, according to Witte S.Y. were positioned from a geopolitical point of view. Russia's foreign policy has been associated with an access to the warm sea and the Caucasus; Eastern problem that reinforced the positions in the Far East and the Russian-Chinese relations, the western part of Central Asia determined a policy of Russians approval in the east of the Caspian Sea. Thus, the foreign policy trends corresponded with the fundamentals of domestic policy.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the world arena has experienced the major socio-economic and political developments, which determined the alignment of political forces and the nature of the diplomatic struggle powers. The tsarist government had two main objectives. A large-scale «Big game» in the Central Asian region was of particular interest among the variety of international events of the second half of the XIX century. Big game – Geopolitical rivalry between the British and Russian empires for supremacy in Central Asia (1813-1907). The authorship of the term «Great Game» is ascribed to Arthur Connolly – an officer of the British Secret Service. The scientific revolution was introduced by the British writer Rudyard Kipling in the novel «Kim» [18].

The XIX century was found for Central Asia a period of strained relations and rivalry between the two major colonial powers – Great Britain and Russia. It was the Anglo-Russian rivalry that determined the fate of the Central Asian states. The results of cooperation between Russia and Great Britain in the second half of the XIX century largely determined the subsequent history of the development not only of these countries, but also the entire region nearly a hundred years ahead.

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