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THE PACIFIC VECTOR OF SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIA AND THE USA IN XVII-XX CENTURIES AND TRANSFORMATION OF THEIR GEOPOLITICAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

The article considers spatial aspects of the formation and transformation of the Russian-American geopolitical relations in the Northern Pacific. It is established that the spatial development of Russia and the US in the 17th - 19th centuries towards the Pacific Ocean occurred almost simultaneously. The stages of the spatial development of these countries during the specified period are allocated. The pacific policy of Russia and the US was built on mutual support for a long period of time. In many cases, it was based on the joint opposition to hegemonic ambitions of Great Britain, including military support to each other during the Crimean War (1853 - 1856) and the American Civil War (1861-1865). Gained trust in allied relations and hope on their stability promoted transfer by Russia of its American assets to the United States (Fort Ross in California and Alaska). However, from the end of the 19th century, the Russian-American geopolitical relations gradually took a turn for the worse. Later, their relations have deteriorated even more after the establishment of the Soviet political system in Russia. This phenomenon has received a pause only in the years of joint struggle against the German and Japanese aggression. Nevertheless, the relations of geopolitical rivalry between Russia (then the USSR) and the US had no mutual spatial claims. However, Mikhail Gorbachev's course to 'new political thinking' has allowed the US to annex the vast sector of the Bering Sea (Baker-Shevardnadze Agreement, 1990).

Keywords

Spatial development – Pacific vector of development – Geopolitical relations – Great Powers

The pacific vector of spatial development of Russia and the USA in XVII-XX centuries and transformation of their... pág. 866

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Introduction

Since the 17th century, the spatial development of both Russia and the United States was largely featured by advancement to the Pacific. This development ultimately led to the formation of two Great Powers and one of the major geopolitical contradictions of our time. During this time both of these countries have gained significant experience in geopolitical relations in wide varieties: from strategic partnerships to adversarial relationships. Nevertheless, they still cannot find a solution to complex problems, both in bilateral interaction and in influencing global geopolitics. At the present stage, with the increasing tension of interstate relations, including major global powers, a retrospective assessment of the experience of geopolitical relations between Russia and the United States (both positive and negative) seems especially significant. Moreover, as noted by Russian academician Victor L. Larin, the study of modern Russian-American geopolitical relations is dominated by 'Eurocentric' aspects, and their Pacific vector has not yet received due attention¹.

A retrospective assessment of the evolutionary dynamics of the state territories of Russia and the US shows that the vectors of their spatial advancement to the Pacific Ocean appeared almost simultaneously at the beginning of the 17th century. Then the Tsardom of Russia, after a pause caused by the death of Yermak Timofeyevich (1585) and the end of the Time of Troubles (from 1612), began to actively advance from the Ob basin further into Siberia. Around the same time, colonists from England (1607) established a foothold on the Atlantic coast of North America. Subsequently, the space of each side began to expand towards the Pacific Ocean. It should be noted that although these expansions as a whole occurred quite simultaneously, their 'starting positions' were quite different. If Russia was already one of the largest countries in the world, then the actual formation of the United States began as the colonies of England (from 1707 - Great Britain). Therefore, several stages can be distinguished in these countries further advance into the Pacific.

Materials and methods

The research materials were represented by actual historical and geographical data on the stages of Russia and the United States' advancement towards the Pacific Ocean, the materials on bilateral and multilateral geopolitical processes of the 17th – 20th centuries, written statements and orders of several statesmen, selected statistics and official documents. Among the methods used were chronological, comparative, historical, and geographical analyses.

Results and discussion

Stages of formation and development of geopolitical relations

Spatial relations between countries, relevant to their geographical location, extent, and configuration of their territory and borders, lay one of the basic components in the system of geopolitical relations². On the one hand, the territory of each country is a space covered by its exclusive rights to manage all kinds of productive forces and resources available. On the other, it is also the living space of citizens (nationals) who act as carriers

¹ V. L. Larin, *The Pacific dimension of Russian-American relations: 21st century controversy* (Moscow: Moskovskiy Tsentr Karnegi Publ, 2015).

² P. Ya. Baklanov and M. T. Romanov, *Economic-geographical and geopolitical position of Pacific Russia* (Vladivostok: Dal'nauka, 2009).

of the national identity creating and consuming material and spiritual values, also requiring protection from external threats, and at the same time ensuring the country's defense. The establishment and settling of international boundaries, along with issues of territorial allegiance of land, water areas, subsoil resources, and airspace, are resolved in the spatial form of relations. The same is the case for laying down the general opportunities and options for organizing continued inter-state relationships.

Since the beginning of the 17th century, an advance to the Pacific coast (with variable success) has become one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy. This expansion developed in three main directions. One of them was of a latitudinal character and led to the exploration of the Sea of Okhotsk in the vicinity of the Ulya River by the reconnaissance party of Ivan Moskvitin in 1639. The second was guided to the southeast, where Vassili Poyarkov reached the Amur basin in 1643. The third direction of this advancement was going northeast, creating a spatial basis for the future Russian-American contact: in 1648, explorers and pioneers Fedot Popov and Semyon Dezhnev followed the Northern Sea Route, circled Chukotka, and entered the Bering Strait, as close as possible to North America. And although America itself was not mentioned then, the assumption on the availability of a new 'Big Land' further to the east did not raise any doubts in general.

Of decisive importance was the 1724 decree of Peter the Great on prospecting works on the north-eastern outskirts of the country. Its essence is reflected in the phrase: 'In the search for America, there can be great benefit'³. In 1732, Russian military geodesist Mikhail Gvozdev landed on Cape Nicht (Cape Prince of Wales), which is the westernmost mainland point of the Americas at the junction of the Chukchi and Bering Seas; in 1741, the ships of Vitus Bering and Aleksei Chirikov reached the American mainland coast near the Mount Saint Elias and the Kodiak Island. As a result, official St. Petersburg announced in 1764 the establishment of the 'Alaska Estate' on the peninsula of the same name and the mainland coast from the Kenai Peninsula (Cook Inlet) to the Seegaay Strait (Dixon Entrance), including all the adjacent islands. In 1782, Catherine the Great prescribed its expansion up the Yukon and along the Pacific Coast Ranges. The transfer of Alaska in 1799 under the control of the Russian-American company did not change much in the geopolitical sense since Russia remained the supreme sovereign of this territory.

The advance of American colonists to the west initially proceeded under different conditions, and also to a large extent quite spontaneously, as well as contrary to the will of the English parent state. The new continent, with its vast and diverse natural resources, attracted thousands of migrants from Europe. The 'land-hunger' formed in the colonies in this regard, pushed them farther from the Atlantic coast. However, in this form of the spatial development of their colonies, the British authorities only evaded their citizens from tax revenues and also restricted their advance farther than Allegheny Ridge of the Appalachian Mountains.

The situation changed after the formation of an independent United States (1776) and the purchase of Louisiana from France (1803). The Lewis and Clark Expedition to upper Missouri (1804 - 1806) reached the Pacific Ocean, initiating the flow of spontaneous migrations to the Columbia Basin, a ground debatable by the British (1811). This precipitated the Californian way of advancing deeper into Spanish possessions (since 1813).

³ V. A. Divin, (ed.) Russian pacific epopee (Khabarovsk: KhKI Publ, 1979).

This process virtually led to the formation of the American Manifest Destiny statecraft, which was based on the fact that the British and Spanish land possessions west of the Mississippi were formal, but in fact, the Indians who owned them were considered too 'ramshackle' to fully manage their resources. That is, it was the United States that was 'destined' to develop all the landscape up to the Pacific Ocean⁴.

It should be noted that Russian-American contacts arose long before that. The first of them, at a high representative level, took place in 1698 in London between Peter the Great and one of the leaders of the colonists, William Penn. The first meet had an introductory character⁵. Then contacts between Russia and the American colonies expanded and took on new facets. By the end of the 18th century, they clearly showed the general geopolitical interest in opposing British hegemony⁶.

Official London initially hostilely accepted Russia's aspirations to gain access to international trade routes through the Baltic and Black Seas. Later, the British perceived Russia as one of the main competitors for geopolitical dominance in the Balkans and Asia⁷. As for the United States, they had to fight against Great Britain for their independent existence in two wars of 1775 - 1783 and 1812 - 1815. The subject of Anglo-American disputes was the territorial delimitation west of the Great Lakes.

The Russia-US rapprochement arose, including on a common anti-British basis, which was quite logical, taking the form of an unspoken but obvious alliance⁸. The initial point of its manifestation was Russia's refusal to request the English king George III to send his troops to suppress the uprising in the American colonies. Then, on the initiative of St. Petersburg, a coalition of European countries was created to counter the privateering of the British fleet on the routes of maritime trade with the rebels (First League of Armed Neutrality). Also, well-known American naval commander John Paul Jones successfully fought against the Turks as part of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in 1788 - 1789.

The assessment of the existing partnership was given in the speech of President Jefferson at the establishment of Russian-American diplomatic relations in 1807: '... our interests ... and our feelings coincide ... Russia ... is the most sincerely friendly country to us'⁹. This type of geopolitical relationship persisted until the middle of the 19th century; the transfer of Russian territories to America (Fort Ross and Alaska) by the USA took place within its framework.

The food shortage in Alaska forced the government to conduct land exploration in the south, all along the American coast. In 1803 and 1808, Russian-American Company commerce counselor Ivan Kuskov sailed to Bodega Bay in California. His exploratory expeditions resulted in the installation of Russian border signs on 41°38' North, near the mouth of the Klamath River on the southern border of Oregon, which the UK considered its

⁴ S. Anders, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York, Hill & Wang Publishing House, 1995).

⁵ E. Dvoichenko-Markov, "William Penn and Peter the Great". *Proceedings of American Philosophical Society*, Vol: 97 num 1 (1953): 16 – 17.

⁶ K. George, "The US – Russian entente that saved the Union". *Executive Intelligence Review*, Vol: 19 num 26 (1992): 46 – 57.

⁷ P. Hopkirk, *The Great Game* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁸ W. Barker, "Secret of Friendship of Russia to United States". *North American Review*, Vol: 178, June (1904): 801 – 811.

⁹ P. I. Kabanov, *Amur's question* (Blagoveshchensk, AKI Publ, 1959).

property. London's protest on this issue was rejected due to the absence of the permanently settled English population there. But soon, American settlers began to arrive in a significant number, which led to aggravation in Anglo-American relations.

The Russian party was in a difficult situation: a confrontation was brewing in the region between the friendly USA and, at that time, a Russian ally in the anti-Napoleonic coalition - Great Britain. In this regard, it was decided to avoid participating in a possible conflict and search for another 'holdfast'. The choice fell on Bodega Bay in California, where Kuskov established the Fort Ross colony in 1812.

California belonged to Spain, which was then captured by Napoleon. Therefore, the local colonial administration, not wanting to obey the occupation authorities in Madrid, reacted to the foundation of Fort Ross loyally, agreeing on further non-expansion of its territory. This pushed Russia to more active behavior. In 1821, Alexander I issued a decree on the transfer of the southern border of Alaska to 51 ° N to the mouth of the Bella Bella River, which led to the need to settle direct Russian-American spatial relations. Their starting point should be the announcement of the Monroe Doctrine.

The primary meaning of this document, developed in 1823 by the administration of US President Monroe, called on European countries to refrain from interfering in the struggle between Spain and the rebels in its American colonies, as well as from attempts to make new territorial acquisitions under this pretext in the western hemisphere. In all of this, the United States saw not only foreign geopolitical interests in the form of attempts to maintain the position of European colonialism in America but also a threat to American sovereignty¹⁰. At the same time, the content of the Doctrine gave reason to interpret it as the US claim for geopolitical dominance in the New World¹¹.

The edition of the Doctrine addressed to Russia had a more restrained tone than the one sent to other European states. It emphasized the preservation of the tradition of friendly relations and the recognition of Russian territorial rights in northwestern America. The presentation of this document was accompanied by negotiations in St. Petersburg. These negotiations could likely contain a request to repeal the 1821 decree and a proposal to streamline bilateral spatial relations in the North Pacific with the aim of joint containment of Great Britain¹². For Russia, this initiative was quite relevant because, according to a delicate assessment of the Secretary of the Senate Nikolai Rezanov, the dialogue with London clearly contained '... a kind of rivalry'¹³.

This is confirmed by the first agreement on the spatial demarcation between Russia and the United States (Russo-American Treaty of 1824), outlining the boundaries between the U.S. and Russian Alaska along the old border at 54 ° 40/North and fixed the obligation of the United States not to advance north of this line. However, this agreement was largely 'virtual': a decree from 1821 on the transfer of the Russian border to 51°north has not yet been implemented, and the US state line ran a short distance from the west coast of Mississippi and Missouri. That is, both countries agreed on demarcation without having

¹⁰ M. Alanga, *The Monroe Doctrine: An End to European Colonies in America* (New York, Rosen Publishing Group, 2003)

¹¹ E. A. Ivanyan, *The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 and the "amendments" to it*. Retrieved 08.05.2017 from: <http://america-xix.org.ru/library/monroe-doctrine/>

¹² W. Barker, "Secret of Friendship of Russia to United States", *North American Review*, Vol: 178, June (1904): 801 – 811.

¹³ P. I. Kabanov, *Amur's question* (Blagoveshchensk, AKI Publ, 1959).

direct spatial contact. But this agreement lifted British claims on the Russian coastal strip of Alaska from Yakutat Bay to the Dixon Entrance Strait. The recognition by the United States of its affiliation with Russia affirmed the latter's right at the international level to possess this territory. Therefore, the British had to be content with quite a modest concession of disputed lands along the eastern slope of the Coast Mountains.

On the side with these events, the Californian crisis was escalating: becoming independent, Mexico in 1822 demanded Fort Ross from Russia. The legal basis of this claim was doubtful. Mexico positioned itself as a new state, which de facto denied its relation to the Russian-Spanish agreement on Fort Ross. Besides, like all young Latin American countries, Mexico adopted the principle of *Uti possidetis* - the inviolability of the previously established colonial borders between itself and the possessions of European countries (except for Spain). But the arguments of Russia based on these facts about maintaining the *status quo* in California were not taken into account by the Mexican side.

The matter went to a war in which the superiority of forces was largely on the side of Russia. However, the property at issue was located on a tremendous distance from Russia, and the Mexicans were promised support by the UK. Under these conditions, the loss of Fort Ross was a foregone conclusion. This could cause enormous damage to the prestige of Russia. The international community was unlikely to give a balanced assessment taking into account the factors of distance and British intervention. And losing the campaign to such a not-so-strong country like Mexico could have a high-profile geopolitical resonance.

In 1841, Fort Ross was sold to US citizen and a pioneer of California John Sutter. Apparently, it was a geopolitical maneuver of Russia, as a result of which Mexico did not acquire Fort Ross; difficult Mexican relationship with American settlers in California has become even more complicated¹⁴.

In 1846, the United States secured Oregon's concession from London and started a war with Mexico. At the same time, an uprising of American colonists broke out in California, with Fort Ross becoming its base. As a result of this campaign's victory, the United States doubled its territory and gained wide access to the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, they recognized the role that Russia played in achieving this success. The *Daily Evening Bulletin*, a publication close to government circles, wrote those days: 'Russia has one comrade in the future, one companion - the United States'¹⁵. The peak of Russian-American geopolitical interaction occurred in the middle of the 19th century. Thus, during the Crimean War of 1853 - 1856, President Pierce announced the possibility of the United States joining it on the side of Russia. This step was hindered by the rise of an internal political crisis in the United States. However, Americans provided all possible assistance: 43 US military doctors participated in the defense of Sevastopol; American whalers warned in advance the defenders of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky about the approach of the British and French squadrons; also during the siege of the city the whalers sidetracked the attention of some of the allied forces from the battlefield. In 1855, a volunteer rifle battalion was formed to be sent to Russia, and a privateer ship was equipped to attack convoys of the anti-Russian coalition in the Pacific Ocean. The news of Russia's defeat in the war triggered the pogrom of the English and French holiday pavilions in San Francisco.

¹⁴ V. G. Shvedov, "Fort Ross - the forefront of Pacific Russia". Geosystems of Northeast Asia, Issue 6. Materials of the scientific-practical conference "Geosystems of North-East Asia: types, current status, development prospects". Vladivostok, TIG DVO RAN (2018): 74 – 79.

¹⁵ P. I. Kabanov, Amur's question (Blagoveshchensk, AKI Publ, 1959).

With the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1863-1864, against the backdrop of the threat of military assistance to the uprising from London, the United States became the only country to support Russia's actions against the rebels. For its part, in the context of the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, Petersburg officially declared: 'The secession of the South will be considered by Russia as the greatest of all possible misfortunes'¹⁶.

In 1863, Great Britain, preparing to enter the war on the side of the southerners, created joint strike naval groups with the Confederates. 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 force projection played an important role in preventing the enemy from attacking the country's most important ports and political centers¹⁷.

Russia's withdrawal from North America transition from alliance relations to adversarial relationship

The level and nature of the geopolitical rapprochement between the two countries achieved at that time largely served as the actual basis for the deal for Russia to sell Alaska to the United States. The reasons and results of this event, due to its still intriguing nature, remain the subject of a separate consideration¹⁸.

Generally, the consequences of this sale for Russia were largely negative, which can be clearly seen nowadays. First of all, it is the fact of a reduction in the country's geopolitical space by 1.5 million sq. km and the loss of sovereign presence on the American continent. The sector of Russian access to the Arctic and the Pacific Ocean was also significantly narrowed. The diverse and large-scale mineral and biological resources of Alaska and the adjacent marine areas were lost, and over time it became a military foothold of the confrontation with the United States and Russia (then the USSR). However, turning to the geopolitical realities of that time, it can be noted that the settlement and development of Alaska remained at a low level. Only 2.5 thousand Russians and 60 thousand aborigines lived here, of which 50 thousand were militant Indians¹⁹. The Alaskan economy was represented only by the hunting and fishing sector.

The severity of the natural and climatic conditions of Alaska did not allow examining in detail (under the mid-19th century conditions) its natural resource potential. Its composition and size were largely unknown and technically inaccessible. The significant remoteness of Alaska from the historical center of Russia was exacerbated by the poor development of means of transportation and the 'barrier' role of such a huge and difficult to develop region, like Siberia. Finally, the Crimean War, without affecting Alaska, showed, however, the insoluble difficulties of its defense at that time.

In other words, this territory was one of the most problematic regions of Russia. But if the country had the necessary capabilities to uphold geopolitical interests in other 'hotbeds' (Poland, the Balkans, the Caucasus), this still did not apply to Alaska. Besides, in 1858 and

¹⁶ N. N. Bolkhovitinov, (ed.) History of Russian America. Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, Vol: 3 (1997).

¹⁷ K. George, "The US – Russian entente that saved the Union". Executive Intelligence Review, Vol. 19 num 26 (1992): 46 – 57.

¹⁸ N. N. Bolkhovitinov, (ed.) History of Russian America... y R. Jensen, The Alaska Purchase and Russian-American Relations (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1975).

¹⁹ A. V. Zorin, Indian war in Russian America: Russian-Tlingit warfare. Kursk, KGMU Publ., 2002).

1860, under the Treaty of Aigun and the First Convention of Peking with the Qing Dynasty of China, the territory of Russia included the Amur lands with an area of more than 1 million sq. km., located in relatively more comfortable climatic conditions. The integration of this, possibly more strategically important territory for Russia, required a lot of money. That is, that was a time of appearance of the geopolitical and geo-economic 'owning problem' of Alaska, which turned to be a monumental challenge for Russia. An active search for its solution began as early as 1857 in the form of consultations between the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich of Russia and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Gorchakov. According to their results, a special council under Alexander II decided in 1866 to offer the United States, as a friendly country, to purchase this territory.

Under the 1867 Treaty with Russia, the United States withdrew the entire Russian mainland and island territories of Alaska in the generally accepted geographical contours of North America. The point of separation was the point in the Bering Strait at the latitude of 65 ° 30' with an equal distance from Cape Dezhnev in the west and Cape Prince of Wales in the east. The dividing lines departed from this point towards the North Pole and into the open waters of the Pacific Ocean. The last one came between the Commander Islands and the Attu Island, the westernmost of the Aleutian archipelago.

At the same time, Alaska was still remote and quite undeveloped, the US experienced serious internal problems (overcoming the consequences of the Civil War, solving the tasks of integrating the virtually uncontrollable 'Wild West', etc.); all of that caused this deal to provoke rejection by American public and government circles, which was, in turn, ignored by the administration of President Johnson²⁰. Some historians believe that this part of US policy has strengthened the line of confrontation with Britain²¹. The authors also tend to believe that for President Johnson's strengthening the anti-British geopolitical position was the main argument in the Alaska Purchase. Its acquisition, as well as the annexation of other coastal Pacific territories, was a very far-sighted and strategically important decision for the United States, expanding the living space of the future superpower between the three oceans: the Pacific, Atlantic, and the Arctic. Alaska, after its purchase by the United States, came under the control of the War Department, with the presence there of regular troops. Later, two warships were transferred to Alaskan waters²². The British did not have an equivalent army group in northwestern Canada. This significantly complicated the standing of their North American possessions.

The acquisition by Russia of Alaska, and then its sale, represents the largest event in Russian-American geopolitical and spatial relations. In general, it happened voluntarily and during the peacetime; therefore, the Alaska Purchase denoted an important stage in the interaction of the two countries. Against its background, it seemed that the traditions of mutual support and containment of the ambitions of the 'third' states would last for long. These expectations, for example, were voiced at one time by the Russian general and diplomat, Count Nikolay Muravyov-Amursky: 'The rapprochement with the North American United States ... is an important subject for the future of Russia'²³.

²⁰ B. Thomas, *Russo-American Relations, 1815-1867* (Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press, 1930).

²¹ C.- M. Naske and H. Slotnick, *Alaska. A History of the 49th State* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

²² G. A. Agranat, "The first half century of American rule in Alaska", Efimov A.V. (ed). *Annals of the North*, Vol: 3 (1962): 223 – 238.

²³ P. I. Kabanov, *Amur's question* (Blagoveshchensk, AKI Publ, 1959).

However, since the end of the 19th century, Russian-American relations began radically deteriorate. Harsh measures against revolutionaries were implemented by the state in response to the assassination of Alexander II (1881); many of the revolutionaries then sought refuge in the United States, bringing along the picture of Russia as a country of civilian captivity²⁴. Gradually, public sympathy for political emigrants penetrated the US leadership, which was reflected in official governmental notes. In turn, official St. Petersburg qualified them as meddling in Russia. The final evidence of the disappearance of the previously established Russian-American geopolitical alliance was the active support by the United States of Japan in its war with Russia in 1904 - 1905²⁵.

The 1917 revolution in Russia and the subsequent formation of the USSR provoked a negative reaction in the USA; the contradictions between the two states based on the ideological differences only intensified. This unfortunate trend temporarily remitted only during World War II.

Facing Tokyo's growing geopolitical claims in the Pacific, the United States joined a coalition that opposed the aggression of German Nazism and Japanese militarism. Within its framework, the US provided significant military-technical and food assistance to the USSR under the Lend-Lease program²⁶, launched military operations against Japan in 1941, and against Germany and Italy in 1942 in North Africa. However, this alliance ended up short-living.

One of the results of World War II was the enlargement of American footprints in Europe, including the US military presence in West Germany. Thereupon, the largest intergovernmental military alliance NATO, led by the United States, was created in the late 1940s. A little later, the US became engaged in the Cold War against the USSR.

At this stage, the Soviet-American confrontation took place both in the West and in the East, where the geopolitical influence of both countries intersected in the North Pacific. Thus, both the US and the USSR became directly involved in the Korean War of 1950-1953, supporting different sides of this, in fact, internal conflict. This situation actually repeated during the Vietnam War of 1964 – 1975.

Some decline in tension occurred in the late 80s and 90s of the 20th century against the background of the processes that led to the collapse of the USSR and the interpretation of this event by the United States as their victory in the Cold War. However, after Russia has declared its aspiration for restoring previous geopolitical position, the United States, in its desire to maintain world leadership, actually returned to the conditions of the Cold War.

The identified stages of the Pacific vector of development of Russia and the US with an assessment of the types of their geopolitical relations are arranged in the following order (Table 1).

²⁴ J. Powell, Encyclopedia of North American Immigration (New York, Facts on File, Inc, 2005).

²⁵ S. S. Ol'denburg, Reign of Emperor Nicholas II (St. Petersburg, Petropol', 1991).

²⁶ G. Levis and J. Mewha, "History of Prisoner of War Utilization by the United States Army", Department of the Army Pamphlet, num 20, June (1955): 213-278.

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Stages of spatial development	Significant milestones of spatial development		Type of geopolitical relationship
	Russia	USA	
First informal contacts: end of the 17 th - beginning of the 18 th century.	Access to the Pacific Ocean (1639), passage to the Bering Strait, reaching Kamchatka.	The landing of the first English colonists on the Atlantic coast (1607) and their further advance to the Appalachian Mountains.	First informal contacts in Europe.
Establishment of formal relations: beginning of the 18 th century – 1807.	Discovery of the northwestern part of North America (1741). Foundation of the 'Alaska Estate' (1764).	Formation of independent United States (1776); Louisiana Purchase (1803); advance to the west and access to the Pacific Ocean (1806).	Formation of a community of geopolitical interests based on counteraction to British hegemony.
Establishment of allied relations, 1808 – 1852	Expansion of Alaska; advance to California; foundation (1812) and loss (1841) of Fort Ross.	Purchase of Fort Ross (1841); acquisition of Oregon (1846) and the expansion of the territory to California as a result of the Mexican–American War (1846 - 1848).	Consolidation of the allied relations on an anti-British basis.
The peak of allied relations, 1853 – 1867.	Acquisition of Amur Region (1858) and Primorye (1860). Sale of Alaska (1867).	Alaska Purchase (1867)	Mutual diplomatic and military support during the Crimean War (1853 - 1856), the Polish Revolt (1863 - 1864), and American Civil War (1861 - 1865).
Transition to a cooling in relations: 1868 - end of the 19 th century.	Consolidation of the positions in Manchuria; commencement of Chinese Eastern Railway construction (1897); acquisition of Port Arthur (1898).	Annexation of Hawaii (1897) and the Philippines as an outcome of the Spanish-American War (1898).	Maintaining friendly relations in general; the beginning of deterioration on the basis of ideological split from the 1880s.
The period of confrontation: beginning of the 20 th century – 1940.	Loss of South Sakhalin, loss of positions in Manchuria (port Arthur, CER) as a result of the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War.	Consolidation of the territory between the three oceans: Atlantic, Pacific, and Northern.	Adversarial relationships: assistance to Japan in 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War, aggravation of ideological contradictions after the October Revolution of 1917 and creation of the USSR in 1921.

Allied relations within the framework of the anti-Hitler coalition, 1941 – 1945.	Marked aggravation of the situation on the eastern borders.	Temporary loss of part of the Pacific possessions.	The Great Patriotic War (1941 - 1945); US entry into World War II (1941) and their assistance to the USSR under the Lend-Lease program (1941 - 1946). The entry of the USSR into the war with Japan (1945).
Cold War; 1946 - to the present days.	The return of South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands (1945). The loss of the disputed sector in the Bering Sea (1990). The collapse of the USSR (1991). Securing the recognition of the Sea of Okhotsk as the internal water area of Russia (2013). Attempts to establish the Russian sovereignty over part of the Arctic shelf.	The return of the Pacific possessions (1945); the growth of geopolitical influence in the Pacific basin. Preoccupation of the disputed sector of the Bering Sea (1990).	Confrontation: the Cold War, participation in military conflicts in third countries. The increase in the level of military confrontation between the USSR (Russia) and the United States in Northern Pacific.

Table 1
The main stages of the Pacific vector of spatial development of Russia and the United States

Changes in geopolitical relations at the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st centuries

Adopted in 1986 by the head of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev, the doctrine of 'new political thinking' turned the USSR to surrender a number of its geopolitical positions. Several other countries, including the United States, could not miss the opportunity to take advantage of this misfortune. Thus, significant territorial concessions from the Soviet Union to the US in Northern Pacific were caused by the gaps of the 1867 Treaty with Russia; the latter agreement stipulated maritime borders without proper geographical and cartographic ties. Earlier, the Russian, and then the Soviet sides proceeded from the fact that the demarcation line of the Bering Sea was drawn according to the parameters of the loxodromic projection adopted when compiling maps in Russia and then the USSR. The US believed that this water area was divided according to the orthodromic projection they used, and therefore the demarcation line goes much west of the Russian (Soviet) version.

Consequently, an extensive zone of overlapping water possessions of the two countries appeared in the Bering Sea. Negotiations on this matter have been conducted since 1976. However, their sluggish character indicated that this problem made little account of. The USSR and the US were preoccupied with the more pressing issues of bilateral and international relations (which both considered way more relevant) and did not want to create additional complications in this regard. It all came down to negotiations on the proposal to divide the disputed territory in half.

This stalemate was unblocked by the conclusion in 1990 of the agreement between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State Baker. This agreement was based on the American version of demarcation; as a result, the Soviet Union, and subsequently the Russian Federation, lost 31 thousand sq. km. of the exclusive economic zone in the Bering Sea and 46.3 thousand sq. km. of the continental shelf in its open part, the Navarino and Aleutian fields with reserves of about 200 million tons of oil and 200 billion cubic meters of gas, along with the zone of the annual production of 200 thousand tons of fish²⁷.

It should be noted that neither in the USSR nor then in the Russian Federation, the bodies of the highest state power have ratified this agreement. That is, it is a deal between a state, as an international legal entity, and a private citizen of another state, which renders it invalid. Whatever the case, but the US Coast Guard has eventually introduced a border patrol regime for the 'ceded' water area, which is de facto a form of accession.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Arctic Regions became one of the main areas of conflict between the spatial interests of both countries.

Adopted by the subpolar countries (except for the US) in the 1920s, the sectoral division of the high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere did not comply with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, approved in 1982 (also not endorsed by the US). In that context, the problem of the legitimate supranational partitions of the Arctic has arisen, where, due to climate change, new opportunities open up for the development of shipping traffic, fishing, and the extraction of minerals.

Acting based on the aforementioned Convention, Russia insists on its exclusive possession of the Northern Sea Route and the Arctic shelf in the area of the Ridges of Mendeleev (to 860 km from Wrangel Island), Lomonosov (1800 km from New Siberian Islands), and Gakkel (1000 km from Severnaya Zemlya archipelago). This will allow Russia to control one of the most promising ways of global freight traffic and 1.2 million sq. km. of the Arctic water area with a potential content of about 5 billion tons of raw hydrocarbon deposits in the Arctic bottom subsoil²⁸.

The US is the obvious main opponent of such an expansion of Russia's territorial waters. Without lodging their direct claims to these Russian demands in the Arctic, the US appeals to international interests. According to the US interpretation, the latter looks as follows:

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

Insisting on these provisions, Washington is promoting own interests: the *terra nullius* 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; free access will be granted to anyone, including the United States.

²⁷ N. G. Palamar', "Some aspects of the border demarcation between the Russian Federation and the United States of America". Vestnik RUDN, num 1 (2009): 82 – 88.

²⁸ Goldin, V.I. The content and problems of modern Arctic geopolitics. Retrieved 25.07.2019 from: <https://goarctic.ru/work/soderzhanie-i-problemy-sovremennoy-arkticheskoy-geopolitiki/>

In this situation, Russia claims to be proceeding from existing international law. The Northern Sea Route is their historically established national transport corridor, which was gradually opened, mastered, and equipped by many generations of Russians²⁹. The claim for possession of a part of the Arctic shelf is based on UN regulatory documents. Therefore, its revised second edition filed in 2015, according to experts of the Legal and Technical Commission of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, can be fully satisfied, at least regarding the sector of the Mendeleev Ridge. As for the shelf adjacent to the Lomonosov and Gakkel Ridges, this matter should be resolved by coordinating the demarcation with Canada and Denmark.

At present, geopolitical contradictions in the high latitude zone are entering the stage of strengthening the military presence: Russia and the US are creating modern military infrastructure on their northern outskirts and regularly conduct army exercises. At the same time, the United States, bearing in mind the firm and legal-based position of Russia, adopted in 2013 the National Strategy for the Arctic Region³⁰. The further development of its provisions for the areas of natural resource use, environmental protection, as well as securing the shipping traffic and military capabilities at high latitudes, has become the basis for discussion by the ruling circles of the United States on the possibility of claiming their sector of the Arctic shelf with a length of 965 km (600 marine miles) north of the coast of Alaska.

Conclusion

The main result of the spatial development of the United States and Russia over vast territories from ocean to ocean was the formation of two Great Powers. As another important achievement could be considered the preservation of the principle of mutual spatial inviolability between them for more than two centuries, which should be maintained in the future as one of the most important conditions for their peaceful coexistence.

The following major processes can be distinguished in the spatial development of Russia through the described time:

- expansion to the East till the Pacific;
- discovery and accession of Alaska;
- continued expansion in North America, voyages to California, and foundation of Fort Ross;
- the process of simultaneous narrowing due to the sale of Fort Ross and Alaska to the US and the transfer of the Kuril Islands to Japan (under the 1875 Treaty of Saint Petersburg), and continued expansion: consolidation of the Amur River and Primorye regions under the aegis of Russia (treaties with the Qing Dynasty), as well as other Eastern territories;
- reduction of the territories due to the loss of South Sakhalin following the results of the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War;
- the return of South Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands to the Russian (USSR) protectorate following the results of World War II;

²⁹ V. G. Shvedov and M.T. Romanov, "About Dynamics of the Geopolitical Position of the North-East of Russia in the 17-th-21-st Centuries". *Humanities & Social Sciences Review*, Vol: 7 num 6 (2019): 169 – 175.

³⁰ National Strategy for the Arctic Region (Washington, The White House Official Press, 2013)

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- a general decline in the country's spatial position due to the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s;
- transition to restoring the country's spatial positions in the Pacific (sovereignization of the Sea of Okhotsk, claims for the possession of a part of the Arctic shelf). Generally, the beginning of the 21st century outlined the new Eastern turn in Russian spatial development. Moreover, the role of the eastern regions of the country, including the Russian Far East and Pacific, will significantly increase in the nearest future³¹.

The spatial development of the United States during this time, for the most part, kept a positive vector: the expansion of the territory to the Pacific, and then to the Arctic Oceans. At the same time, the area of the US geopolitical interests had quite expanded. After World War II, it came close in the East to the Pacific frontiers of the USSR and its successor, the Russian Federation. In the West, having formed in mid-1945, the area of US geopolitical interests also became more extensive within the framework of a NATO alliance. After the collapse of the USSR, a 'belt' from former socialist countries and even new states from the former Soviet republics (excluding Belarus) was drawn into American influence in Eastern Europe. Thus, an extensive area of direct contact between Russian-American spatial geopolitical interests has developed by the beginning of the 21st century; it took turns in three directions that have closed in a single parabola: East, North, and West. The current condition, possibilities, and prospects of Russian-American relations in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole are comprehensively described by IMEMO researches³². The most important recommendation of these studies is that relations between Russia and the US in the Asia-Pacific should not be linked to their European and Middle Eastern relations.

The intensifying rivalry by the United States has recently been complicated by the entry into the political arena of new and dynamically developing 'superpowers' (China, India), which generally complicates the global geopolitical situation. The US aspiration to strengthen its leadership in the Asia-Pacific also to the new Indo-Pacific region (including through the use of bloc structures) was disclosed in one of the latest works by Soviet and Russian diplomat and international relations scholar Anatoly Torkunov³³. As for Russia, an important problem remains to overcome the misunderstanding of the strategic importance of the stable development of the entire vast eastern space, including its Pacific segment, and ensuring its accelerated socio-economic and demographic development.

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³¹ V. L. Larin, (ed.) *Pacific Russia in the integration space of the North Pacific at the beginning of the XXI century: experience and potential of regional and cross-border interaction* (Vladivostok, IIAE DVO RAN Publ, 2017).

³² *Russia and the USA in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Moscow, IMEMO Publ, 2016).

³³ A. V. Torkunov, "D. Trump's Administration Strategy for the Asia-Pacific Region", *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, Vol: 63 num 6 (2019): 25 – 37.

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