

Toward the Great Ocean – 6: People, History, Ideology, Education. Rediscovering the Identity

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Asia is becoming the centre of global development

“Nowadays Asia is winning, Asia is the progress <...> fast development, wealth <...> the future is there,” Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman of the Board, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Russia changes the global power balance

“We have changed the global balance of power <...> With our movement towards Asia <...> we are growing stronger even regardless of economics and technology,” Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman of the Board, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Russia is the assembly site of ‘Greater Eurasia’

‘There are three great powers of colossal size in the Greater Eurasia: China, India and Russia. Unlike transatlantic relations, where there are the huge USA and a bunch of small allies, our situation is different, so we'll have to reach an agreement. Russia, with its historical and diplomatic experience, acts as this negotiator, balancer <...> that is, the one who can bring everyone together,’ Timofei Bordachev, Director, Centre for Comprehensive European and International Studies, National Research University Higher School of Economics; Programme Director, The Valdai Discussion Club.

PROBLEMS

Underestimation of the new global development vector

“The Far East did not believe in (this turn - *Ed.*) <...> And it did not become a national goal,” Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman of the Board, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

“We are clearly in the phase of breaking down the ideological barriers that divided territories and regions, that seemed to be unshakable just a couple of years ago <...> Now <...> there is a restoration of Eurasian unity — from Europe to East Asia, which <...> is more natural in such an array, than the division we are accustomed to,” - Fyodor Lukyanov,

Research Director, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Chief Editor, Russia in Global Affairs Journal.

Insufficient attention to the history of the East

“We do not know the history of Russian Asia – Siberia – very well. For us, the whole history is the history of Europe,” Sergey Karaganov, Dean, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, National Research University Higher School of Economics; Honorary Chairman of the Presidium, Council on Foreign and Defence Policy.

“The problem is not that there are no historical texts, the problem is that there are no popular texts,” Leonid Blyakher, Professor, Head of the Department of Philosophy and Culturology, Pacific National University.

Communication barriers between Russia and Asia

“Media space is Western-centric <...> This also has to do with what the audience wants to see,” Stanislav Natanzon, Anchor, Russia 24 TV Channel.

“One of the biggest problems is business communication,” Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman of the Board, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Deficit of experts in Asian studies

“At the moment, the Asian studies in Russia have been dismantled <...> This is a serious problem, we have a devastating lack of specialists,” Victor Larin, Director, Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East, Far-Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IHAE FEBRAS).

SOLUTIONS

Creation of communication systems within the Eurasian territory

"In practice, we need to have some sort of systems <...> something like social networks, where the exchange of information between different segments of Eurasia will increase exponentially," Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman of the Board, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics.

Reconfiguration of Russian education system

"We need to educate others and educate ourselves <...> adapt our education to the fact that China is a big and complex country that played a role in Asian history, and Asian history played a role in Russian history," Fyodor Lukyanov, Research Director, Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Chief Editor, Russia in Global Affairs Journal.

"We start with inquisitive children, through those who aspire, who strive," Tatiana Urzhumson, St. Petersburg State University of Economics.

Creation of the state programme to develop Asian studies

"A state programme should be adopted here (in Asian Studies - Ed.)<...>," Viktor Larin, Director, Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East, Far-Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IHAE FEBRAS).

"There is a system for the teachers retraining<...> You can take a few experts in Asian studies and make them give lectures that we will spread," Sergey Karaganov, Dean, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, National Research University Higher School of Economics; Honorary Chairman of the Presidium, Council on Foreign and Defence Policy.

Using the experience of people who do business in the Far East

"We have communicators, people from the Far East who have been doing business in Asia for 15–20 years and they have established networks and connections <...> These people really understand the situation," Sergey Karaganov, Dean, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, National Research University Higher School of Economics; Honorary Chairman of the Presidium, Council on Foreign and Defence Policy.