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A model for harmonizing strategy and tactics of modern Russian-Tajik relations

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Relevance of the research topic. Russia's relations with Tajikistan seem to be relevant for several reasons. The first is that this country is part of the post-Soviet space, which is of prime strategic importance for Russia. The events of 2020 in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Nagorno-Karabakh show how complex and conflicting the situation in this important for Russia region is. Russia, as a leader in the post-Soviet space, is expected to provide proposals and actions aimed at facilitating an effective solution of regional political problems. The study of political processes in the post-Soviet space is, therefore, very important and relevant for the implementation of Russia's national interests.

Tajikistan does not stand aside from these complex problems either. A significant number of Russian compatriots who have close ties with the Motherland live in the country. More than 1 million labor migrants from Tajikistan work in Russia, their remittances constitute a significant part of the country's income, support a large number of Tajik households. The return of a significant part of them home as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the decline in economic activity in Russia in 2020 led to an aggravation of socio-economic situation in Tajikistan. The country is home to the 201st Russian military base, the largest Russian foreign

military base. The intertwining of all these and other interests makes the active policy of Russia in the Tajik direction in demand.

The relevance of the research topic is also influenced by the need for the development of Eurasian integration, which is one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy. Taken into account ongoing connection of Uzbekistan to regional integration, the issue of Tajikistan's entry into the EAEU is being actualized. It is also important that the EAEU itself is developing not only in the economic direction, but also expanding the range of areas of cooperation. Tajikistan with its 9 million population could play an important role in these processes. In particular, there is a need for gradual transition of Eurasian integration from the stage of an economic union to a political one, that is, from the Eurasian Economic Union to the Eurasian Union. Tajikistan, which is a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, could play a certain positive role in such a transition.

Research object: modern Russian-Tajik relations.

Subject of research: the relationship between strategic goals and tactical actions in Russian-Tajik relations.

Purpose of the study: to develop a model for harmonizing the strategy and tactics of modern Russian-Tajik relations and, on its basis, to propose recommendations aimed at a more complete realization of the national interests of Russia and Tajikistan.

Research objectives:

- Develop a conceptual model for harmonizing the strategy and tactics of the state's foreign policy;
- Determine the methods of researching factors included in this model;
- Summarize foreign experience in harmonizing strategies and tactics in international relations;
- Identify the characteristic features of Tajikistan's foreign policy identity;
- Investigate progress in the development of Russian-Tajik relations;
- Identify problems in relations between Russia and Tajikistan;

- Using the harmonization model of the strategy and tactics in development of bilateral Russian-Tajik relations, to propose perspective directions for their deepening;

- Explore the possibilities of Tajikistan joining the Eurasian Economic Union.

The theoretical basis of the research. Russian-Tajik relations are multifaceted, therefore, a fairly wide range of scientific theories, both in political science and beyond it, were used in the dissertation. In particular, taking into account the growing interdisciplinarity of scientific research, the dissertation uses the life history theory, which develops at the junction of two directions - evolutionary biology and modern psychology¹. Biologists use this theory to explain interspecies differences, which are manifested, for example, in the strategies of reproductive behavior, depending on the degree of certainty of the environment. The application of these theories was required due to the fact that in recent years uncertainty in international relations has increased.

The dissertation also applies various political science theories, which consider the factors influencing the country's foreign policy. According to the theory of neoclassical realism, state foreign policy model consists of three groups of factors: systemic variables, systemic modifiers, and «invading» variables². There are other theoretical approaches to the factors influencing state foreign policy. Of these various theoretical approaches, we should choose the one that is most suitable for the analysis of contemporary Russian-Tajik relations. The dissertation uses the approach of W. Hudson and B. Day to classify these factors into external and internal ones. Each of these groups consists of four factors.

The dissertation also reflects elite studies, in the center of which are the motives and patterns of behavior of the elite, top leaders of the state, as well as the state of their elite status. Russian President V.V. Putin has been in power since 2000.

¹ Stearns, S. (1992). *The Evolution of Life Histories*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

² Ripsman N., Taliaferro J., Lobell S. 2016. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. NY: Oxford University Press.

The current President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon has been in power for almost 30 years, since 1992. In 2015, he was awarded the special title “Founder of Peace and National Unity - Leader of the Nation”. The President plays a special role in the Tajik state, including formation and implementation of Tajikistan's foreign policy. This explains the need for a special study of highest statesmen's role in development of Russian-Tajik relations.

Taking into account the fact that the study considers the issue of the possible participation of Tajikistan in the Eurasian Economic Union, the dissertation uses integration theories, in particular, J. Viner's theory of the customs union³.

Methodological basis of the dissertation. The methodological basis of the dissertation was formed by the main methodological approaches, methods and techniques. The dissertation used the systemic, structural-functional, synergetic and identity approaches. A systematic approach is necessary taking into account the fact that Russian-Tajik relations are developing not in isolation, but within the framework of the global and regional systems of world politics. Therefore, in some aspects of the problems of these bilateral relations, it was necessary to go beyond them, to analyze the situation in Central Asia, the problems of the Afghan peace settlement and other problems that strongly affect the relations between Russia and Tajikistan.

The structural-functional approach was needed due to the fact that in order to disclose the topic of the dissertation, it was necessary to analyze certain areas of Russian-Tajik cooperation and their impact on the general state of interaction between the two countries. These areas include cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan in the fields of energy, labor migration, countering drug trafficking and some others. From this point of view, the political and military-political spheres, as well as the military-technical sphere of cooperation between the two countries are very important.

³ Viner, J. (1950) The Customs Union Issue. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. N.Y., № 3.

The dissertation uses a synergistic approach. Applicant takes into account the emerging in science of a new interpretation of determinism, which directly affects the activities of people. Knyazeva E.N. and Kurdyumov S.P. write in this regard that «management begins to be based on the combination of human intervention with the essence of the internal tendencies of developing systems. Therefore, in a sense, a higher type of determinism appears here - determinism with an understanding of the ambiguity of the future and the possibility of reaching the desired future. This is determinism that enhances the role of man»⁴. Synergetics thus allows, based on a rethinking of causality as such, to more fully take into account the possibilities of people in their transformative activity, the degree of their freedom.

Any bilateral international relations are highly dependent on countries' national identities. The peculiarities of Tajikistan's geography, history, culture, and religion are very clearly manifested in its politics. This explains the use of the identity approach in the dissertation, the purpose of which is to study national identity. Using this approach, the dissertation examines the main characteristic features of Tajikistan's foreign policy identity.

Dissertation uses a variety of general scientific research methods, such as analysis, synthesis, analogy, comparison and others. Thus, the method of comparative analysis was necessary when studying foreign experience in harmonizing strategic goals and tactical actions in international relations. The method of analysis was used to study the essence and content of concepts used in the dissertation, such as harmony, adaptation, strategy, tactics and others. The analogy method turned out to be especially useful in the study of political science phenomena similar to phenomena in other sciences, which indicates the interdisciplinarity of the problem studied in the dissertation.

The method of case study was required to study two important problems in Russian-Tajik relations, namely, the energy problem, including the one associated

⁴ Knyazeva E.N., Kurdyumov S.P. Synergetic paradigm. Basic concepts in the context of the history of culture // Living ethics and science. 2008. No. 1. P. 379–443.

with the construction of the Rogun hydroelectric power station, and the problem of labor migration of Tajik citizens to Russia. Thanks to this method, it became possible to identify the individual characteristics of the situation around the Rogun HPP, to reveal its specifics. An analysis of the situation with labor migration also allowed a deeper understanding of the existing contradictions in its current status quo. The use of this method made it possible to propose several new strategic directions for the development of Russian-Tajik relations.

Quantitative research methods are widely used in the dissertation. The applicant believes that due to this, more objective conclusions can be obtained. Taking into account a fairly large array of economic information, various economic and statistical methods were used in the dissertation. As a result, the work makes many cross-country comparisons based on numerical data. In most cases, they are presented in the form of tables, which contributes to the clarity and visualization of the analyzed information. For the same purposes, the applicant included several figures in the text.

A number of techniques were used in the dissertation. Foresight methodology plays the most important role in the research. Its essence lies in the convergence of predicted events in the future with the active actions of stakeholders in the present. This is how the foresight technique differs from other forecasting methods. Not only science, but also science fiction writes about the transfer of all good things from the future to the present, for example, N.G. Chernyshevsky in the novel «What to do». But, unlike the fantasies of writers about the most attractive ideas, the foresight technique is purely scientific. It includes a variety of scientific methods, such as the Delphi method, trend projection, brainstorming and others, methods of enhancing the creativity of participants, methods of encouraging communication with each other, stimulating interactivity and methods of providing evidence of the results of foresight research.

In the dissertation, many different indices were used, which are methods for studying specific areas of foreign policy and economics. In particular, the Transit Index calculated by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was

applied, which is often used in the analysis of the economic situation in post-Soviet countries⁵. This Index consists of six indicators to measure development of a sustainable market economy, including its competitiveness, environmental friendliness, inclusiveness, quality of governance, resilience and integration. The stability of the economy is the most important parameter of strategic planning.

In the course of the study, a fairly wide range of other quantitative indices was used, which have already proven their theoretical and practical value. These are such indices as Democracy Index, National Brands Index, Global Soft Power Index, Elite Quality Index, Climate Vulnerability Index, Corruption Perceptions Index and Global Competitiveness Index. In addition, quantitative methods are partly applied in content analysis, which was also used in the dissertation when analyzing strategic planning documents of Russia and Tajikistan.

When analyzing the possibilities of Tajikistan's joining the Eurasian Economic Union, the prospects of this international organization were considered. For this, the methodology for assessing the effectiveness of the activities of international organizations at Oxford University was partially used⁶. It evaluates trends in the organization's budget, the desire of other countries of the world community to become its members, and a number of other indicators by which one can judge the success of its activities. In addition, the Ranking of foreign markets attractiveness developed by the experts of the Russian Export Center turned out to be very useful.

Provisions for Defense:

1. For the study of modern Russian-Tajik relations, a model of international relations can be proposed, in which included factors are harmonized with each other by the method of mutual adaptation. The theory of W. Hudson and B. Day about the factors influencing international relations is most suitable for determining the

⁵ EBRD Transition report 2019-20: better governance, better economies. London, 2019.

⁶ Lindoso V., Hall N. Assessing the effectiveness of multilateral organizations // Blavatnik School of Government, Working Paper (April 2016). URL: https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/files/documents/2016-04_Hall_Lindoso-Multilateral_Effectiveness.pdf.

elements included in the model. In accordance with it, all factors are divided into internal and external ones. In total, this system includes eight factors, the analysis of which makes it possible to fully reveal the patterns of the state and development of relations between countries. The group of internal factors includes geographic location, economic development, political system and socio-cultural characteristics, and the group of external factors includes international system structure, international organizations' activities, behavioral patterns of other states and external economic situation in the world.

2. To harmonize the strategy and tactics of the foreign policy of the state, it is most expedient to use the foresight methodology, which is a systematic, participatory process of collecting information about the future and forming a medium-term and long-term vision. This process is aimed at ensuring the adoption of current decisions and mobilization of joint actions. The purpose of foresight is not to predict the future, since it is not predetermined, but to create conditions for its formation.

3. The study of foreign experience in international relations has shown that the discrepancy between the strategic goals and tactical actions of countries is a serious problem. One of the priority directions for reducing this difference may be their harmonization. Harmonization can be done in various ways. Germany has an active information policy among its population to explain its actions in relation to the demographic problem, which causes many controversies in society. The European Union has established a Strategic Foresight Program. It is planned to issue annual Strategic Foresight reports, which will reflect the work on combining the strategic goals and tactical actions of the European Union into one whole. China has developed a strategy and tactics harmonization tool, the Five Compatibility Index, which is designed to ensure the effective development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

4. Consideration of bilateral international relations' theoretical foundations and foreign experience of their development, with an emphasis on the consistency of strategic goals and tactical actions, makes it possible to determine the

characteristic features of Tajikistan's foreign policy identity. The geographical position of the country plays a significant role in it, for example, its world leadership in water and energy potential. This explains such attention of Tajikistan to the construction of the Rogun hydroelectric power plant. In geopolitical terms, the importance of Tajikistan is great in connection with the neighboring Afghanistan, the situation in which remains tense and threatening the region and the world as a whole. Another characteristic feature of Tajikistan's national identity is the elite factor, the special position of the President of the country E. Rahmon as the Leader of the Nation.

5. The successes, problems and prospects of relations between Russia and Tajikistan are analyzed on the basis of the author's model for harmonizing the strategy and tactics of foreign policy. Success in the development of Russian-Tajik ties is most clearly manifested where tactical actions correspond to strategic goals. An example in this regard is Russian-Tajik military ties. Both sides are interested in long-term security in their countries and the Central Asian region. Therefore, with some problems arising from time to time, in general, military and military-political cooperation between the two countries meets modern requirements. Cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan in some areas of the cultural sphere can be characterized in the same way. However, strategic goals do not always coincide with tactical actions in a natural way; additional efforts of political actors from both Russia and Tajikistan are needed for their harmonious combination.

6. There are a number of problems in relations between Russia and Tajikistan. By the degree of problemat�city, it is necessary to distinguish between possible threats and challenges to the national security of Russia and Tajikistan. Drug trafficking, as a result of which thousands of Russians are killed, can be viewed as the greatest modern threat to Russia from Tajikistan. There is also a real terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan. The situation with drinking water is seen as a challenge, the lack of which in the world and at the same time the huge reserves of which in Tajikistan can turn it into a source of armed conflicts. In political terms, one can note the discrepancy between the foreign policy priorities of Russia and

Tajikistan. The fluctuations in relations between Russia and Uzbekistan have an excessively great influence on Russian-Tajik ties. In economic terms, weak development of Tajikistan's economy, as well as poverty of significant part of the country's population, negatively affects cooperation of two countries.

7. Prospects for the development of Russian-Tajik ties are associated with the successful mutual adaptation of foreign policy strategies and tactics as a result of creative solutions to current problems in relations between the two countries. Russia and Tajikistan should improve the effectiveness of their strategic planning systems. In matters of labor migration in Russia and Tajikistan, it is advisable to move from the formula «integration before migration» to the formula «circular migration». Such a transition is aimed at long term purposes and meets the national interests of both countries, and not one of them to the detriment of the other. In solving regional water and energy problems, it is necessary, based on the foresight method, to involve the most interested and competent parties in this process, while taking into account both subjective desires and objective circumstances that cannot be changed.

8. When considering the issues of Tajikistan's accession to the EAEU, all factors influencing such a decision should be fully taken into account. At present, when analyzing this problem, first of all, the static effects of the creation of a customs union are taken into account, which may not seem very beneficial for Tajikistan. However, this view, considering only the short-term perspective, seems short-sighted. It is also necessary to take into account the dynamic effects of integration, which are manifested in the long term and very significantly depend on the effectiveness of Tajikistan's interaction with the EAEU countries. They result while deploying projects using Tajikistan's competitive advantages. With this approach, the success of Tajikistan's involvement in the processes of Eurasian integration will most likely be achieved, but it is not guaranteed. Achieving it will require long-term, focused work on both sides.