

Measuring Unfriendliness and Remoteness: Dynamics of Geopolitical Processes in Eurasia

Arseniy N. Fartyshev¹ and Sergei V. Pisarenko²

Abstract

The official list of the "unfriendly countries" has appeared in the Russian political discourse since 2022, though dividing countries into friends and foes has deep roots, that come from traditional American geopolitical discourse. The authors view friendliness and unfriendliness of the geopolitical actors and their mutual distance as key characteristics of the geopolitical space. The study presents a renewed scale of friendliness and unfriendliness based on "Discord and collaboration" by A. Wolfers. Analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data, the empirical research includes using this multistep scale to evaluate countries friendliness and unfriendliness towards Russia in 2016 and 2024. Next, the method of multiscale distances is used to measure and graphically represents the connectedness and degree of geographical influence of the geopolitical subjects varying in friendliness and unfriendliness on Russia, Siberia (as a general geographic region) and the Siberian federal district. The research considers in mesolevel that is measured through economical distances (understood as the length of the existing transport lines) between nearest cities as actors of economical space. The research proves that due to its remoteness Siberia has a more beneficial location in comparison with Russia as a whole, because only friendly economic centers can be found within 2500 km from Siberia, unfriendly geopolitical actors moved even farther from it, whereas the friendliest actors (primarily Eurasian states) remained as close as in 2016 and became even friendlier towards Russia. The view of the geographical map through the prism of dynamic characteristic of graduating friendliness-unfriendliness and the multiscale analysis of remoteness of geopolitical subjects help us to understand geographical and geopolitical advantages and disadvantages of the Eurasian integration and the concept of the Greater Eurasia, its problems and threats. In case of Siberia the main characteristic of the current geopolitical position is the drifting of Mongolia and Kazakhstan as the most geographically close subjects from friendliness to the opposite, whereas other subjects in Central Asia rise to more friendly status as detected on the scale. Overall, the presented view on the geopolitical dimensions presents a new geographical picture of position Russia and Siberia in Eurasia.

Keywords: quantitative geopolitics, Russia, Siberia, economical distances, Wolfers, unfriendliness, Eurasia, sanction policy, economic distance

¹ Head of Laboratory of Natural Resources and Political Geography, V. B. Sochava Institute of Geography SB RAS, Irkutsk. Russian Federation. Associate Professor, Irkutsk State University, Irkutsk. Russian Federation.

² Research Fellow, Laboratory of Natural Resources and Political Geography, V. B. Sochava Institute of Geography SB RAS, Irkutsk. Russian Federation. Associate Professor, Pushkin Leningrad State University, Pushkin, Russian Federation.

Introduction

Traditionally, geopolitics is concerned primarily with the global and the national level (Okunev 2021), and the role of subnational units - regions - is somewhat reduced due to their smaller role in foreign policy. The methodology of regional geopolitics is most fully presented in the works of P.Ya. Baklanov on the territory of the Far East (Pacific Russia) (Baklanov, Shvedov, and Romanov 2023). Probably, the interest in this topic specifically in the Far East is associated with the significant vulnerability of this territory and constant geopolitical shifts in the external environment. Siberia, despite its remoteness from most world powers in modern times, is also an important part of Russia, the geopolitical position of which has significant dynamics. This is manifested in the changing positioning of neighboring Mongolia on the world stage, the foreign policy drift of Kazakhstan and, of course, in the Ukrainian crisis, which pushed Russia to accelerate its “turn to the east.” In view of these transformations, the importance of geopolitical research is increasing.

Another factor that has influenced the revision of geopolitical studies is the creation of "lists", "axes" and "registers" of unfriendly countries. Such lists are rarely based on clear and objective criteria, but some efforts to formulate them can be noted (for example, Safranchuk, Nesmashnyi, and Chernov 2023 is noteworthy in this regard). One way or another, subjects of varying degrees of unfriendliness have different geographical influence on Russia. Siberia also occupies a special place, being, like the Far East, the most remote territory from the theater of Russian-Western confrontation, but the question arises how significant this fact is. The purpose of this work is to identify the geographical characteristics of subjects of varying degrees of unfriendliness that affect Russia and Siberia in particular.

Review

Attempts to create a scale of friendliness and hostility have been made in the academic literature for quite a long time, but researchers have used different terms and variables for this topic. Back in 1941, a study by F. Klingberg was published, in which tension was considered as a “psychological distance” separating two states, the value of which can be measured within the framework of the “friendliness - hostility” scale (Klingberg 1941).

In 1955, a model for measuring interstate tension as a dynamic state located in a multidimensional space between the poles of stability and conflict was presented (Wright 1955). Earlier, in thinking about whether tension could be assessed or measured, Wright started from the use of this term in the physical sciences and its reflections in sociological and psychological research. An approach to measuring

tensions, based on the assumption that in formulating foreign policy it is important to understand the perceptions of reality, images, stereotypes and definitions of the situation by decision makers, rather than the objective conditions existing in the world, was later proposed by K. J. Holsti 1963. The greatest attention when turning to the analysis of tension, as a rule, was attracted by the problem of identifying the main causes and factors causing it (Leifer 1974). These included perceptual variables such as threat perceptions, assessments of abilities, intentions, attitudes and overt behavior (O. R. Holsti 1962). As a result of all these efforts, the concept of tension gradually began to acquire greater definition and substantive rigor. In accordance with the classical interpretation of K. Holsti, it has come to be understood as a set of attitudes and tendencies, such as distrust and suspicion, that the public and politicians experience towards others (K. J. Holsti 1963).

In mathematical models used in political science, the political attitude is represented as a certain constant that is specified by the researcher. In the model of L.F. Richardson, known as the arms race model, identifies “the magnitude of past grievances” as such a variable (Richardson 1960). This variable can be either a positive or a negative number, but one way or another it was perceived as a constant. Richardson's followers were engaged in a detailed description of the exact definition of this parameter.

The most well-known scale in the positive direction (that is, the scale of friendliness) is probably the concept of B. Balassa about the stages of integration processes (Balassa 1961). Complex integration processes have a branched structure, but it has been revealed that economic integration has certain stages: a preferential trade zone, a free trade zone, a customs union, a common market, an economic union. At the same time, currency unions remain somewhat on the sidelines, since they are created for various reasons (this can occur both from integration processes and due to currency protectorate or post-colonial ties) (Okunev 2021). A similar gradation can be seen in the military-political sphere: a non-aggression treaty, an agreement on cooperation in the military-technical sphere, joint military exercises, a joint defense agreement, a unified military command. In the context of the friendliness of states, these processes overlap each other, forming different levels of friendliness of states.

To summarize, we derive the parameter of “political attitude” as a measure of the positivity or negativity of connections between geopolitical subjects, which is similar to Richardson’s “magnitude of past grievances”, since it generally reflects the assessment of one subject by another on the “friendliness-hostility” scale. It is this factor that introduces a geopolitical aspect into political-geographical analytics. At the state level, A. Wolfers, in his essay “Discord and collaboration”, presented certain

and clear criteria for political subjects, divided into categories, ranked on a “hostility-friendliness” scale. He identified the following categories:

- Irreconcilable hostility (state of war)
- Showing hostility
- Termination of friendly relations
- Minimum relationships
- Cool or non-aligned relations
- Active internal cooperation
- External cooperation
- Extreme expression of friendship (Wolfers 1962)

The Wolfers scale emphasized military power, but in subsequent decades there was a tendency to reevaluate the importance of military and economic factors in shaping foreign policy in favor of the latter. In our earlier works, the Wolfers scale was modernized and the exact criteria for the onset of one or another stage of manifestation of friendliness or hostility were identified (Fartyshev 2018). It is the basis for this work.

Data and Methodology

Within the framework of the task, two successive stages are distinguished: distribution of geopolitical subjects according to the degree of friendliness-hostility and assessment of the remoteness of subjects of varying degrees of distance from Russia (Fartyshev 2017). The sample includes Asian countries (excluding Southeast Asia and the Arabian Peninsula), the most significant and close countries of Europe and the USA. In earlier works, a typology of political attitude was proposed based on a linear scale of “friendliness-hostility”, which presents clear criteria for stages of the parameter PA (political attitude), starting from $PA = 0$, as minimal relations, both in the direction of friendliness and in the direction of hostility, and being divided into 9 stages (Fartyshev 2018). The assignment of one or another degree of gradation is based on the criteria reflected in Table 1. In case of duality of assessment, the prevalent criterion is considered to be the one that is more up-to-date (for example, the expulsion of diplomats as the latest fact of a change in the type of political relationship), or stronger (for example, the fact of regularly held military exercises between Russia and Mongolia is more significant than the negative factor of the negative connotation of news about Russia in the Mongolian media).

Table 1: Typology of political relations between geopolitical subjects

Type	Sub-type	Attribute
Union ($PA=+3$)	3.3 Unity	Common governmental structures
	3.2 Trust	No border control, common currency
	3.1 Cohesion	Military alliance, joint defense treaty
Cooperation ($PA=+2$)	2.3 Friendship	Customs union
	2.2 Mutual benefit	Special conditions for trade agreements
	2.1 Partnership	Joint military training
Warm neutrality ($PA=+1$)	1.3 Consent	Support in voting on UN resolutions
	1.2 Sympathy	Positive connotations of news about the country in the media
	1.1 Communication	Existence of trade relations without special conditions
Minimal relations ($PA=0$)		Small volumes of trade, political and cultural connections
Cold neutrality ($PA=-1$)	-1.1 Caution	Strengthened visa regime, tougher customs duties
	-1.2 Rejection	Negative connotations of news about the country in the media
	-1.3 Disagreement	Protest voting on UN resolutions
Competition ($PA=-2$)	-2.1 Rivalry	Territorial disputes are in the active stage of discussion
	-2.2. Opposition	Embargo/sectoral sanctions
	-2.3 Disgust	Diplomatic wars (cases of expulsion of diplomats)
Hostility ($PA=-3$)	-3.1 Remission	A war in a frozen state
	-3.2 Escalation	Local war
	-3.3 Destruction	Total war

To assign one or another degree of friendliness, current data on UN voting on resolutions, data on military exercises, data on international treaties on the degree of

economic integration, data on the political coloring of messages in the leading media of the relevant countries (the sample included 100 publications in each country), data on cases of expulsion of diplomats and other relevant data were analyzed.

Geographical analysis is based, first of all, on measuring the distance of certain entities from each other. In classical geopolitical studies, the principle of neighborhood order is used (Baklanov, Shvedov, and Romanov 2023), however, we believe that this approach is incorrect due to the underestimation of the extent of space, therefore the influence of subjects is evaluated through the economic distance between the nearest demographic and economic centers, reflecting the possibilities of direct cooperation between countries.

Economic distance (in other terminology “relative distance”) refers to the distance along existing communication routes (roads, railways, sea routes) (Bezrukov 2023). It can be measured in length, time or prices. This is important from the point of view of the immediate possibility of contact between two geopolitical entities for the exchange of goods. The comparison of economic distances was carried out on the basis of border checkpoints operating on highways as of March 1, 2024. In a number of cases, sea distances are taken through currently existing sea connections (for example, transport connections with Syria are actually carried out along the Novorossiysk-Latakia sea line, and connections with India are through the ports of Calcutta-Vladivostok and Nhava Sheva-Novorossiysk, and not by land transport).

For comparative analysis, two dates were taken: 2016 as the year preceding the period of global turbulence and pandemic transport restrictions, and the current year 2024.

Besides, the perception of the borders of Siberia should be clarified. During the period under review, the Siberian Federal District was reshaped after the resubordination of the Republic of Buryatia and the Zabaikalsky krai to the Far Eastern Federal District, however, following the academic traditions of V. B. Sochava Institute of Geography SB RAS, the territorial framework of Siberia in the general geographical sense should include the Tyumen region with its districts and the Republic of Sakha-Yakutia (Korytny 2021). From the point of view of modern approaches in regional studies, the region does not have clearly defined boundaries at all, since the level of regional cohesion (regional consolidation) is of greatest importance (Hettne 2005).

Results

The origin of the concept of unfriendly countries

In itself, the division into friendly and unfriendly countries is fundamental for political theory, since the theory of the emergence of statehood according to K. Schmitt is built around the dichotomy of friend or foe. The proclamation and institutionalization of “other” communities or subjects allows us to see more clearly what “we” are, where the border between “them” and “us” lies, and what exactly serves as this border (Kharkevich 2009). In the period of antiquity, states on the political map of the world, according to this demarcation, were divided into the “civilized world” and “barbarians”, during the Middle Ages - into Christian states and infidels, in modern times and especially aggravated during the Cold War - “democratic” and “authoritarian” states. In 1959, US President D. Eisenhower signed a joint declaration with Congress recognizing the “Captive Nations Week” and issued a proclamation, which subsequent US presidents reissued every year. In the same year, Public Law No. 86-90 (07/17/1959) was adopted, under which it was impossible to peacefully exist with a communist society, and Russian communism (in fact, the USSR) was declared a serious threat to the national security of the United States and the whole world. The law designates the countries (Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Belarus, East Germany, Bulgaria, mainland China, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Albania, Idel-Ural, Tibet, Kozakia, Turkestan, etc.) in need of support of their desire for freedom and independence from the USSR.

The report of the US National Security Council No. NSK 5811/1 dated May 24, 1958 provides an overview of the geopolitical relationship of Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Bulgaria to the United States, and formulates short-, medium- and long-term goals reflecting the declared principles of the proclamation. At the same time, guidelines were drawn up for the introduction of US foreign policy towards Eastern Europe and the following measures were prescribed (some are classified to this day): nurturing nationalist pride and aspirations among people and within the leadership of the regime, publishing evidence of violations of the human rights of citizens of the republics by the USSR, etc. This document provides specific guidance on policy towards the Baltic countries. It seems that such proclamations should be considered an official designation of the geography of US geostrategic interests, which have not changed since the end of the Cold War.

In the late 1980s – early 1990s, the term “rogue states” arose in the discourse, characteristic of US international policy, as a similar manifestation of the “alien” in

foreign policy to replace the collapsed USSR (Kharkevich 2009). US President George W. Bush, speaking before Congress on January 29, 2002, introduced the term “axis of evil” into international circulation, referring to countries that allegedly support terrorism and develop weapons of mass destruction. The first list included Iraq, Iran and North Korea; in 2005, Condoleezza Rice and her deputy John Bolton included Libya, Syria, Cuba, Belarus, Zimbabwe and Myanmar in the “axis of evil”.

In 2022 the Government of the Russian Federation published the “List of Unfriendly Countries and Territories” (Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 5, 2022 No. 430-r), thus institutionalizing one of the main components of the geopolitical position - the political relationship between countries, expressed on the scale of “friendliness-hostility”. The list as of March 1, 2024 includes: Australia, Albania, Andorra, Great Britain, including Jersey, Anguilla, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Gibraltar, member states of the European Union, Iceland, Canada, Liechtenstein, Micronesia, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, San Marino, North Macedonia, Singapore, USA, Taiwan (China), Ukraine, Montenegro, Switzerland, Japan, as well as dependent territories of Great Britain. This list was originally created from the point of view of the so-called “sanctions policy” (Timofeev 2023), but in reality it has had an impact on many more areas than just economic measures. When referring to this list, the following important aspects should be emphasized:

- The selection of “aliens” was done quite clearly (although the above-mentioned decree is constantly being supplemented), whereas the selection of entities that are friendly is a more debatable topic. Although a number of legislative acts (for example, Federal Law No. 630-FZ dated December 25, 2023 “On Amendments to the Law of the Russian Federation “On Customs Tariffs” and the Federal Law “On the Fundamentals of State Regulation of Foreign Trade Activities”) introduce such a definition, there is no list of friendly countries.

- The register of states itself is discrete and does not imply gradation, which is a significant simplification of current reality. In terms of research, it is more accurate to talk about levels or degrees of gradation, which will be discussed in more detail below.

- The list contains polities that do not take direct unfriendly actions towards Russia, for example, the British dependent territories, such as the Pitcairn Islands, were included in the list in order to comply with the sanctions regime on all territories that have any form of dependence from the metropolis, but, at the same time, unincorporated dependent territories of the Netherlands, such as the island of Aruba and Curacao, on the contrary, were not included. Such an approach is inconsistent and gives rise to misinterpretations of the list.

Thus, lists of unfriendly countries are a traditional form of fencing, hanging a “label” or a “black mark” and highlighting the “alien” in a multidimensional political space, but from a research point of view it seems more relevant to speak about various levels of political relations of geopolitical subjects.

Assessment of the level of political attitude

During the period under study, significant changes occurred in the political attitudes of countries. In 2016 the vast majority of European countries were subject to Russia’s economic and political sanctions. After the announcement of a “special military operation” in 2022, hostility intensified with the expulsion of diplomats (which in the previous period happened only in the case of Great Britain, Sweden, Poland and the Ukraine), which means a transition from the stage of “opposition” to “disgust”. The most radical geopolitical subject in attitude towards Russia is the Ukraine, the degree of hostility with which in 2024 can be assessed as “escalation” (although in the political discourse of both Russia and Ukraine in a number of cases the “destruction of statehood” is mentioned). Relations with China have not developed, and Russia and the PRC have not advanced along the path of integration, although every year the parties conduct joint Maritime Cooperation exercises in the Sea of Japan, which allows one to evaluate relations as “partnership” with the prospect of moving to higher degrees of friendliness (Lukin 2021).

Relations between Russia and the DPRK over the past period remain uncertain. North Korea is one of the few countries that recognized the annexation of new regions by Russia. In September 2023 the leader of the DPRK visited Russia and negotiations were held at the highest level, in July the Russian Minister of Defense visited the DPRK, where the issue of joint military trainings was discussed among other things. However, the political attitude is not symmetrical, since Russia holds strict sanctions against the DPRK, introduced by the UN.

Russia's warmest relations are observed in Central Asia, where the CSTO military alliance prevails as the highest stage of friendship, with high stability, assessed as “cohesion” Relations with the countries of South Asia are characterized primarily by joint military exercises, which are held regularly. In the case of India, these have been carried out since 2005, with Pakistan - since 2014, and with Iran - since 2019. Since 2023, Iran has entered into a free trade zone with the EAEU, which further increases its degree of friendliness. Relations with Nepal and Bhutan can be characterized as minimal relationship.

The remaining assessments of countries according to the scale are more specific. The final distribution of countries by degree of political attitude is presented in Fig. 1.

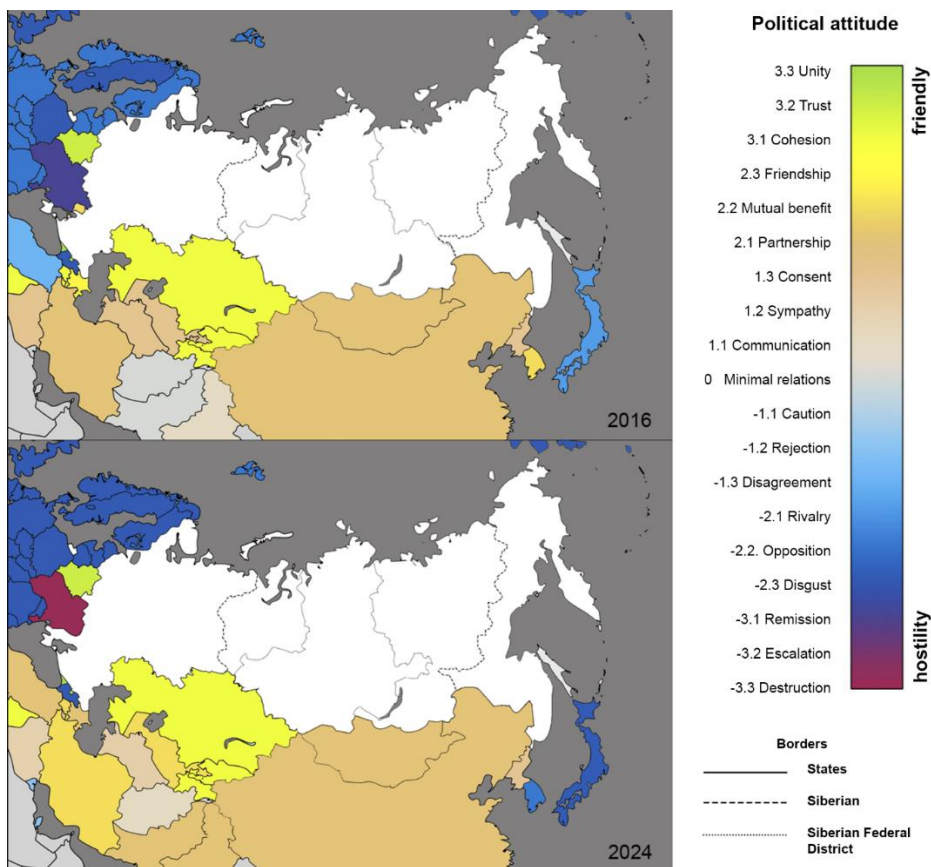


Figure 1: Political attitude of the countries of the world towards Russia.

The following trends are visible from the presented maps:

- Over the past period, there has been an increase in unfriendliness both on the eastern and the western “flank” of Russia that were already unfriendly in the previous period (from the degree of competition to hostility). For Siberia, these subjects have a more distant position, but they are of more critical importance for Russia as a whole.

- The friendliness of countries within the Eurasian space to the south of Russia has increased, it is strengthening slowly and gradually, from neutrality towards cooperation. For Siberia, these are the closest subjects, which increases the geopolitical significance of this macro-region.

- The presented maps show the inconsistency of the judgment about the political isolation of Russia and, taking into account a number of assumptions, clearly shows the implementation of the concept of the so-called “Greater Eurasia”, implying the political consolidation of the intra-Eurasian space (Bezrukov 2018; Fartyshhev 2021).

Analysis of the degree of remoteness of geopolitical subjects

The results provide grounds for a geopolitical assessment of the proximity and distance of countries with various political attitudes and depending on the level of their significance in world politics. The classification of power levels is taken from the another study (Nesmachnyi, Zhornist, and Safranchuk 2022). Distance diagrams are presented for this assessment (Fig. 2).

An analysis of the remoteness of political entities showed the main trend that occurred during the period under review: unfriendly entities moved away from the territory of Russia due to the closure of the border between Russia and the Ukraine, and the closure of all checkpoints on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. The greatest increase in distance is observed with Moldova, which, despite the fact that geographically it is a second-order neighbor, now has land connection with Russia only through three countries - Ukraine, Poland, Belarus. The closure of most border points in Finland has led to an increase in the economic distance by land between the nearest economic centers; whereas the maritime connectivity of the states remains. As for the macroscale, there have been no fundamental changes, but when considering the distances between political centers along aviation routes, taking into account the emergence of no-fly zones and closed airspaces, the greatest changes have affected almost all European countries, where the connection with Russia is only possible through third countries (for example, through Turkey).

These processes have less impact on Siberia and the Siberian Federal District, since they are located at a considerable distance and, according to the law of diminishing returns, the increase in high mileage is less significant. In the 2500-km distance zone, Siberia has exclusively friendly entities, which makes its geopolitical position extremely advantageous, while they remained at the same distance as they were in 2016, since during the period under review there was no increase in connectivity as border points (the only new border checkpoint was opened on the Russian-Chinese border in the area of the village of Nizhneleninskoye, Jewish Autonomous Region), no new direct transport routes connecting economic centers, no transfers of political centers occurred, and the closest entities that were previously unfriendly (among them) did not become friendly. Only Turkey can be noted, and the growing

friendliness of Pakistan and India is offset by the excessive remoteness of these countries.

The overland remoteness of Siberia is, of course, an economic problem for itself, since transport costs by land are significantly higher than by sea (Bezrukov 2008), however, from a geopolitical point of view, Siberia seems to be the most favorable territory for future internal economic and internal political development. But, of course, this is only one of the factors.

Discussion

Today we can observe a significant civilizational movement, when Russia is increasingly moving away from the “Western countries”; against this background, a new interest in Eurasianist ideas has arisen (Druzhinin 2021), as well as the ideas of the “Siberianization” of the country (Karaganov 2024). As the results of our analysis show, Siberia has an advantageous geopolitical position due to its proximity to friendly countries, therefore Siberia becomes a platform for ensuring the internal economic stability of a country under siege by the Western thalassocratic bloc. The failure to finish creating the third industrial base with the center in East Siberia led to the lack of industrial development of the vast territories beyond the Yenisei, the focus not on creating full-cycle production chains, but on the export of resources without a high degree of processing, the problems of developing transport and logistics capacities along the transit type along the Asia-Europe route. This negative feature of spatial development in the post-Soviet stage is clear now, when the military and strategically important industry of the country is primarily situated in the European part of Russia, in the proximity of the theater of military operations.

At the same time, it is important to understand that political attitudes are extremely dynamic and depend mainly on government decisions and internal political events, which is why the presented structure is flexible. For example, the change of power in Argentina in 2023 turned the state’s policy almost 180 degrees from the desire to join BRICS towards increased foreign policy dependence on the United States and the “dollarization” of the country. The same processes could be observed during the periods of “color revolutions” of the 1990s-2010s. There are still countries in close proximity to both Russia and Siberia that have the potential for a sharp change in foreign policy course through a revolutionary path, for example, in Kazakhstan, or an evolutionary path, for example, in Mongolia. These two neighboring countries are located at the very core of the continent, and the dynamics of consolidation in the Eurasian space depend on the policies of these countries. In many ways, the project of Greater Eurasia will depend on Russia’s policy towards these two countries,

which, translated into the language of geopolitical analysis, implies increased friendliness on the scale we presented above.

On the other hand, geographical images and stereotypes are incredibly inertial (Kolosov 2003), which is embedded in the political culture and behavioral patterns of both the population and the elites of a particular country. The construction of the image of “enemy” or “friend”, “significant other”, “center” and “periphery”, etc. occurs through human communication, mass propaganda, art, etc. These images, based on collective identity, remain unchanged for a long time, which depends on the speed of information dissemination, the degree of ingrained ideas, consistency with the picture of the world, which reflects the process of diffusion of innovations. How to influence this image of one’s country in the event of a transition of one or another state to a hostile state is a question of the design of social behavior. For the studied time period 2016-2024 there was no overall critical change in the political attitude of these countries towards Russia, although for the purposes of national interests, the increase in friendliness of continental states should be at least symmetrical to the deterioration of sentiment in the countries of the Western bloc. At the moment, such a symmetrical process is not happening.

In order to increase the relative proximity of states, it is necessary to develop intracontinental highways. For example, India, being a generally friendly state towards Russia, remains an extremely distant country, since communication with it is carried out not by land routes, but almost exclusively through seaports. But the main limiting factor of meridional distribution is the belt of political instability on the border of South Asia with East and Central Asia (Bezrukov 2008).

Conclusion

The division into unfriendly and friendly countries has a long historical tradition. The modern “list of unfriendly countries” published by the Russian Foreign Ministry is, from the economic side, a manifestation of the “policy of sanctions”, but from the political side it is the successor to the American geopolitical tradition of identifying “rogue countries” or “captive nations”.

Analysis using the grading of geopolitical subjects on a scale of “friendliness-hostility” shows the exact characteristics of the political attitude of countries. The following changes were recorded for 2016-2024: increased hostility of European countries, increased friendliness of the countries of Central and South Asia, static relations with China, North Korea and Mongolia, and increased friendliness with Turkey. The geopolitical situation requires constant monitoring due to the dynamism recorded in this work.

The trends in geographic remoteness, which are only briefly reflected in this article, indicate many side effects of political decisions to change the status of border crossings or airspace. At the same time, economic distances shows the real difference in the distance of countries much more accurately than dividing countries according to an ordinal principle and should be used as a basis for geopolitical analysis. A tendency has been revealed that Siberia, in its general geographical understanding, has an advantageous geopolitical position due to its remoteness of more than 2500 km from hostile entities, however, economically this is a disadvantage due to the long transport distance and high transport costs.

Acknowledgements

Research funded by Russian Science Foundation № 23-77-10048,
<https://rscf.ru/project/23-77-10048/>

References

- Baklanov, P. Ya., V. G. Shvedov, and M. T. Romanov. 2023. "Pacific Vector in the Spatial Development of Russia and USA: Main Frontiers and Stages." *Proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society* 153 (3): 3–16. doi:10.31857/S0869607121030022.
- Balassa, Bela. 1961. *The Theory of Economic Integration*. London: Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Bezrukov, L. A. 2018. "The Geographical Implications of the Creation of 'Greater Eurasia.'" *Geography and Natural Resources* 39 (4): 287–95. doi:10.1134/S1875372818040017/METRICS.
- Bezrukov, L. A. 2023. "Continental–Oceanic Dynamics of Russia at the Beginning of the 21st Century." *Geography and Natural Resources* 44 (2): 91–98. doi:10.1134/S1875372823020038.
- Bezrukov, L.A. 2008. *Continental-Oceanic Dichotomy in International and Regional Development*. Edited by Ishmuratov B.M. Novosibirsk: Geo.
- Druzhinin, A. G. 2021. *Ideas of Classical Eurasianism and Modern: Human-Geographical Analysis*. Rostov-on-Don: South Federal University.
- Fartyshev, A. N. 2017. "Geopolitical and Geoeconomical Position of Siberia: Modelling and Estimation." *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Earth Sciences* 62 (3): 300–310. doi:10.21638/11701/spbu07.2017.306.
- Fartyshev, A. N. 2021. "Siberia in Conception of Greater Eurasia." *The Bulletin of Irkutsk State University. Series Political Science and Religion Studies* 37: 40–49. doi:10.26516/2073-3380.2021.37.40.
- Fartyshev, A.N. 2018. "Assessment of Political Relations of Geopolitical Subjects in the Modern World Using A.Wolfers' 'Friend-Foe' Scale." *World Politics* 4 (4): 21–33. doi:10.25136/2409-8671.2018.4.26652.
- Hettne, Björn. 2005. "Beyond the 'new' Regionalism." *New Political Economy* 10 (4): 543–71. doi:10.1080/13563460500344484/ASSET//CMS/ASSET/AB1611AE-334C-496F-B2F3-08B2E0E8CAF7/13563460500344484.FP.PNG.
- Holsti, K. J. 1963. "The Use of Objective Criteria for the Measurement of International Tension Levels." *Background* 7 (2): 77–95. doi:10.2307/3013638.
- Holsti, Ole R. 1962. "The Belief System and National Images: A Case Study." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 6 (3): 244–52.

doi:10.1177/002200276200600306/ASSET/002200276200600306.FP.PNG_V03.

Karaganov, Sergei A. 2024. "An Age of Wars? Article Two. What Is to Be Done." *Russia in Global Affairs* 22 (2): 96–111. doi:10.31278/1810-6374-2024-22-2-96-111.

Kharkevich, M.V. 2009. "Rogue-States as Images of the 'Other' in World Politics." *Polis. Political Studies* 4: 99–110.

Klingberg, Frank L. 1941. "Studies in Measurement of the Relations among Sovereign States." *Psychometrika* 6 (6): 335–52. doi:10.1007/BF02288590/METRICS.

Kolosov, V. A., ed. 2003. *The World by Eyes of Russians: Myths and Foreign Policy*. Moscow: Public Opinion Foundation.

Korytny, L. M. 2021. "Northeast Asia: Delimitation Preconditions, Composition, Boundaries." *Izvestiya Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk. Seriya Geograficheskaya* 85 (1): 14–23. doi:10.31857/S258755662101009X.

Leifer, Michael. 1974. *The Foreign Relations of the New States*. Longman Australia.

Lukin, Artyom. 2021. "The Russia–China Entente and Its Future." *International Politics* 58 (3): 363–80. doi:10.1057/S41311-020-00251-7/METRICS.

Nesmachnyi, A. D., V. M. Zhornist, and I. A. Safranchuk. 2022. "International Hierarchy and Functional Differentiation of States: Results of an Expert Survey." *MGIMO Review of International Relations* 15 (3): 7–38. doi:10.24833/2071-8160-2022-OLF2.

Okunev, Igor. 2021. *Political Geography*. Bruxelles: Peter Lang B. doi:10.3726/b17747.

Richardson, Lewis F. 1960. *Arms and Insecurity: A Mathematical Study of the Causes And Origins of War*. Pittsburgh: Boxwood.

Safranchuk, Ivan A., Alexander D. Nesmachnyi, and Daniil N. Chernov. 2023. "Africa and the Ukraine Crisis: Exploring Attitudes." *Russia in Global Affairs* 21 (3). Foreign Policy Research Foundation: 159–80. doi:10.31278/1810-6374-2023-21-3-159-180.

Timofeev, I. N. 2023. "Policy of Sanctions in a Changing World: Theoretical Reflection." *Polis. Political Studies* 2 (2): 103–19. doi:10.17976/JPPS/2023.02.08.

Wolfers, Arnold. 1962. *Discord and Collaboration. Essays on International Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Wright, Quincy. 1955. "The Peaceful Adjustment of International Relations: Problems and Research Approaches." *Journal of Social Issues* 11 (1): 3–12. doi:10.1111/J.1540-4560.1955.TB00300.X.

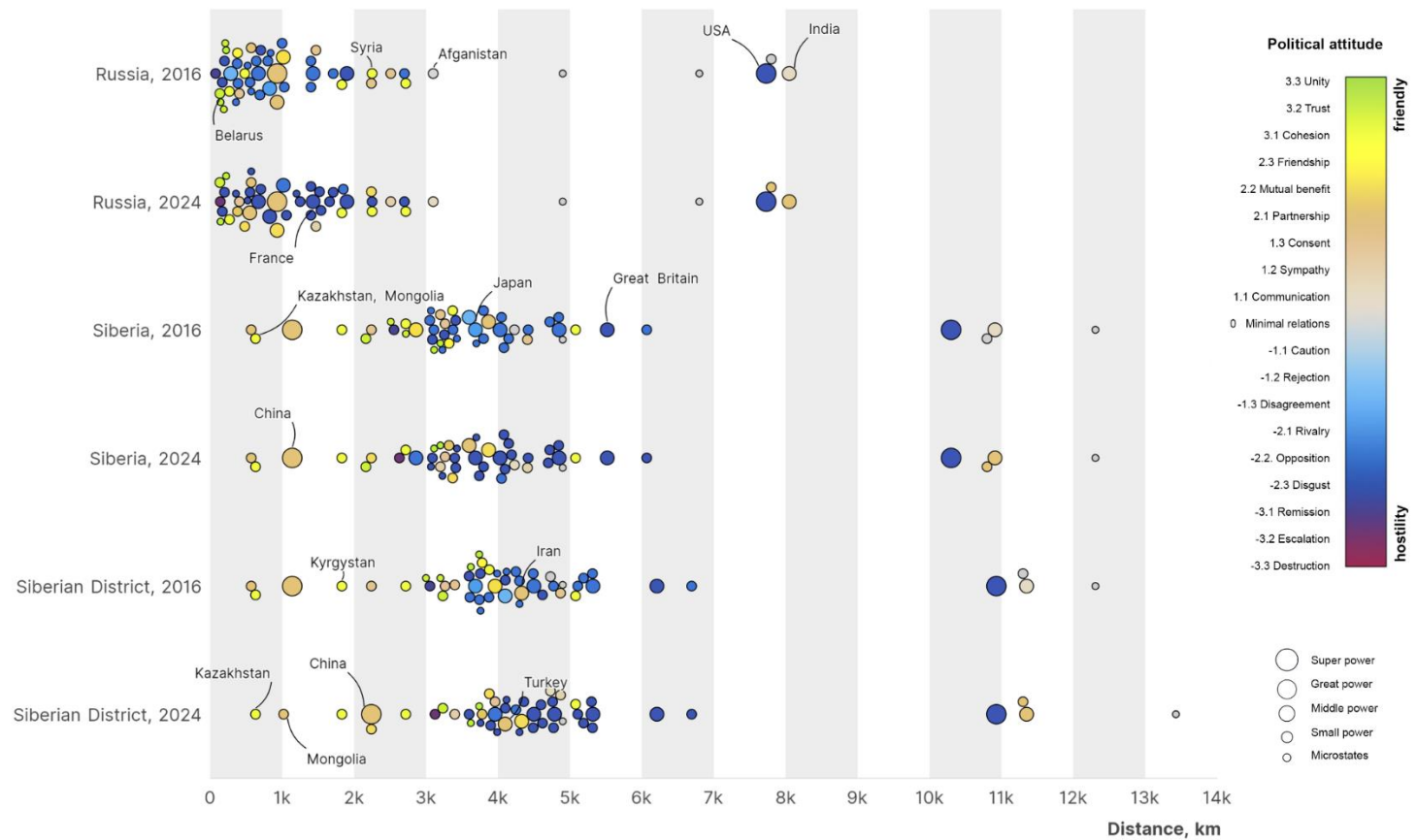


Figure 2: Diagram of the distance between subjects of varying degrees of friendliness and hostility towards Russia, Siberia and the Siberian Federal District