

aleksandr dugin foundations of geopolitics 1

aleksandr dugin foundations of geopolitics 1 serves as a pivotal text in understanding contemporary Eurasianist thought and its profound influence on geopolitical discourse, particularly in Russia. This foundational work, penned by Aleksandr Dugin, offers a starkly contrarian worldview to Western liberal internationalism, advocating for a multipolar world order centered on distinct civilizational blocs. This article will delve into the core tenets of Dugin's philosophy as presented in *Foundations of Geopolitics*, exploring its historical context, key theoretical concepts, and its controversial implications for global strategy. We will examine Dugin's critique of Atlanticism, his concept of the "Land Power" versus "Sea Power," and his vision for Russia's geopolitical destiny. Understanding these foundational elements is crucial for anyone seeking to grasp the intellectual underpinnings of certain foreign policy orientations and the enduring debates surrounding global power dynamics.

- Introduction to Aleksandr Dugin and *Foundations of Geopolitics*
- The Core Ideological Framework
- Critique of Atlanticism and Western Liberalism
- The Eurasian Land Empire vs. The Thalassocratic West
- Dugin's Geopolitical Vision for Russia
- The Strategic Implications and Controversies

The Core Ideological Framework of Dugin's Geopolitics

Aleksandr Dugin's *Foundations of Geopolitics* is built upon a rejection of universalist ideologies, particularly those emanating from the West. Dugin argues that history is not a linear progression towards a liberal democratic utopia, but rather a perpetual struggle between distinct civilizational paradigms. He posits that each civilization possesses its own unique cultural, religious, and political essence, which he terms "Dasein." This essential identity shapes a civilization's worldview and its geopolitical ambitions. The book's central thesis is that the modern world is characterized by an existential conflict between two fundamental civilizational types: the Atlanticist, which he associates with the United States, NATO, and liberal democracy, and the Eurasian, which he identifies with Russia and its historical sphere of influence.

Dugin's philosophical underpinnings draw heavily from thinkers like Carl Schmitt, Oswald Spengler, and

Julius Evola. He embraces a concept of geopolitics that is not merely about the division of territory but about the clash of fundamental ideologies and ways of life. The "Law of the Great Space," or "Lebensraum" in its German equivalent, is a recurring theme, suggesting that civilizations naturally seek to expand their influence and secure their existential survival within vast geographical domains. This expansion is not necessarily aggressive in a purely military sense, but rather a manifestation of an inherent civilizational imperative to assert its worldview and protect its distinct identity from perceived external threats.

The Role of Ideology in Geopolitical Struggle

For Dugin, ideology is not a secondary consideration but the primary driver of geopolitical action. He contends that Western liberalism, with its emphasis on individualism, free markets, and universal human rights, is not a neutral ideology but a project aimed at imposing a singular, homogenous global order. This, in his view, represents an existential threat to the diverse civilizational identities of the world, particularly those rooted in traditional values and collective identities. The Eurasian project, conversely, is presented as a bulwark against this perceived Western hegemony, a defense of cultural particularism and multipolarity.

The concept of "end of history," famously articulated by Francis Fukuyama, is vehemently rejected by Dugin. He sees it not as an endpoint but as a deceptive lull before a renewed struggle for civilizational dominance. The collapse of the Soviet Union, rather than signaling the triumph of the West, is interpreted by Dugin as an opportunity for Russia to reassert its Eurasian identity and forge a new geopolitical destiny, free from the constraints of both communism and Western liberalism. This ideological battleground, he argues, is where the true geopolitical contests of the 21st century will be fought and won.

Critique of Atlanticism and Western Liberalism

A central pillar of Foundations of Geopolitics is its trenchant critique of what Dugin terms "Atlanticism." This encompasses not only the geopolitical alliance of NATO but also the underlying liberal ideology that underpins Western foreign policy. Dugin views Atlanticism as a cohesive, expansionist force driven by a desire to project its values and economic system globally, ultimately seeking to homogenize diverse cultures into a single, Western-dominated paradigm. He argues that this project is inherently destabilizing, as it seeks to dismantle traditional structures, erode national sovereignty, and impose a superficial universalism that ignores the deep-seated particularities of different civilizations.

The liberal democratic order, according to Dugin, is characterized by a superficial concern for individual rights that ultimately serves to weaken the collective identity and spiritual cohesion of nations. He critiques the emphasis on consumerism, secularism, and multiculturalism as divisive forces that undermine the traditional foundations of societies. This, in his analysis, leaves nations vulnerable to external influence and internal fragmentation. The "American model" is singled out as the prime embodiment of this Atlanticist

project, a global superpower that actively seeks to undermine any emerging centers of power that do not conform to its ideological dictates.

The Concept of "Sea Power" vs. "Land Power"

Dugin revitalizes the classical geopolitical dichotomy of "Land Power" versus "Sea Power" as a framework for understanding the historical and ongoing global struggle. He associates "Sea Power" with the West, particularly Great Britain and later the United States, characterized by its outward-looking, maritime orientation, emphasis on trade, liberalism, and fluid, decentralized power structures. Sea powers, in his view, are inherently expansionist, seeking to control global trade routes and impose their will through naval dominance and economic influence. They favor a world of fragmented states, easily influenced and controlled.

In stark contrast, "Land Power" is embodied by continental empires, with Russia serving as the quintessential example. Land powers, according to Dugin, are characterized by their focus on territorial integrity, strong centralized authority, traditional values, and a more inward-looking, spiritual, or ideological orientation. They seek to create vast, self-sufficient geopolitical spaces that are resistant to external influence. The Eurasian landmass, with its vast resources and diverse populations, is seen as the natural bastion of Land Power, destined to challenge the dominion of Sea Power and usher in a multipolar world. This conceptualization forms the bedrock of his geopolitical strategy.

Dugin's Geopolitical Vision for Russia

The core of Foundations of Geopolitics is Dugin's ambitious vision for Russia's future role on the global stage. He argues that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has a unique historical opportunity to shed its communist past and re-embrace its inherent Eurasian identity. This means rejecting both Western liberal models and the vestiges of Soviet ideology, and instead forging a new civilizational project centered on the vast Eurasian landmass. Dugin envisions Russia as the nucleus of a new multipolar world order, a powerful "Land Power" that can effectively counter the hegemonic aspirations of the "Sea Power" of the Atlanticist bloc.

Dugin's strategy for Russia is not one of direct military conquest, but rather a sophisticated geopolitical approach aimed at weakening adversaries, fostering alliances with like-minded civilizations, and promoting internal stability within its sphere of influence. He advocates for a carefully orchestrated foreign policy that seeks to destabilize the United States and its allies, exploit internal divisions within Western societies, and cultivate strategic partnerships with nations that share a similar desire for a multipolar world. This involves ideological subversion, support for anti-Western movements, and the projection of Russian cultural and political influence.

The Eurasian Project and Spheres of Influence

Central to Dugin's vision is the concept of the "Eurasian Project." This entails the creation of a vast geopolitical bloc encompassing Russia and its neighboring countries, forming a unified entity that can stand as an equal to other major civilizational poles. This bloc is not merely a military alliance but a cultural and economic union that celebrates the diversity of Eurasian peoples while fostering a shared sense of destiny. Dugin emphasizes the importance of restoring historical ties and cultural connections that he believes have been deliberately suppressed by Western influence.

Within this Eurasian space, Dugin outlines specific strategic objectives for Russia. These include:

- Securing Russia's borders and extending its influence into Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Eastern Europe.
- Undermining the influence of the United States and NATO in these regions.
- Fostering strong, authoritarian regimes that are amenable to Russian leadership.
- Encouraging anti-Western sentiment and movements globally.
- Promoting traditional values and religious identities as a counterpoint to Western secularism and liberalism.

The aim is to create a self-sufficient and resilient Eurasian bloc that can dictate its own terms in international affairs and resist the homogenizing pressures of the West. This involves a complex interplay of diplomacy, economic leverage, and ideological propagation.

The Strategic Implications and Controversies

The publication and subsequent influence of Aleksandr Dugin's *Foundations of Geopolitics* have sparked significant debate and controversy, both within Russia and internationally. The book's starkly anti-Western rhetoric, its advocacy for a multipolar world order dominated by distinct civilizational blocs, and its detailed prescriptions for Russian foreign policy have been viewed by many as a blueprint for a new era of geopolitical confrontation. Critics often point to the book's perceived authoritarian leanings, its rejection of liberal democratic values, and its historical revisionism as deeply problematic.

One of the most contentious aspects of Dugin's work is its alleged influence on Russian foreign policy decision-making. While the extent of this influence is debated, it is undeniable that many of the themes and strategic concepts outlined in *Foundations of Geopolitics* resonate with pronouncements and actions of

Russian leadership in recent years. The emphasis on sovereignty, the critique of Western interventionism, and the pursuit of a multipolar world order are all consistent with the book's core arguments. This has led to concerns that Dugin's Eurasianist ideology is not merely an academic exercise but a guiding principle for Russian statecraft, posing a direct challenge to the existing international order.

Geopolitical Scenarios and Potential Conflicts

Dugin outlines several specific geopolitical scenarios in *Foundations of Geopolitics* that are designed to weaken Western influence and advance the Eurasian agenda. These include:

- Encouraging instability in the United States through social and political divisions.
- Supporting anti-American sentiment and movements in Europe and the Middle East.
- Promoting the rise of strong, nationalistic leaders who are critical of Western dominance.
- Utilizing energy resources as a geopolitical weapon.
- Fostering alliances with countries that feel threatened by Western expansionism.

The book's detailed prescriptions for the future of various regions, including the breakup of certain states and the redrawing of borders, have been particularly alarming to observers who see them as advocating for a more aggressive and revisionist foreign policy. The strategic implications are profound, suggesting a potential return to a more confrontational international system where spheres of influence and civilizational competition take precedence over global cooperation and international law. Understanding these ideas is critical for navigating the complexities of contemporary international relations and the evolving geopolitical landscape.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central thesis of Aleksandr Dugin's 'Foundations of Geopolitics'?

The central thesis is that geopolitics is a struggle between land powers (like Russia) and sea powers (like the United States), and that Russia, as a Eurasian land power, must expand its influence to secure its borders and re-establish its historical sphere of dominance, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, to counter the perceived hegemony of the Atlanticist sea powers.

What role does Dugin assign to ideology in 'Foundations of Geopolitics'?

Dugin views ideology as a crucial tool for shaping geopolitical strategy and national identity. He advocates for a Eurasianist ideology that rejects Western liberalism and promotes a multipolar world order based on distinct civilizational blocs, with Eurasianism serving as Russia's ideological foundation for its geopolitical ambitions.

How does Dugin view the United States in his geopolitical framework?

Dugin sees the United States as the primary adversary, representing the 'Atlanticist' sea power that seeks to impose its liberal, individualistic ideology and global hegemonic order. He believes the US is actively working to weaken Russia and prevent the rise of a Eurasian power bloc.

What does Dugin propose for Russia's relationship with Europe?

Dugin advocates for a strategic division of Europe. He suggests that Russia should exert influence over Eastern Europe (including parts of Germany, the Balkans, and the former Soviet republics) to create a Eurasian buffer zone, while encouraging a detachment of continental Europe from American influence, potentially leading to a Franco-German axis aligned with Russian interests.

What are Dugin's views on the concept of 'civilizations' in geopolitics?

Dugin emphasizes the concept of distinct, sovereign civilizations with their own unique values and historical trajectories. He argues that the current world order, dominated by Western liberal civilization, is unsustainable and that a multipolar world, where these civilizations can flourish independently, is necessary. Russia, he posits, is the heart of a unique Eurasian civilization.

What specific regions does Dugin identify as critical for Russian geopolitical expansion?

Dugin identifies Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and parts of the Middle East as crucial for Russian influence. He also suggests a strategic partnership with China to counter American power, though he maintains reservations about potential future competition.

How does 'Foundations of Geopolitics' influence contemporary Russian foreign policy and intellectual discourse?

While Dugin is often described as a fringe figure, his ideas have permeated certain circles within the Russian military, security services, and political elite, influencing strategic thinking and providing an ideological justification for assertive foreign policy, particularly regarding neighboring states and opposition to Western influence.

What is Dugin's perspective on the role of religion in geopolitics?

Dugin sees religion as a fundamental component of civilizational identity. He advocates for a resurgence of traditional religious values, particularly Orthodox Christianity for Russia, as a bulwark against Western secularism and liberalism, and as a unifying force for a Eurasian identity.

What are some criticisms leveled against Dugin's 'Foundations of Geopolitics'?

Critics often point to the book's perceived neo-imperialistic, nationalist, and anti-Western rhetoric. Concerns are raised about its potential to incite conflict, its historical inaccuracies, and its simplistic portrayal of complex international relations as a zero-sum game.

Does Dugin's work propose specific methods for achieving geopolitical goals?

Yes, Dugin's work suggests a multifaceted approach. This includes fostering internal unity and ideological cohesion, weakening adversaries through covert means and propaganda, forging strategic alliances, and leveraging Russia's geographical position and resources to project power and influence.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to Aleksandr Dugin's *Foundations of Geopolitics*, with short descriptions:

1. *The Eurasian Manifesto*

This foundational text by Dugin himself lays out his core theories of Eurasianism, positing a unique civilizational destiny for Eurasia that stands in opposition to Atlanticist modernity. It argues for a multi-polar world order centered on Russian leadership, emphasizing traditional values and a rejection of liberal democracy. The book is a direct precursor and companion to *Foundations of Geopolitics*.

2. *The Fourth Political Theory*

In this work, Dugin critically analyzes and declares the exhaustion of liberalism, communism, and fascism as viable political ideologies. He then proposes a "Fourth Political Theory" as a new framework, drawing inspiration from traditionalism and Eurasianism, to counter what he sees as the global hegemony of liberalism. This book is essential for understanding the ideological underpinnings that inform *Foundations of Geopolitics*.

3. *Geopolitics: A Critical Introduction*

While not solely focused on Dugin, this type of introductory text would likely explore the core concepts of geopolitical thought that Dugin draws upon and reinterprets. It would probably cover classical geopolitics (Mackinder, Mahan), its evolution, and critiques, providing context for Dugin's specific Eurasian agenda.

Such a book would illuminate the historical and theoretical lineage of his ideas.

4. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*

By Zbigniew Brzezinski, this book outlines a contrasting perspective to Dugin's, detailing America's strategy for maintaining global dominance in the post-Cold War era. It highlights the importance of controlling the Eurasian landmass for U.S. hegemony, a notion that Dugin vehemently opposes and seeks to disrupt. Reading this provides a direct intellectual counterpoint to *Foundations of Geopolitics*.

5. *The Crisis of Modernity: Traditionalism and the Quest for Meaning*

This title suggests a book exploring the philosophical underpinnings of traditionalist thought, a key influence on Dugin. It would likely discuss thinkers like René Guénon and Julius Evola, whose ideas about restoring sacred traditions and critiquing modernity resonate deeply with Dugin's Eurasianist project. Understanding this intellectual stream is crucial for grasping the ideological depth of *Foundations of Geopolitics*.

6. *Russia's Destiny: Imperial Vision and Geopolitical Ambition*

This hypothetical title would likely delve into the historical narratives and cultural justifications for Russian imperial ambitions throughout history. It would explore the concept of Russia as a distinct civilization with a messianic role, a central theme in Dugin's geopolitical vision. The book would provide context for how Dugin frames Russia's place in the world.

7. *The Empire of the Mind: Soviet-Era Propaganda and Its Legacy*

While seemingly focused on propaganda, this title implies an examination of ideological warfare and the shaping of public perception, which are key elements in Dugin's geopolitical strategy. Understanding how narratives are constructed and disseminated can shed light on the methods advocated in *Foundations of Geopolitics* for challenging Western influence. It highlights the soft power aspects of geopolitical struggle.

8. *Post-Soviet Russia: Ideology, Politics, and Geopolitics*

This kind of academic work would analyze the complex transition of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, examining the various ideological currents and their impact on foreign policy. It would likely discuss the rise of nationalism and attempts to redefine Russia's role in the world, providing a backdrop for Dugin's emergence as a prominent geopolitical theorist. The book would offer insights into the political landscape that *Foundations of Geopolitics* sought to influence.

9. *The Eurasian Heartland: Russia and Central Asia's Strategic Landscape*

This title suggests a book focused on the geographical and strategic importance of the region that Dugin designates as Eurasia's core. It would analyze the historical interactions, ethnic complexities, and resource potentials of this vast territory, highlighting why it is central to any geopolitical conception of Russia's sphere of influence. The book would offer concrete geographical and historical data supporting the strategic arguments made in *Foundations of Geopolitics*.

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