

Siberia Could Become a U.S. State If Moscow Doesn't Change Course, Russian M...

Siberia Could Become a U.S. State If Moscow Doesn't Change Course, Russian Mathematician Says

Vienna, June 8 - A leading Russian specialist on mathematical models of development says that if Moscow continues its current policy of relying on the export of natural resources alone, Siberia could become part of the United States, the Far East part of Japan and China, and the Middle Volga, North Caucasus, and Karelia all independent countries by 2030.

In an interview in yesterday's *Izvestiya*, Georgy Malinetsky, the deputy director for science at the Academy of Sciences Institute of Applied Mathematics, argues that earnings from the sale of oil and gas will not save the Russian Federation any more than a large nuclear arsenal saved the Soviet Union (www.izvestia.ru/obshchestvo/article3117125/).

Indeed, he says, Soviet scholars like Academician Viktor Gelovani of the Institute of Systems Analysis argued during Gorbachev's time that the USSR could survive only by choosing "the technological path," something that would have allowed that country not only to continue to exist but to be a genuine world leader.

Now, Malinetsky says, Russia faces an even greater challenge: if it "does not want to be removed from the political map of the world, super efforts by the entire people and a breakthrough to a post-industrial society build on innovation are required. Otherwise, [its] production will stay uncompetitive and others will simply take 'the pipeline' away from Russia."

Malinetsky says that scholars at his institute have made two geopolitical predictions for where Russia will be in 2030, one which assumes that Moscow will continue to follow the policies it is pursuing now and another which assumes that the Russian government will make dramatic changes both at home and in its dealings with the other post-Soviet states.

"If things go on as they are now," the much-published specialist argues, "then, even without external interference, the disintegration of Russia into zones of influence of other civilizations is probable. China and Japan will divide the Far East. To America will go Kamchatka, Chukotka and Siberia."

In addition, there will be Muslim "enclaves" in the Middle Volga and the North Caucasus, and some kind of independent formation north of St. Petersburg. He notes that this projection agrees with those made by the CIA and by other American researchers who see the Russian Federation disintegrating into five to eight countries over the next 10-15 years.

The other variant Malinetsky outlines would require the formation of a tighter union of the 12 former Soviet republics (The maps he provided "*Izvestiya*" show only Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania remaining completely independent.) "If super efforts are applied" - and they may include violence -- "it [will be] possible to reestablish on the Eurasian space" a "Soviet people."

Pressed by *Izvestiya* to explain his pessimism given Russia's current economic success, Malinetsky offers the following response: "Why do you forget the beginning of the 20th century when Russia and the world were assumed to have such glorious perspectives," perspectives that the past century did not bring?

"Politicians frequently seek to calm the people as they would a child. But serious politicians will recognize the threats. Note how [Dmitry Medvedev,] the newly elected president [of Russia,] formulated his task: effectively administering the country in its current borders. In this obvious modesty is a [clear] recognition of the difficulties of the path."

"Russia is falling behind the developed countries ever further - in science, in the social sphere, and in the structure of its economy." And it has done so despite warnings: In 2001, Vladimir Putin asked the Academy of Sciences to develop a system for predicting catastrophes and another for making the transition from a raw materials exporter to an innovative economy.

The Academy did what it was asked, Malinetsky says, but “the assignments of the president were not fulfilled.” And he pointedly adds, “Rome died when the barbarians approached its walls and no one came to defend it – the men were too much diverted by the spectacles” that the emperors had used to try to keep the people happy.

High oil prices have convinced many they need do nothing. That already entails some fatal consequences: One of them, Malinetsky says, involves education “The demand for a first class education [in Russia] is falling,” with ever more students preferring “education lite.” And soon the teachers who received better training in Soviet times will be retiring.

Obviously, one of the reasons people make predictions about the future is so that they and others can try to affect the course of history. Malinetsky is no exception. He argues that Russians need not accept their fate as a people slated to disappear from the face of the earth but that to avoid it, they must act now.

Among the measures he calls for are restrictions on capital export, lending policies designed to promote innovation, investments in defense institutions that have long been a source of inventions, and a major effort to reduce income inequality and the level of poverty among Russians.

Those are all steps the Russian government has talked a great deal about over the last decade but ones that it has done little to actually promote. Perhaps Malinetsky’s vision of a Russia more than 50 percent occupied by the Americans will cause at least some in the Russian capital to move beyond talk to action in these and other areas.



Paul Goble is director of research and publications at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Earlier, he served as vice dean for the social sciences and humanities at Audentes University in Tallinn and a senior research associate at the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu in Estonia. While there, he launched the “Window on Eurasia” series. Prior to joining the faculty there in 2004, he served in various capacities in the U.S. State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the International Broadcasting Bureau as well as at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He writes frequently on ethnic and religious issues and has edited five volumes on ethnicity and religion in the former Soviet space. Trained at Miami University in Ohio and the University of Chicago, he has been decorated by the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for his work in promoting Baltic independence and the withdrawal of Russian forces from those formerly occupied lands.

Author: Paul Goble

Copied from: http://www.ruociagi.com/spis_art/2008_1/pdf/windowoneurasia.pdf

Article downloaded from page [eioba.com](http://www.eioba.com)