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When Does the State Disappear? (in memory of Rudolf Kjellen)

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***Abstract*---** Geopolitical tensions in the world are recognised as the first in the list of threats to the progress and potential of the 21st century. It is impossible to understand the essence of this geopolitical tension without clarifying the semantics of the adjective “geopolitical”, which, in turn, requires elucidation of the meaning of the concept of geopolitics, as outlined by its author – Swedish historian Rudolf Kjellen. The occasion of appealing to the figure of this researcher can be considered the fulfilment in 2021 of 105 years since the publication of his fundamental work “The State as a Living Organism.” Namely: why R. Kjellen is talking about the “immortality of territorial domination” as opposed to the “perishability of the state”; whether digital technologies cancel “immortality of territorial domination” and, accordingly, geopolitics are abolished; which is hidden behind calls to abandon geopolitics as some “scientific nonsense.” It is concluded that, first, in light of R. Kjellen's doctrine of the state, the latter is doomed to destruction in case of refusal to build its own system of “territorial domination” in favour of another state, which, of course, does so in view of ensuring its own self-preservation and its own viability. And, secondly, the concept of geopolitics proposed by R. Kjellen has not lost its relevance for the modern world, which is experiencing a boom in digitalisation and, moreover, may be useful in analysing its topics, preventing the transformation of the latter into

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axioms such as: “revolution information technologies”, “paradigm of failed states”, “archaic geopolitical knowledge”.

Keywords---geopolitical tension, geopolitics, immortality of territorial domination, self-preservation, state disappear, system of territorial domination.

Introduction

On January 22, 2020, the UN Secretary-General, summarising the work of the organisation in 2019 and outlining the tasks for 2020, defined the extremely high geopolitical tensions in the world as the likeness of the current “first rider of the apocalypse”. Subsequent events, of course, the coronavirus pandemic and the corona crisis in general even increase the danger of the “first rider of the apocalypse” (the “vaccine race”, the fragility of European solidarity in the face of trials, the economic confrontation between the US and China, etc.). But it was also associated with the possibility of “destroying the liberal international order” Fukuyama (2020), the chance to “move from the position of “open society” to the concept of “responsible sovereignty” Halpern & Sloan (2020), and overcome the “neoliberal plague” Chomsky (2020), the prospects of the “end of the whole world of happy globalisation”, affected by the “virus of deregulation” (de Benoit, 2020). In a way, the question arises as to whether geopolitical tensions in the world are not so much the cause of the proclamation of the “end of the world” Fukuyama (1990), as the consequence of such a proclamation, the reverse of the conviction that “liberal democracy and market system finally won” de Benoit (2020), and therefore “The earth will become a huge trading centre, all obstacles to free exchange must be removed, borders destroyed, states replaced with “territories” and Kant's “eternal peace” established” (de Benoit, 2020).

It is hardly possible to understand this question without first turning to the meaning of the concept of “geopolitics”, and hence to the figure of the scientist who introduced geopolitical terminology that still remains an integral part of political discourse – Swedish statesman Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922). Undoubtedly, “Kjellen 's followers received a slightly different meaning of geopolitics”, and among themselves “there is no agreement on the subject and tasks of geopolitics”. But, using the adjective “geopolitical”, or trying to discuss its semantics, the authors think it is still worth paying tribute to its author, given that in 2021 it will be 105 years since the publication of the fundamental work of R. Kjellen “The State as a Living Organism” (1916) Kjellen (2008), without reference to which there is no encyclopaedic or educational publication on geopolitical issues (Vakulchuk et al., 2020; Bachmann & Sidaway, 2016).

In modern domestic intelligence, R. Kjellen is usually mentioned in two cases. First, in the context of defining geopolitics and clarifying its problem field as a scientist who introduced the term “geopolitics” and was the first to describe its content (Voronkova, 2010; Dnistryansky, 2011; Timoshenko, 2014; Mazurenko, 2019). Secondly, in the context of foreign policy issues, which he was a contemporary of, in particular as the author of the “concept of the German-Nordic Union of Small European States led by Germany” and the “spatial concept of

"large states" Lepskaya (2003), researcher of "Eastern European problems" Matvienko (2003) and a sympathiser of "the national liberation struggle of non-Russian peoples and their separation into independent states" (Dergachev, 1996). Among the foreign authors whose publications were devoted to the figure of R. Kjellen, it is worth paying attention to Vladimir Den Den (1997), Mikhail Ilyin and Nikolai von Kreitor (Ilyin, 2008; von Kreitor, 2016).

It so happened that, noting the superiority of R. Kjellen in trying to determine the meaning of the concept of geopolitics, it is customary to limit the statement that geopolitics in R. Kjellen belongs to the science of the state. In fact, everyone who is familiar with the above-mentioned "The State as a Living Organism" could not help but notice that geopolitics here is an element of the state. But few people thought about why in R. Kjellen the geopolitics is also the first, original, fundamental element of the state. Therefore, on the one hand, geopolitics as an element of the concept of the state can be understood only in the context of the latter. On the other hand, the very notion of a state without geopolitics as its first element loses its meaning. Why is the connection between the state and geopolitics necessary, so that its destruction threatens the destruction of the state that abandons geopolitics? (At the same time, if to mention Raymond Aron, the external features of the state can be preserved and even respected by other states (Aron, 2000). The answer to this question may shed light on the "first rider of the apocalypse" (Balcilar et al., 2018; Bouoiyour et al., 2019).

Geopolitics in the understanding of R. Kjellen: features of interpretation

Geopolitical tensions are tensions between states over what constitutes the meaning of "geopolitics". At first glance, this is the territory. The argument here is the "categorical political imperative" formulated by R. Kjellen for a state that cares about its self-preservation (Kjellen, 2008). Accordingly, a state needs to expand its territory for its self-preservation, and therefore geopolitics, which is "the doctrine of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space, the state as a land, territory, region" (Kjellen, 2008). At this point, the quote is usually taken for some reason Lepskaya (2003); Dnistryansky (2011); Mazurenko (2019), and it turns out that geopolitics is interested in a state "as a geographical object" (Averyanova & Voropaeva, 2020), and it was invented solely to ensure territorial expansion (Koopman, 2011; De Catanzaro, 1991).

But, it is worth emphasising once again that for R. Kjellen geopolitics is a component of the doctrine of a state, which before using the "categorical political imperative" must take place as a special "form of life", i.e. as a specially organised common life of people in a given area. The first step in such an organisation is to take into account the "natural component" of the state, "which first comes into view during its external observation", and without which it cannot obtain "all available forms of its own existence" Kjellen (2008), such as: ethnopsychological, economic, social and administrative-legal. This "natural component" is not, therefore, a "kind of appendage to the constitutional order of a state", but the state itself "is something bigger than its constitution", something that is not limited to "legal-administrative fact" and "is outside all legal constructs" (Kjellen, 2008). That is why, defining the system of government as "deepest element of a state" ("state power in the full sense of the word, domination, leadership, legal

organisation of the mechanism of management tasks" Kjellen (2008), R. Kjellen warns of the danger of slavish copying by a state in its constitutional policy of "trendy abstraction" called "state ideas of the West", which includes "the idea of separation of powers Montesquieu" and "the general model of the English constitution" (Kjellen, 2008). This "trendy abstraction" coupled with foreign influence, R. Kjellen noted, leads to friction with the individual features of the nation and causes a large amount of domestic political unrest in the successor states. As a result, constitutional reform becomes an experiment and can "do more harm than good" (Kjellen, 2008).

And only the study of England, R. Kjellen wrote, and not blind imitation of it, allows understanding that the imitating state has no individual prerequisites for the successful use of the English constitutional model, "such as: country, people, economy, society, which transformed England to England" (Kjellen, 2008). The "deepest element of the state" in each case is tied to these "individual preconditions". These are "five elements of one force, like five working fingers on one hand, both in times of peace and in times of battle". Conversely, the weakness of the state is due to the neglect of its own "individual preconditions", "individual features" and "distinctive features", the refusal of its inherent "individualisation" as a whole. As a result, "the activities of the state are largely limited to the functions of supervising the compliance of reality with the issued regulations", and "education is the study of these regulations, and no more". This, R. Kjellen summed up, is due to the "de facto long monopoly of law faculties on the supply of personnel to our bureaucracy" (Kjellen, 2008).

The concept of individualisation of a state and its geopolitical meaning

The primacy in this individualisation, according to R. Kjellen, belongs to the geographical individualisation, which is engaged in geopolitics, which studies the state as "territorial domination" and provides "organisation of territorial management" (Kjellen, 2008). The full definition of geopolitics in R. Kjellen: "Geopolitics is the doctrine of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space, the state as a land, territory, region or, more precisely – as a territorial domination [rike]" (Kjellen, 2008). The latter does not simply imply that, being attached to its own land, the state is subordinated in its activities to the "features of life" on it. Or that the organisation of local government, the creation of a transport system, etc. is impossible without the state clarifying the "geographical features" inherent in its land. "Territorial domination", which is a matter of geopolitics, is carried out as work on the development and organisation of these "geographical features", including in a way to "fill in the gaps" so that the state could "through this union to obtain the natural form of its organic sphere" (Kjellen, 2008).

As a "geographical individual" state, R. Kjellen concluded, is impossible without external "natural borders" and internal harmonious connection with the "natural sphere". Therefore, a country with its geographical attributes, such as territory, its shape, location, etc. is not "accidental affiliation" or "changing concern" for the state, but the content of its own essence, which determines the mode of its action and history of development. For example, location is a property of the state that determines its policy with the necessity, "from which a state-friendly free will

cannot evade". Therefore, the opinion of liberals that the state should not exercise unlimited power over its territory, R. Kjhellen believed, is equivalent to the fact that the state should give up its personal responsibilities (Kjellen, 2008).
Geographical individualisation entails ethnic, which is important when the "state is seen as acting" and which involves the study of the "spirit of the nation", this "most individual trait of the people", which forms the guide for the system of government. And this is because geopolitics is occupied by "territorial domination", and territory, unlike just a part of the earth's surface, is inseparable from human subjects. Further, there is economic individualisation, which provides the state with autarky, which, according to R. Kjellen, is not limited to "measures to stabilise the national economy behind customs barriers" (Kjellen, 2008). It also presupposes the construction of the state's system of "closed sphere of interests", the creation of independent industry, and the exclusion of "unilateral advantage in favour of what is called monoculture" with the simultaneous development of the country's capabilities in "all changing directions". Finally, social individualisation as the "special form of society" to which all states "equally by touch" lead their peoples by creating "professional and workers' organisations" in order, first, to prevent "paralysis of the state's own strength" inevitable in a situation where "classes cannot find any other modus vivendi (way of life – Latin), except innate hostility". Secondly, to affirm "social and public representation", i.e. to organise universal suffrage so that "it reflects not only the unity of the nation, but also the diversity of society". That is why, according to R. Kjellen, "sociality is a kind of reliable barometer, which can be used to guess the strength or weakness of the state". But the main conclusion here is that "social interaction" is the same "essential moment of the state" as "domination" (Kjellen, 2008).

Speaking of individualisation, which should protect the state from the fascination with "trendy abstractions", R. Kjellen repeatedly emphasised the importance of the order of its elements. And when he emphasised that the state is impossible without "individualisation and organisation of geographical, ethnic and economic spheres", as well as without the state receiving "a certain distinctive feature in the form of a special form of society". And when he wrote that "empirical observation of actual states" "consistently views the state as a territorial form of power [rike], as an economy, as a people, as a society, and as a system of domination [herradome] or legal entity". In both of these orders of elements of individualisation the first point remains unchanged – geographical individualisation or geopolitics, which makes possible (so to speak, "launches") the whole chain of "individualisations", which together form the state as a special form of life in geographically individual territory. Why so? It can be explained by the metaphor of R. Kjellen that "the state cannot hang in the air", because "like a forest, it is associated with a certain soil". But R. Kjellen himself in his explanation of the importance of "territorial domination" (and hence geopolitics) for the state is not limited to this metaphor. The meaning of "territorial domination" or "organisation of territorial management" is not in the statement that the state is tied to its land, but in the filling and processing of forms and raw materials, which, accordingly, are determined and given by nature. In the "organisation of nature itself" in general, the organisation without which the country loses the features of the state (Kjellen, 2008).

And if this “organisation of nature itself” is destroyed, then not only the state is destroyed but also the land, to which this state was tied, can be organised in another way, given the task of ensuring the viability of another state and acquire, as a result, of a completely different kind. And all this because geopolitics deals with the state not as a “legal construction”, but as an empirical fact that “relentlessly seeks to realise the opportunities for development that offer it the inclinations of the people and the geographical environment” (Khamari, 2021; Sukadi et al., 2021) The ways to realise these opportunities can be so different that in some cases the emergence of a “new country in the same place” is not excluded. And, again, “in the same place” does not mean on the same land, the landscape of which, as shown by the example of lands in the valley of Guadalajara, Tigris and Euphrates or “malaria coast of Italy”, may change beyond recognition due to the fact that “new peoples and states”, which took the place of “Moors, Babylonians and ancient Romans”, abandoned irrigation facilities. Therefore, the destruction of the state does not cancel the task of “territorial domination” for another state, which comes in its place and builds its territory here (as a system of its own infrastructure), thus “launching” the whole chain of its own individualisation. That is why R. Kjellen states “the perishability of the state” and “the immortality of territorial domination” (Kjellen, 2008).

Geopolitics in the age of digitalization

But isn’t the “digital technology revolution” today, thanks to which “the ways information is processed and transmitted, uniting regions like never before” Kissinger (2019), the task of geographical individualisation? Do not “reactive speeds in the information age” Kaplan (2015), testify the perishability of the “territorial domination”? Doesn't the state require a “complex” post-industrial economy “in which information and technical innovation play an increasingly important role” Fukuyama (2004), to sacrifice its “territorial governance organisation” to membership in the world community? At first glance, it cancels and certifies, and demands. But here another question arises, namely: before distribution and use, whether digital technologies, carriers of jet speeds and technical innovations are subject to production in advance? For example, a wireless data network (Wi-Fi, 3G, 4G, and now 5G) will not be created without powerful signal transmitters with cable (!) Communication and power lines connected to them. “Cloud” technologies – the essence is nothing more than a metaphor that hides a complex infrastructure object, consisting of quite physically tangible technical devices, the material implementation of which, in turn, is impossible without minerals: ore, oil, gas, coal . And, of course, electricity, which also needs to be generated. In other words, to paraphrase Mikhail Lifshitz, “these bodily signs, symbols, the word that sounds, the printed book, and other tablets of culture, being “an extension of our brain, prostheses”, before “expanding its capabilities” (Lifshitz, 2003) must first be created from the available “here and now” substance (Nikitin et al., 2020; Windt et al., 2016).

If to take off the table the actual production and technological component of this process, its initial condition is the producer's access to the extraction of essential minerals, including “the whole cycle – exploration, development, processing, delivery and sale” (Dugin, 2002). Or – to the markets in the sense of independent choice of supplier or buyer, and hence the method of transportation, based on

considerations of their own economic benefit. It is clear that the state should have control over access (extraction and processing) to the necessary natural minerals, and not only over the operations of their purchase and sale (transportation routes). This is perhaps why the Americans once made a “firm decision” “not to allow any foreign state to purchase coal-fired power plants 3000 miles from San Francisco and Central America” (Vandam & Edrikhin, 2002). And all because access to natural resources involves control over the area where they are located. Control, which, in turn, is impossible without the territorial domination of the state, i.e. without its organised management of territories. But it is geopolitics whose goal is “not territory [land], but always and exclusively the political organisation that permeates it, i.e. the territorial form of government [rike]” Kjellen (2008), is a key element of the organisation of the state as a living organism. An element whose abolition inevitably leads to the destruction of the entire system of public administration as such, i.e. “public power in the full sense of the word”, including “domination, leadership, legal organisation of the mechanism of management tasks” (Kjellen, 2008).

It is geopolitics as a doctrine of territorial domination ensures the organisation of state power taking into account and using “the influence of space, its form and location” and, operating on the concept of “geographical individualisation” Kjellen (2008), “keeps in mind the integrity of the state” is impossible without the “engagement” of the state with its “geographical features” (Kjellen, 2008). But the main thing is that R. Kjellen concludes that “territorial domination [rike] is the body [kropp] of the state” (Kjellen, 2008). Thus, “no state can dominate the territory of another state for a long time, just as a body cannot serve two masters at the same time” (Kjellen, 2008). Someone is doomed to leave because “it is impossible to imagine the absence of state power over one's body” (Kjellen, 2008). That is why geopolitics is not relevant only in a situation when the task of building a state's own system of control-mobilisation of its resources (system of “organisation of nature itself”) is not relevant, and when such a system begins to build on its territory another state, of course, in the interests of its own vital activity (Alconini, 2008; Medvedev, 1981).

That is, various forms of control over the territory together with the space formed within its cultural and historical relations Pleshakov (1994), become effective only given the control of the “natural component” of the state, which, according to R. Kjellen has always been and remains land. Therefore, R. Kjellen writes, “all states are landowners” Kjellen (2008), “the state consists of “land”” Kjellen (2008), “the state cannot move anywhere” and “cannot hang in the air” Kjellen (2008), and “we cannot think of the state regardless of the land, without shaking the very concept of the state” (Kjellen, 2008). Ignoring geopolitics results in the loss of dominance over its territory by a state “attached to a land” and the organisation of this territory, but by another state governed by its own organisational and managerial patterns (legal, social, cultural, etc.) and possibly, even with the preservation of the external attributes of the first. But, as Anatoly Edrikhin once remarked, “the natural right to land belongs not to those who sit on it, but to those who extract wealth from it” (Vandam & Edrikhin, 2002). And this, in turn, is impossible without territorial domination, and hence geopolitics as a doctrine of it (Kjellen, 2008). “The whole political organisation, after all, is just a form: a thing it depends on is its living meaning. This is exactly what liberalism does not notice,

relying exclusively on medicines management: in the light version – a change of government; in a difficult way – a change in the constitution", – R. Kjellen emphasised. Such a sketch of the paradigm of "failed states" Mazarr (2014), according to the logic of which states to overcome their weakness must abstract from their "unique social, cultural, economic, political and religious contexts" and focus solely on rational-technocratic aspects reforms carried out in an authentic developed way (Mazarr, 2014).

Conclusion

Given the meaning of the concept of geopolitics, as defined by R. Kjellen, it can be concluded that, first, geopolitical tensions in the modern world is associated with the dubious universality of the system of "organisation of nature itself", now known as "the end of history". By the way, R. Kjellen spoke about it when he wrote about "trendy abstraction", which transforms the state into a purely legal essence, ignoring the empirical fact of the state's existence as five manifestations of "the same form of life". Second, information technology, therefore, does not abolish geopolitics that requires natural resources for its production (the post-industrial world will collapse if, for example, it does not receive rare earth metals for its high-tech and "environmentally friendly" economy), and therefore access to them while maintaining , thus, the importance of "territorial domination [rike]" as a system of mobilisation of natural resources (the system of "organisation of nature itself") sharpened under the interests of the "landowner". Building a system of resource mobilisation of a territory of one state in the interests of another inevitably requires convincing the former of the insignificance and uselessness of geopolitics.

And, thirdly. Taking into account that geopolitics in R. Kjellen is a component of the concept of the state, it seems important to discuss the following issues. Isn't ignoring geopolitics a symptom of eliminating the demand for state-building and public administration? Recognition of the annihilation of the request for the organisation of the space of the state from the point of view of its (state) eternal interests (survival, security and glory, according to Raymond Aron)? Aren't constant attempts to accuse geopolitics of "archaicness", "obsolescence", "inconsistency", etc. evidence of a truly peculiar "danger" of geopolitics, which is that it exacerbates the question of both the subject of government in given state territory, and the future that can (and should) be the present for this state? In this context, the question of priority is interesting. Are abandoning geopolitics as a relic of knowledge in the modern world and, as a result, losing "territorial domination [rike]" as a system of mobilisation (bringing into a state that ensures the successful completion of any task) of resources in the interests of a state? Or is it worth to dismantle "territorial domination [rike]", or rather "do not object" to its construction, but in the interests and standards of another state and, as a result, reject geopolitics as a relic? In any case, geopolitics is related to the mental component of state-building, in the sense that state-building is impossible without geopolitics as a set of special efforts of practical and theoretical plan. The latter is due to the fact that geopolitics does not work "automatically", but requires serious study, advocacy and persistent implementation.

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