

Review of: "Rebuilding a 'Greater Russia' and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine"

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Article of Prof. Roger E. Kanet entitled „Rebuilding a 'Greater Russia' and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine” is an excellent study which is very interesting and useful study. I have only few points which I will add as additions to this important discussion:

1.) In early 2022 Russia already had much more than 125,000 troops along the border with Ukraine, probably up to 200,000.

2.) I think the concept of 'Pax Russica' needs some bigger attention and also explanation of how Putin's regime used in its imperialist policy and aggressive wars (against Georgia in 2008, intervention in the civil war in Syria, attacking Ukraine in 2014 and in 2022: a large-scale war launched by Russia against Ukraine) in creating 'Greater Russia'. In the context of today's Putinist ideology, it is precisely that the concept of 'Pax Russica' (to a large extent a development of the idea of the 'Third Rome' and Uvarov's theory and some other ideas, e.g., Russian chauvinism, imperialism etc) helps to justify Kremlin its neo-imperialism, expansionism and aggressive foreign policy in the Eurasian region, as well as Russia's military aggression against Ukraine etc. The idea of Moscow as the 'Third Rome' is skillfully used, above all, for propaganda purposes, but not only. The idea of Moscow as the 'Third Rome' was already during the Tsarists Russia's period linked to the continuity of the Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire).

As we can see, in most cases, Putin's 'national idea' offers basically nothing new and in many ways, it also copies the national idea of Count Uvarov from the first half of the 19th century, which is based on three ideological concepts - autocracy, Orthodoxy and nationalism. Even the term 'Pax Russica' was used by Count Sergei Uvarov (1786-1855), who was a influential political leader during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, he was President of the Imperial Academy of Sciences and Minister of Education. Uvarov's theory became the basis of the Russian Empire's ideology and nationalism (see e.g., Laruelle, 2015, 3). It is also important to mention here one of the founders of Slavophilism and Russian nationalist writers, e.g., Alexei Homyakov (1804-1860), who mentioned the 'Russian spirit', and the Russian philosophers Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900) and Nikolay Berdyaev, who spoke about the 'Russian idea'.

In 2000ties Kremlin reintroduced the concept of 'Pax Russica' and this basic idea of 'Pax Russica' is being vigorously used by Moscow for expansionist purposes -e.g. recently in connection with Russian war and military aggression against Ukraine.

In addition, the Kremlin is using various propaganda tools to justify the annexation of Crimea and the brutal military

invasion in Ukraine and Russia's genocide against Ukrainian people. The idea of "Pax Russica" is one of the main pillars of ideological basis of Russia's propaganda machine. For many years, "the Pax Russica" was promoted by numerous information campaigns in the pro-Kremlin mass media, but also in social media and in several media publications outside. After the collapse of the USSR, it became an effective weapon of influence activity (among them information warfare) and leverage for the Russian political elite, used to unite people in Russia and also Russophone communities abroad and it was used by Moscow for creating a Russian cultural, ideological, political, and informational space as well in the post-Soviet space and even more widely, reacting also to the policy of 'compatriots'.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Roger E. Kanet's study is an important contribution to understanding the nature of Russian neo-imperialism and Putin's regime and its goals. It is an important piece of research on which other scholars can draw as they continue to research on this very actual and important topic.