

The first Circular

**Moscow State Institute of International Relations
(University), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RF
Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences
Commission on Political Geography, IGU
Russian International Studies Association**
co-sponsored by the Commission on the History of Geographical Thought

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND
GEOPOLITICS:
YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Moscow, 1-7 June 2003

The Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MGIMO), the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IGRAN), the International Geographical Union Commission on Political Geography & the Commission on the History of Geographical Thought, and the Russian International Studies Association (RISA) announce the International Conference "Political Geography and Geopolitics yesterday, today and tomorrow" to be held in summer of 2003 in Russia.

Scientific Programme

The history of modern political geography goes back for more than a century. In 1997 the Conference of the Commission on the World Political Map (on political geography) of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Trieste celebrated the 100th anniversary of the famous book by Friedrich Ratzel '*Politische Geographie*', which lay the foundations of this discipline. Political geography has known its ups and down. Although the number of political geographers in the world is limited, this discipline possesses all the attributes of a respectable and independent sphere of knowledge. International and national journals are published, committees in IGU and International Political Science Association as well as national commissions in many countries of the world are at work.

However, it has been subject for discussion recently whether political geography should be considered just one of the branches of political science¹, dealing with territorial aspects of the political process and providing details to the general conclusions made by political scientists, or it is capable of getting new knowledge in principle, the kind of knowledge that can be obtained only by specifically geographical methods. The international journal '*Political Geography*' held a discussion on the relationship between political geography and political science. It was noted that the concept of place, contextual approach and the most modern statistical methods allow us to regard space not only as a set of cells for an analysis of territorial aspects of political processes, but also as an independent variable, as space changes the nature and the course of these processes in accordance with the history and the social peculiarities of each location. The discussion resulted in acknowledging that political geography had its own field of research. But the most convincing evidence in favour of this was received not long ago, and the ways of interaction between political geography and political science are far from being clear. The theory of political geography issues are still topical.

In the past decade one of the most successfully developing and at the same time traditional branches of political geography causing great interest has been *borders studies* as a part of an interdisciplinary field of research called limology. Recent geographical publications have shown that state and administrative borders are parts of a single system, that the role and functions of borders are at present subject to radical change. The shift and redistribution of functions among different types of borders is the result of the so called *glocalization*. On the one hand, state sovereignty is becoming blurred under the influence of globalization ('*detrterritorialization*'), but at the same time the importance of international and supranational territorial formations is growing, the processes of regionalization and territorial segregation within states

¹ Similar discussions have been held about economic geography and regional economics, cultural geography, etc.

are going faster (*'reterritorialization'*). Understanding these processes is important for managing transborder interactions and strengthening national security in the new conditions, establishing new forms of cooperation along borders, settling international conflicts stemming from the long-standing existence of the 'international' of unrecognized and self-proclaimed states and hotbeds of separatism.

The past decade has witnessed quick theoretical renovation of geopolitics, which has led to establishing closer links both with its 'twin' discipline political geography, with which in the past it has often been tragically confused, and with political science. There have been worked out theories enabling to join naturally the research into territorial-political problems on subnational and global levels, to bridge or even close the long-standing conceptual gap between geopolitics and political geography. There is even an opinion that geopolitics and political geography are now one and the same discipline. The change of paradigms in geopolitics is connected with the long-existing abroad dissatisfaction with the traditional neoclassical approaches. Russian geopolitics, unfortunately, still mainly operates the concepts known from the pre-war times, and it mostly amounts to purely armchair speculations on the national interests understood as historically invariable and sustained almost exclusively by military-political means. Up-to-date interaction among geopolitics, political science and international relations science is a topical problem.

New possibilities of such interaction can be found firstly, at the macrolevel, namely on the basis of recently popular *geocultural* and *geoeconomic* approaches in geopolitics, comparison of theoretical views of modern geopolitical situation, shared by geographers, specialists in international relations, political scientists, military experts. Secondly, there are interesting prospects of interaction between the so-called critical geopolitics and other social sciences. According to modern publications, the geopolitical position of the state is determined by the ratio between the evaluation of its position in the world with the help of different parametres made by the states and its perception made by the citizens and the political elite. *The world geopolitical vision* is an inalienable part of the ethnic and national (political) identity, which is why its construction, especially by way of manipulating public opinion with the help of mass media is an instrument of legitimizing foreign policy, nation and state building.

The study of *geographical images*, *national geopolitical culture* (the traditions of interaction with the rest of the world), *geopolitical imagination* (the image of the country in the eyes of its citizens, including its 'natural', or 'historical' borders, the sphere of vital interests, the models of development), the analysis of *geopolitical discourse* promotes better understanding of geopolitical ('informal') regions of the world as social constructs.

The main *aim* of the planned interdisciplinary conference in Moscow is to consider topical theoretical and modern applied issues of political geography and geopolitics and the ways of their interaction with the political science and the international relations studies. The draft list of the issues for discussion is given below.

I. Political geography and geopolitics: unity in diversity (modern theoretical issues)

1. Territorial and political organization of society as the basis of political geography.
2. Globalization and ‘glocalization’: the unity of political-geographical and geopolitical processes.
3. The question of scale in political geography and the concept of place.
4. Political science, international relations, political geography and geopolitics: their place among social sciences.

II. Geopolitics I: international relations and the world geopolitical vision (‘the view from above’)

1. Postmodernist approaches in geopolitics: the geopolitical world order or chaos.
2. The crisis of the Westphalian system and modern geopolitical challenges.
3. Geopolitics and security: the new principles of international interaction.
4. The realities of globalization: geopolitics versus geoeconomics?
5. The cultural foundations of geopolitics.
6. The world after September 11: illusions and reality.
7. Small states in the conditions of globalization.

III. Geopolitics II: geopolitical images and identity (‘the view from below’)

1. ‘Sociology of geopolitics’: geopolitical images of the world in public opinion and in the opinion of experts (‘low’ and ‘high’ geopolitics).
2. Geopolitics and the system of education: the role of secondary and higher educational institutions in shaping geopolitical images of the world.
3. The geopolitical role of mass media.
4. The construction of space. The role of discourse in shaping the political map at different territorial levels.
5. Geopolitical macroregions as social constructs. Globalization and new identities.

IV. Political geography, the processes of territorial integration and disintegration and the modern methods of studying borders

1. Identity, security and borders: local, regional, national and global levels.
2. State borders as a part of the world system of borders, the regime and the functions of borders.
3. State building and borders on the post-Soviet territories.
4. Cross-border policy and cooperation: modern challenges and new ideas.
5. Transborder regions: experience and prospects.

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Members:
Mr. Anton Aleinov
Mrs. Elena Bespalova
Dr. Elena Seredina

Registration Fees and Registration Categories

Categories of participants	Types of registration	Deadline for registration	Fee (US dollars)
Delegates	Early	December 1, 2002	150
	Regular	March 1, 2003	200
	Late	April 20, 2003	250
Students	Regular	April 20, 2003	50
Accompanying persons	Early	December 1, 2002	100
	Regular	March 1, 2003	125
	Late	April 20, 2003	150

Registration fees for delegates and students ensure:

- participation in all scientific sessions
- copies of all materials of the conference
- transfer from airports and back
- transfer from the hotel to the MGIMO
- coffee and tea breaks
- reception
- half day excursion over Moscow

Registration fees do not include the payment for the excursion to Rostov-the Great - Yaroslavl and lunches. The preliminary cost of two-days excursion (including

transport, hotel, meals, excursion service and reference materials) is \$ 100. The price for lunch at MGIMO is \$ 4-6.

Accompanying persons who filled in the registration form and paid the registration fee may take part in the opening and closing ceremonies of the Conference, social program and excursions.

The fee is to be paid after the registration is confirmed by the Organizing Committee.

Preliminary Conference Schedule

June 1	arrival of participants to Moscow
June 2	sessions and excursion over Moscow
June 3	sessions
June 4	sessions and reception in MGIMO
June 5-6	excursions to Rostov-the-Great and Yaroslavl
June 7	departure from Moscow

All sessions will be held at the MGIMO. Working languages are English and French.

Accommodation

Ts.D.T. hotel
Leninsky prosp., 146
119526 Moscow, Russia
E-mail: info@cdt-hotel.ru

Prices

Rooms	Regular	Renovated
Single	30	62
Double	40	

Excursions:

1. Excursion over Moscow

Participants may visit the historical centre of Moscow including the Kremlin and ancient cathedrals inside it. They will also visit more recent monuments such as the campus of Moscow University, Park of Victory and contemporary residential areas. A tour over the capital will be guided by geographers-specialists of Moscow.

2. Excursion to ancient Russian towns Rostov-the Great and Yaroslavl.

Rostov-the Great and Yaroslavl make a part of the Golden Ring of Russia consisting of the most ancient and famous towns of Central Russia to the northeast of Moscow

and covering the core of the country where the main events of Russian history took place.

ROSTOV-THE GREAT is a small town reminding Russian folk tales with their turrets and towers, magic and miracles. The splendid ensemble of the Kremlin dominates the surroundings creating a very special festive atmosphere. Everything here speaks of bygone days, remote pages of Russian history: the high churches with their beautiful proportions, the pure colours of the frescoes. Distance from Moscow: 190 km.

YAROSLAVL is an important regional centre of Central Russia (about 700,000 inhabitants). This town is rich in fine monuments that have gone down in the history of 17th-century Russian culture as one of the most illustrious pages. It was here that the highly distinctive Yaroslavl school of architecture and painting flourished. The town was even the virtual capital of Russia briefly during the Time of Troubles. In the historical center you will find many original churches, some with frescoes of outstanding beauty and interest. It is the largest and most active of the Golden Ring towns, yet still retains the quiet charm of provincial life with the splendid view on the Volga. Distance from Moscow: about 300 km.

Information on Registration

Authors who would like to present a paper are asked to complete the attached provisional registration form and return it by mail, fax or e-mail to the General Secretary of the Conference, Mr. Boris Bykov, **AND** to the Vice General Secretary on scientific questions, Dr. Nadezhda Borodulina.

The deadline for receipt of abstracts (300 words maximum) will be **1 March, 2003**. Faxed abstracts will not be accepted. E-mail submissions are encouraged and should be sent to the contact person.

The maximum length of abstracts is 1 page A-4. Format New Roman. Margins are 2,5 sm all over the list. The title of the article is centered on the top - size 12. After two blank lines the name of the author is centered. After one blank line the author's position and e-mail are centered. After two blank lines the text is being typed by size 10.

Registration Form
International Conference "Political Geography and Geopolitics
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"

Registration Form

Name.....

First name.....

Title.....

Organization.....

Address:.....

Postcode:.....Town:.....

Country.....

Phone.....Fax.....

E-mail:.....

Arrival to Moscow.....

Departure from Moscow.....

Accompanying Person(s) Name.....

Author(s).....

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Paper's title.....

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Language of presentation.....

Excursions: Moscow;
Rostov-the Great - Yaroslavl

Accommodation: Ts.D.T. Hotel

Method of payment:

You should point out:

**SAVINGS BANK OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION
(VERNADSKOE BRANCH 7970)
MOSCOW, RUSSIA**

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<p><i>Или/or:</i></p>	
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