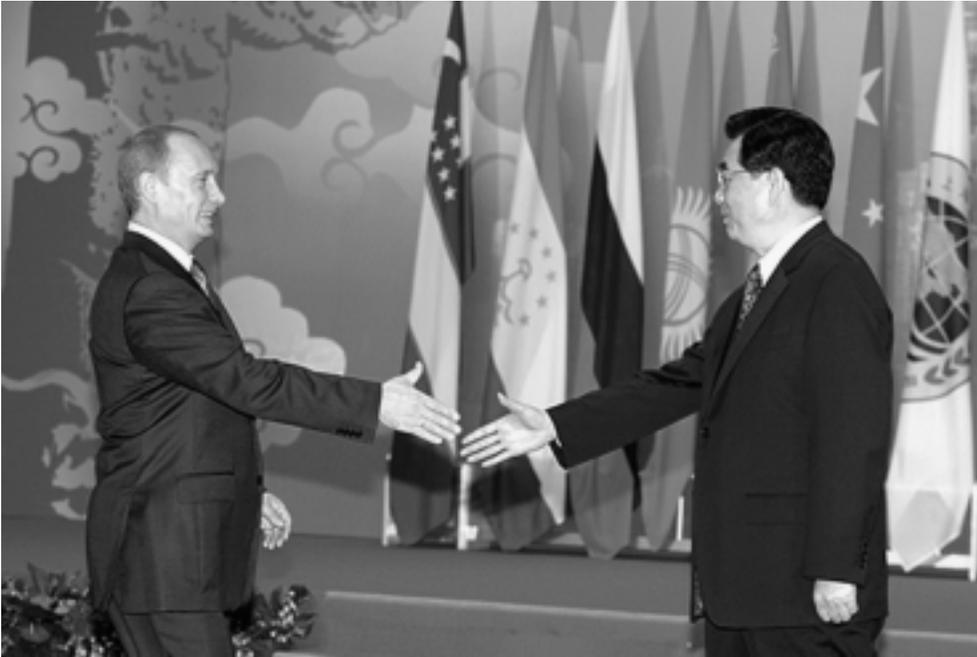

Russia

Global and Regional Dimensions of the SCO

by Prof. S.G. Luzyanin

Prof. S.G. Luzyanin is a senior scientific researcher from the Far East Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, working on current questions of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and security in Central Asia. He sent this paper, titled "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO); Its Development During 2006; Global and Regional Dimensions" (Aug. 24, 2006) to the Berlin conference, and it was summarized during the question period. For Mr. LaRouche's comments on this and related questions, see last week's EIR. Professor Luzyanin's paper was preceded by an introductory note of greeting to the conference. Both have been translated here by EIR.

As for Mr. LaRouche's proposals for large-scale infrastructure projects in Eurasia, I believe that his evalua-



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Hu Jintao meet at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit on Sept. 14, 2006.

Press Service of the President of Russia

tion and analysis of Eurasian matters are extremely important and timely at present. Essentially LaRouche's concept gives new approaches to the integration of the Eurasian space. The idea of the Eurasian Bridge precisely fits with traditional Russian approaches and is well suited to the current reality in the world: the formation of a new institution for organized cooperation among peoples and states. I believe that Mr. LaRouche, in developing the concept of the Eurasian Bridge, has found the optimal ratios of geopolitical, physical-geographical, and geo-economic methods. The result is a very promising theory of the fusion of various sciences. This is very important, since most studies are premised exclusively on political science methods. I fully support this approach that Mr. LaRouche takes, and his basic conclusions.

Respectfully, and with very best wishes,

Prof. S.G. Luzyanin

The Overall Story

The 5th anniversary summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (July 5-17, 2006, Shanghai, P.R.C.) confirmed that the organization is attractive and of interest for many countries of the East, which would like to live in a multipolar world, a world free of American dictates. The organization's prestige in the world is rising rapidly. An impressive line has already formed of applicants for membership in the SCO, including major countries such as India, Pakistan, Iran, and Mongolia, which have observer status. There is a special contact group working with Afghanistan. It is also known that Belarus and a number of other countries would

like to become observers. Many authoritative international organizations have already established cooperation with the SCO, or would like to do so. The Shanghai summit declared a moratorium on the further expansion of the organization. It appears that a status called "dialogue partner" will soon be established, as a position between observer and permanent member. The SCO leadership decided to call a halt to the headlong rush of new members to join, in order to allow for political and ideological "digestion" of what has already been established.

The SCO and the Problem of Detering the U.S.A.

The SCO's growing strength is pivoted on the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership, which is extrapolated to the organization as a whole. In addition to its basic objectives of fighting extremism, terrorism, and separatism, and developing economic and humanitarian cooperation in Central Asia, the SCO is objectively becoming an important factor for "detering" U.S. extremism. The Iraq adventure, the Lebanon-Israel war, and the hysteria around Iran have demonstrated once again the adventurism of U.S. policy and the need for politically building up alternative political organizations, like the SCO, in the world. Locally, the SCO today already represents a serious political counterweight to the U.S.A. in Eurasia.

Regional Specifics of the SCO

The SCO's internal structure, while noting that the consensus of all member states is required, can be thought of provisionally as "three (China, Russia, Kazakstan) plus three

(Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan).” The first troika represents the clear leaders of the organization, which initiate various questions and decisions to be adopted by the organization as a whole. The creation of an “axis of democracy” from the Baltic to Georgia, and the “Greater Central Asia” (GCA) and other American projects, are prompting actions in response, by Moscow and Beijing, and will continue to do so. Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao have been able, in the framework of the unified SCO project, to offer the Central Asia region their agenda of security, development, and modernization. This agenda is attractive for the local elites, because it does not propose a radical “democratization” of the existing regimes, according to the well-known American scenario. Rather, it fully supports them and provides an opportunity for the more underdeveloped countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) to enjoy economic development, based on the resources of the more developed ones: China, Russia, and Kazakstan. Modernization, security, and stability in the region are the main points on the SCO’s agenda today.

Beijing’s contribution to the SCO is of great economic significance. At a certain point, Beijing succeeded in convincing Moscow and the Central Asian Republics, that the organization’s range of activity should encompass as many areas as possible, including economic, humanitarian, and integration matters, not merely security alone. Accordingly, in 2005 the P.R.C. offered \$900 million for the development of economic projects. Procedures for operation of this “second wheel,” economic cooperation, were set in motion, so that the organization’s activity became truly more comprehensive. Humanitarian activity and the “second road” also took shape, in the form of the SCO Forum, etc. China’s long-term and well-conceived policy of “harmonizing the SCO” met full support from the other five members at the summit. It is quite likely that the SCO project is only one aspect of China’s longer-term strategic design for Central Asia.

Thus, despite its discussions being internal, the SCO has outgrown its “regional suit” and is trying on larger “geopolitical clothes.” The organization’s sphere of interests today encompasses Central and Northeast Asia. In the medium term, this will extend to South Asia and the Middle East. At the same time, the organization has, in effect, institutionalized the famous Russia-India-China “triangle,” in a certain way, considering that India is an observer. It is planned to hold SCO military exercises in Russia during 2007, with units from all six member countries taking part. The Russian-Chinese exercises, Peace Mission-2005, already took place in the P.R.C., while there were a series of Russian-Indian ground and naval maneuvers during 2004-05.

Prospects and Prognoses for 2006-08

If India and Pakistan join as full members, this could be a major geopolitical factor in the strengthening of the SCO. Russia’s priority partner in that pair is India, while for China, despite the radical improvements in relations between Beijing

and New Delhi, it remains Pakistan. Besides the moratorium on enlarging the number of SCO members, the Kashmir problem and the non-adherence of India and Pakistan to the NPT are obstacles to their joining. The latter violates the other SCO members’ formal commitment to strictly following non-proliferation procedures. Equally difficult is the situation with Iran. Participation in the SCO gives the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran the possibility of obtaining an additional political resource in its stand-off with the U.S.A. and its allies. Iran’s energy potential is attractive for the SCO, since it is a major oil and gas producer, providing resources that India and China would like to use. As is well known, a major Iranian-Indian gas project, involving the supply of gas to India, is already under implementation. Pakistan, which wants to hook in to Iranian gas, has an objective interest in this project. Russia is interested, because of the deepening Russian-Iranian cooperation in the area of peaceful nuclear power (construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant) and the development of north-south transport “corridors,” which are beneficial for Moscow.

At the same time, the SCO’s rapprochement with Iran brings with it the danger of a worsening of the organization’s relations with the U.S.A. This concerns India, Russia, and Pakistan, first and foremost. Understandably the SCO, as an organization that represents an alternative to American projects, has some interest in political rapprochement with Iran, but within certain limits. There are concerns in Moscow, Beijing, and New Delhi, that Iran might at some point break away from any influence, not only of the SCO, but of the entire world community.