

RUSSIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THE 3rd MILLENIUM. GEOPOLITICAL RESOURCES AND OPTIONS

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Rezumat: Autorii prezintă și analizează resursele demografice și economice ale Rusiei și, totodată, opțiunile geopolitice favorizate de prezența acestora. Din punct de vedere geopolitic, Rusia are o serie de dificultăți demografice (scăderea ratei natalității, densitate demografică slabă, speranță de viață redusă și starea general de sănătate precară a populației). Cu toate acestea, Rusia zilelor noastre este cea mai bogată țară a lumii. Pe baza acestor considerații, autorii consideră că Rusia ar putea deveni o superputere reală (în concordanță cu aprecierile lui Zbigniew Brzezinski) numai dacă își va rezolva problemele demografice și își va construi o armată și economie de tip occidental, pe baza uriașelor sale resurse economice.

Abstract: The authors present and analyze demographic and economic resources of Russia and also its geopolitical options, favored by the control of these resources. Geopolitically, nowadays Russia has great difficulties when it comes to demography, because of the decrease of birth rate, to the poor demographic density, low life expectancy and its population's precarious general health state. All the same, nowadays Russia is the richest country in the world. Based on these considerations, the authors consider that Russia could become a true super-power (according to Zbigniew Brzezinski's considerations) only if it will solve its demographical problems and will build a Western-style army and economy, based on its huge economic resources.

Résumé: Les auteurs présentent et analysent les ressources démographiques et économiques de la Russie et aussi des options géopolitiques favorisées par leur présence. En termes de géopolitique, la Russie dispose d'un certain nombre de problèmes démographiques (faible taux de natalité, faible densité de population, l'espérance de vie réduite et une mauvaise santé générale de la population). Cependant, la Russie est aujourd'hui le pays le plus riche du monde. Sur la base de ces considérations, les auteurs considèrent que cette pays pourrait devenir une réelle superpuissance (tout en accord avec les opinions de Zbigniew Brzezinski) si sa population est déterminée à fonder une armée et une économie aussi de type occidental, basées sur ses énormes ressources économiques.

Keywords: Russia, geopolitics, demography, economy, mineral resources, oil, gas, carbon, superpower

Introduction

In the modern area, the Russian geopolitics was that of a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, strongly landlocked, which has tried to ensure the opening to the Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas, as well as to the Pacific Ocean in the 19th century. By promoting the concepts of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Orthodoxy, Russia has considerably extended towards east and south, conquering Caucasus, the Black Sea northern coastline, the area around the Caspian Sea and the trans-Caspian steppes from Central Asia.

Also, in the 19th century, Russia had become an American power, being present in Alaska and California. The Russian Empire has manifested strong ambitions regarding the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Tibet, Chinese Turkestan, India and even Korea. The end of the Second World War finds USSR as a winner, with an influence area in central and south-eastern Europe. USSR has recomposed almost completely the former Imperial Russia's perimeter, as well as that of new territories, such as: the Baltic States, parts of the Finnish territories, a portion of Prussia (Kaliningrad – Königsberg), Byelorussia, the Polish Ukraine and the trans-Carpathian Ukraine, Bessarabia, Tuva, Sakhaline and the Kurile Islands¹.

Nowadays, Russia is making efforts to adapt to the post-imperial reality, and block Turkey and Iran's influence over the new central-Asian independent states, to discourage the formation of an American regional or independent Central-Asian cooperation, and limit the American geopolitical influence in the new sovereign capitals. The chosen instrument for reaching this purpose has been firstly the Independent States Community (ISC), though in some places, using Russian armies and the Russian diplomacy smartly using the *divide et tempera* principle, have served as well the Russian interests, the purpose being the maximum obedience from the part of the new states towards the Russian objective. The political Russian governors have explicitly said that they see the Central Asia area as their own geopolitical space, even if formally it is no longer an integral part of their empire, Russia making special efforts in order to keep its military presence on the new states' territory.

In the 1990's the new Russia was preoccupied by the internal problems and was materially speaking, unable to perform its influence outside the borders, even in the close proximity of the republics of the former USSR. Russia created the ISC in 1991, in a desperate effort of maintaining or regaining a part of the former USSR authority, but this re-shaping experiment was not a success. The intention was that the

¹ Vasile Marin, *Aspecte geopolitice ale spațiului ex-sovietic* [Geopolitical aspects of the former soviet space], în „GeoPolitica”, Bucharest, Top Form Publishing House, no.16-17, p. 38-39.

ISC create a unified military command and create a joint market between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan².

In this study the demographic and economic resources of Russia will be analyzed, in order to answer if Russia is or could become a real superpower.

I. Population

The population in Russia was estimated on January 1st 2010 to be of 142,905 thousand inhabitants, the historical peak being reached in 1991 (148,689,000). In 1959, the Russian Federation population was 117,239 thousand inhabitants, in 1970 of 129,941 thousand inhabitants, in 1979 of 137,409 thousand inhabitants, in 1989 of 147,021 thousand inhabitants, while in 2002 of 145,166 thousand inhabitants.³

Demographic index. The population's density is of 8.3 inhabitants per square kilometer, Russia being a poorly developed country, if we compare it to the surface of the territory⁴. The largest population density (almost 105 million inhabitants) is registered in the Asian part of the Russian Federation. In the European part, the largest concentration of population is to be found in the regions of Moscow and Sankt Petersburg. In Russia, 73% of the population lives in the urban area. The birth rate in Russia has increased from the lowest point (8.27 births per 1000 inhabitants in 1999) to 12.4 per 1000 inhabitants in 2009, while the fertility rate has increased from the lowest point) 1.16 per thousand inhabitants in 1999), to 1.54 per thousand inhabitants in 2009. If the birth rate in Russia can be compared to that of other developed countries, the death rate is way bigger, especially within men of working age, because of the existence of certain heart diseases and of a high percent of accidents. The general life expectancy in 2010 was of 68.7 years, in men – of 62.8 years, while in women – of 74.7 years.⁵

The demographic gap between the European and Asian areas. Almost 105 million Russian citizens live in the European area of the state. The rest lives in the Asian area, which creates large geostrategic vulnerabilities to the country. The military-industrial complex plays a very important role in the administrative organization of the Russian spaces, since in many territories (especially in those

² Paul Dobrescu, *Viclenia globalizării. Asaltul asupra puterii americane* [The trickery of globalization. The assault on the American power], Iași, Institutul European Publishing House, 2010, p. 263.

³ http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b11_12/IssWWW.exe/stg/d01/05-01.htm (Федеральная служба государственной статистики – *Federal State Statistics Service* – i.e. of Russia). Accessed in 30.03.2012.

⁴ Alexandru Ungureanu, Ionel Muntele, *Geografia populației* [Geography of Population], Iași, Sedcom Libris Publishing House, 2006, p. 113

⁵ http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b11_12/IssWWW.exe/stg/d01/05-07.htm (Федеральная служба государственной статистики). Accessed in 30.03.2012.

poorly populated) the civilians live within the towns and military bases areas. The location of the most important industrial centers also depends on this fact, these centers being also related to the so-called “defending industry”. In fact, the entire geopolitical configuration of Russia depends on the military doctrine model⁶.

The natural growth gap of different ethnicities within the same state may have important geopolitical consequences in that, that it can produce relocations of the ratios between the respective populations. Throughout the USSR period, the Russian ethnic population, which was of 145 million people then, had the same number of children as the Muslim population, which numbered only 50 million people⁷. Currently, the Muslim populations within the Russian federation have an increasing natural growth, so that, in time, the Muslim population proportion will increase, in the detriment to the Russian one. Some UNO estimations for the Russian Federation estimated that somewhere in 2050, a population of 121 million inhabitants will live in Russia⁸. A more optimistic estimation of the United Nations Organization offered for the Russian Federation as for 2050 a population of almost 134 million inhabitants⁹.

The degree of the country’s population’s dispersion depends largely on the climatic conditions, being characterized by a large population density in the Central Europe’s districts, Southern Europe and Northern Caucasus districts. Compared to the 2002 census, the 2010 census results show that the population has decreased in 63 regions of the country. The most significant decrease of the number of inhabitants took place in the region of Magadan (14%), in Pskovsk and the Komi Republic (11.5%), as well as in the Murmansk, Kirov and Kurgan regions (11%).

Instead, the population has increased in 20 regions from the Russian Federation, the largest increases taking place in the Daghestan Republic (15.6%), the Chechnyan Republic (15%), Moscow (11%), the Karachayevo-Cherkessian Republic (8.9%), the Moscow region (7.2%), the Khanty-Mansi-Ugra Autonomous Territory (6.9%). The Southern District Population has decreased by 0.8%, with a slight increase of population in the Krasnodar territory and the Astrahan region. In the North Caucasus District the population has increased by 6.3%. In the Volga District the population decreased, with the exception of the Tatarstan Republic, where a 0.2

⁶ Aleksandr G. Dughin, *Bazele geopoliticii* [Geopolitics principles], vol. I, *Viitorul geopolitic al Rusiei* [Geopolitical future of Russia], translated from Russian into Romanian by Valentina Roșca, Bucharest, Eurasiatica Publishing House, 2010, p. 197. The first edition: *Основы Геополитики: Геополитическое будущее России*, Moscow, Arktogaia Publishing House, 1997.

⁷ Paul Dobrescu, *Geopolitica* [Geopolitics], Comunicare.ro Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 109.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.112.

⁹ http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=98&ref_id=CMPTEF01116 (Institut national de la statistique et des etudes economiques – National Institute for Statistics and Economics Studies - France). Accessed in 06.04.2012.

increase was registered. The Ural District population has decreased by 2.4%, while the Tiumen region population, the Khanty - Mansi - Ugra district population has increased, as a result of natural migration. In the Siberian District, the population has decreased by 4.0 %, some population increases being observed only in the republics of Altai and Tuva.

Demographic vulnerabilities. In 2010, in Russia, the number of women significantly surpassed that of men, women representing 53.7% of the population, while men only 46.3%¹⁰.

Statistics clearly show a significant decrease of the number of marriages in the last 50 years (1960 - 2010). The annual marriages number has decreased by 28.4%. The marriage rate has decreased, throughout this period of time, by 1.5 times – from 12.5 to 8.5 marriages per thousand inhabitants. In 2010, 640,000 divorces have been registered, as opposed to 1.2 million marriages. In the last few years, the Russian Federation has been ranked first in the world in the divorce rate, one of the effects being the fact that the number of reported children per woman is currently the same as the number of children reported per woman at beginnings of the 1990's (1.4 – 1.5 children), with which the Russia's depopulation process has started.

During 1989-2002, the ratio of one-child families has increased from 51% to 65%, while the ratio of families having two, three or more children, by contrast, has suddenly dropped: from 39% to 28% for two children, and from 10% to 6.6 – for the three or more children families. During 1992-2010 almost 40.5 million abortions have been performed in Russia¹¹.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Russia is described by a low life expectancy, not only compared to the economically developed countries, but also to the states with the same level of development. The life expectancy was of 69 years in 2009¹², Russia being ranked 162 out of 220 countries in which similar statistics have been performed. A bigger life expectancy is observed in the North Caucasus and Moscow regions, where men exceed the age of 69 and the women exceed the age of 77. The lowest numbers are registered in Tuva and the Chukotka region: 55 years for men, and 66 years for women¹³.

Demographic imbalance with geostrategic implications. In the Russian part of the Amur River area from the Far Orient, only 7.4 Russian people live, while in the

¹⁰ http://www.perepis-2010.ru/results_of_the_census/VPN-BR.pdf (Предварительные итоги всероссийской переписи населения 2010 года – Preliminary Results of the Census in Russia, 2010). Accessed in 30.03.2012.

¹¹ http://www.demographia.ru/articles_N/index.html?idR=21&idArt=1926 (Институт демографических исследований – Institute of Demographic Research – i.e. in Russia). Accessed in 06.04.2012.

¹² <http://data.worldbank.org/country/russian-federation>. Accessed in 06.04.2012.

¹³ http://www.demographia.ru/articles_N/index.html?idR=21&idArt=1926. Accessed in 06.04.2012.

Chinese area of the Amur River, over 70 million Chinese people live there. From 1989 up to the present day, the Russian population in this region has decreased by 8%, while the Chinese one has increased by 13%. Also, an emigration of the Chinese people in the Far Orient Russian area registers a very alert rhythm, a phenomenon which the worried Russian authorities try to block. China, instead, is taking advantage of this phenomenon, the demographic factors developing in its interest¹⁴.

On the Chinese part of the Amur River, the population of the Heilongjiang province has been, at the 2010 census, of 38,312,224 people, representing 2.86% of China's total population. The interior Mongolia autonomous region's population was in 2010 of 24,706,321 people¹⁵.

On the Russian part of the Amur River, one may find certain administrative entities which hold great geographic areas, very poorly developed from the demographic point of view, compared to the Chinese south.

The region of Amur covers 363,700 square kilometers, and is included in the Far Orient District. The region's population was of 864,500 people (estimation for January 1st 2009), out of which 565,300 people lived in urban areas, while 299,200 people lived in rural areas. The ethnic structure of the population in 2010 was the following: Russian population – 92%, Ukrainians – 3.5%, Evenki – 0.2%, other nationalities – 4.3%. Considering the poor population, local authorities try to develop certain programs meant to attract the Filo-Russians from the regions belonging to the former Soviet Union, historically linked to the mentality, cultural perceptions, which fit to the economy and local traditions. The Amur region's administration has elaborated a target regional project program meant to assist the voluntary immigration of the Russian population living abroad, within the region of Amur. Also, the Chinese migration within the region has become a reality, and in the future, it might become a very important factor for the region's economy, as well¹⁶.

On January 1st 2010, the Jewish Autonomous Region population was of 188,700 inhabitants, this being one of the poorest populated areas of Russia. The Birobidjan – the centre of Jewish Autonomous Region's has a population of 77,250 people. Along with the mass emigration in Israel, USA, Canada, Germany and other countries at the end of the 90's – beginnings of the 2000's, the Jewish population in Birobidjan has been drastically reduced, reaching somewhere about two thousand people.

¹⁴ Paul Dobrescu, *Geopolitica*, p. 201.

¹⁵ www.stats.gov.cn/english/newsandcomingevents/t20110428_402722244.htm (National Bureau of Statistics of China). Accessed in 30.03.2012.

¹⁶ <http://amurstat.gks.ru/digital/region5/default.aspx> (Территориальный орган федеральной службы государственной статистики по Амурской области – Territorial Office of the Federal State Statistics Service in the Amur region). Accessed in 06.04.2012.

The region number 21 localities, the majority of the population living in rural areas. The population's density was in 2010 of 3 people per square kilometer¹⁷.

The land of Habarovsk covers a 788,600 km² area, the population being of almost 1,401,900 people (2010). Compared to the other regions in Russia, the Habarovsk Land is the most urbanized one, the urban population share being in 2010 of 80.4%, while the rural one of 19.6%. The city of Habarovsk holds a population of 577,700 people (2010). The second largest city is Komsomolsk-upon-Amur, its population being of 281,035 people. Out of the rest of the land's five cities, 4 are small and 1 middle. The average density of the population in the region is of about 1.8 people per square kilometer; in the northern and central parts it doesn't go beyond 0.1-0.2 per km², in the south the areas being more populated – 1.6 people per km²¹⁸. The ethnic composition of the region is the following: Russians – 129,264 people (89.82%), Ukrainians – 48,622 people (3.38%), Nanaite people – 10,993 people (0.77%), Tatar – 10,972 people (0.76%), Koreans – 9,519 people (0.66%), Byelorussians – 8,840 people (0.62%), Evenki – 4,533 people (0.32%) Azers – 4,463 people (0.31%), Chinese – 3,815 people, Moldavians – 3,399 people, Germans – 3,166 people, Ulchi – 2,718 people, Armenians – 2,669 people, Nivkts – 2,452 people, Jewish – 2,370 people, Chuvash – 2,225 people, Bashkir – 2,225 people, Yakut – 1,454 people¹⁹.

Social problems in this region include: economy's focus only on two large cities, social-economical polarization in the center and periphery, depopulation of northern areas, aging of the population and a precarious health state, low life expectancy, especially in men²⁰.

The Primorsk land covers an area of 164,700 square kilometers, (0.96% of the Russian Federation territory) and consists of 179 municipalities, out of which 12 urban districts, 22 municipalities and 145 localities (29 urban and 116 rural localities). Primorsk has 22 localities with a population of over 10 thousand people. The largest urban centers are Vladivostok (153,421 people), Nahodka (168,489 people), Ussurisk (153,421 people), Artem (102,445 people). The province population has been in 2010 of 1,988,500 people (1.37% of Russia's population). The urban population share is of 75.4%, while the rural population is of 24.6%. The population's density is of 12.2 people per square kilometer. Compared to the data offered by the

¹⁷ <http://www.eao.ru/?p=782> (Официальный портал органов государственной власти Еврейской автономной области – Official portal of public authorities of the Jewish Autonomous Region). Accessed in 06.04.2012

¹⁸ http://gov.khabkrai.ru/invest2.nsf/General_ru- (Правительство Хабаровского края – Government of Khabarovsk Land. Official site of this institution). Accessed in 05.04.2012.

¹⁹ http://www.demographia.ru/articles_N/index.html?idR=64- (Институт демографических исследований-Institute of Demographic Research – in Russia). Accessed in 05.04.2012.

²⁰ <http://www.zdrav.khv.ru/node/281> (Министерство здравоохранения Хабаровского края – Ministry of Health of the Khabarovsk Land). Accessed in 06.04.2012.

2002 census, the number of people in Primorsk has decreased in 2010 by 83,200 people (4%). Life expectancy for 2010 in the Primorsk Land has been of 65.1 years out of which 59.3 for men and 71.4 for women²¹.

The Land of Primorsk is a multinational region, with a predominance of the Russian population of 89.9%, Ukrainians representing 4.5% of the populations. The inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations are not very tensional, some minor problems in the relationship with the Chinese people being reported (yet, a negative perception has increased upon the Central Asia immigrants, who are attracted to homes, especially in Vladivostok). The majority of the immigrant workers come from Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaidjan, being hired in the construction field, road works etc. They do not speak the Russian language fluently; they do not know the local regulations and Russian laws. The increase of competition on the manpower market is given by the seasonal workers from the southern countries – China, Vietnam, North Korea and it may therefore raise the risk of restarting some ethnical conflicts.

II. Natural resources of the Russian Federation

The Russian Federation holds one of the most important raw materials in the world: 1/3 of the world's iron reserves, iron ore, carbon – 1/3 of the world's reserves, gold, nickel, chromium, bauxite, asbestos, salts of potassium, uranium, and also holds a high level of electrical power. Russia disposes of the best natural gas reserves in the world, and is among the first countries when it comes to carbon, oil and natural gas reserves²².

Russia's mineral resources. On the Russian territory, up to now, over 20 thousand mineral deposits have been indentified: oil, natural gas, carbon, ferrous metals, non-ferrous metals, rare and precious metals, precious stones, semi-precious stones, different minerals. It is estimated that the Russian Federation holds important shares of the world's reserves, in the following fields: oil 10-12%, natural gas 32%, carbon 11%, iron ores 25%, nickel 33%, lead 10%, zinc 15%, potassium salt 33%, cobalt 21%. Also, Russia is a world leader when it comes to gold, silver, platinum, diamonds and useful fossil materials. The total of estimated mineral reserves of the Russian Federation has been in 2001 28.000 billion dollars. Nevertheless, the greatest part of the Russian mineral deposits are not of best quality, the useful components content being by 35-50% below the world's average. Moreover, some of them are difficult to process because of

²¹ <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0177/analit06.php>- (Центр демографии и экологии человека Института народнохозяйственного прогнозирования – Center for Demography and Human Ecology, Institute of Economic Forecasting). Accessed in 06.04.2012

²² Stan Petrescu, *Rusia în sistemul global de securitate* [Russia within the global security system], in "GeoPolitica", Bucharest, Top Form Publishing House, no. 16-17, 2006, p. 221.

the distances, transport conditions and severe meteorological conditions, as well. As a result, despite having significant reserves, the degree of industrial transportation of certain minerals is relatively small: bauxite 32%, copper 49%, zinc 16%, tin 42%, molybdenum 31.5%, lead 8.8%, titan 1.3%, mercury 5.9%.²³

Oil and gas. In 2008, Russia had an oil productivity of 488, 5 million tons, representing 12.4% of the world's production, 2nd in the world.²⁴

Most of these resources are concentrated in Eastern Europe and the country's northern area. Areas rich in hydrocarbons are to be found in the sub-marine area of the arctic polar regions of the Russian Federation²⁵.

On the Russian territory, one may find natural gas and oil deposits, in the following regions: Western Siberia, Volga-Urals, the Caspian Sea, Northern Caucasus-Mangyshlak, the Baltic Sea, Anadyr, Eastern Europe, Kamchatka, Enisei-Anabar, Timan-Peciora. Oil and gas deposits cover the entire section of sedimentary rocks, but there are deposits (Usiansk, Vozeyskoe, Zapadno-Tebukskoe) where more than 90% of the reserves are concentrated. In the province of Devonian, 40% of the oil and more than 50% of the state's carbon reserves are to be found. Gas and oil reserves have been also discovered in Perm, Kirov, Ulyanovsk, Samara, Orenburg, Saratov as well as in the Volgograd, Tataria, Bashkir regions and the Udmurt Republic. The largest oil fields are the following: Romashkinskoye, Arlan Bavly, Muhanovskoe, Ishimbai. Another area which disposes of oil and natural gas is the region of the North Caucasus, which extends all along the Caucasus, from the Azov Sea up to the Caspian Sea. Maikop is another area rich in natural gas, where the Groznyi and Anastasievskoe fields dispose of one third of the oil and natural gas resources. Industrial accumulations of gas are attested in the Ust-Enisei basin. Adynar is a region situated in the south-eastern part of the Ciukotka Autonomous Republic, where, in a similar way, significant oil resources are deposited. Kamchatka is as well a region rich in natural gas and oil. According to British Petroleum, in 2003, the petrol reserves from Russia were representing 60 billion barrels, estimated at the consumption level for a 22 year period²⁶.

Russia was the main natural gas producer in 2008, having a production of 601.7 billion cubic meters, representing almost 19.6% of the world's production and having reserves of 43,300 billion cubic meters²⁷.

²³ [http://tpu.ru/Томский политехнический университет](http://tpu.ru/Томский_политехнический_университет) (Technical University of Tomsk, website). Accessed in 20.05.2012.

²⁴ Silviu Neguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială* [World Economic Geography], Bucharest, Meteor Press Publishing House, 2009, p. 52.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁶ [http://tpu.ru/Томский политехнический университет](http://tpu.ru/Томский_политехнический_университет). Accessed in 20.05.2012.

²⁷ Silviu Neguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 69.

On the Russian territory, the natural gas extraction areas are to be found in the Volga-Ural region, in the Orenburg city area and in the Saratov city area. Another region is Tiumen- Ukhta-Peciora and on the sub-marine platform of the Kara sea. The natural gas deposits are to be found also in the north-western area of Caucasus, in the Stavropol plateau and in the Astrahan area²⁸.

The gas reserves of Russia are to be found, as follows: Volga – 5.9%, Urals – 2.3%, North Caucasus – 0.6%, Western Siberia – 77.5%. The greatest gas fields are in the Yamburgskoe, Urengoy regions²⁹, Hydrocarbons can be found in Russia in the Volga-Ural areas (exploitations being performed in Romashkino, Zainsk, Neftekamsk as well as in Kuibyshev and Volgograd and also Tengiz), Western Siberia (the Tiumeni land, the inferior course of the Obi river, up to Arctica in the continental plateau of the Kara)³⁰.

Gazprom is the largest energetic company of the world, holding the biggest natural gas reserves, estimated at 33.1 billion cubic meters, and oil reserves of almost 62.7 billion tons. Gazprom holds 15% of the world's production of methane gas. The Gazprom Group is an important player in Central Asia as well, acquiring in 2010 37.8 billion cubic meters in this area. Gazprom also holds the largest natural gas transport system in the world, of about 161,700 km³¹.

In 2010, the Rosneft Company has exploitations of 40.5 billion oil barrels, and 1.7 thousands of billion cubic meters of gas, this without introducing the arctic area deposits aquired only in 2010. The main exploitation fields are in Eastern Siberia, Far Orient and the arctic seas. The company performs explorations activities also in the traditional regions, such as: Western Siberia, the Volga region, the Tiumeni-Peciora region, the southern part of the European Russia and is involved in exploration projects in countries such as: Algeria, Venezuela and the United Arabian Emirates³². The company exploits hydrocarbons within the fields Sahalin 1, Sahalin 3, Sahalin 5. The Rosneft Company ensures more than 20% of the oil production in the Russian Federation. In 2009, Rosneft started out the largest exploitation from Eastern Siberia to Vankor, a project which is among the first 10 in the world. The company also holds processing plants in the Far Orient, as well as a refinery at Tianjin in China. Also, Rosneft has aquired shares at four refineries in Germany, thus increasing its capacity of processing by 20%. In 2011, the company discovered new deposits in the Baykalovsky area from the region of Krasnoiarsk and the Buzerovski area in the region of Samara. In 2011, Rosneft signed a strategic partnership with Exxon Mobil

²⁸ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei* [Economic geography. Earth's resources], Meteor Press Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 146.

²⁹ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012

³⁰ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p. 118.

³¹ <http://www.gazprom.ru/about/production/>, Gazprom website. Accessed in 20.05.2012.

³² <http://www.rosneft.ru/about/history/> (Rosneft website). Accessed in 05.05.2012.

for joint exploitations in the Kara Sea and the Black Sea, as well as a scientific project of exploration of the arctic area. The Rosneft Company performs an annual natural gas production of 55 billion cubic meters³³.

In 2008, Russia held 6.3% of the world's refinement capacity³⁴. Russia holds the second place in the world regarding the refinement capacities, with a volume of 6.5 million barrels per day. Refineries can be found in the North Caucasus area of Groznyi, one of the largest refineries at Ufa, in the Samara region, at Isimbai, Saratov, and Kuibyshev, in the Volga region at Volgograd and in the Emba region at Guriev. Other refineries are places on the main pipelines route: Gorki, Riazan (on the Volga-Ural- Moscova route), Krasnoiarsk, Angarsk, Omsk, Habarovsk, Vladivostok (along the Siberian pipelines)³⁵.

In order to become a true superpower, Russia has to follow a smart politics towards the energetical resources of the Caspian Sea.

The Caspian Sea, with a surface of 370 thousand square kilometers, is the vastest of the world's closed seas, forming natural frontiers between Transcaucasia, Northern Russia, the Asian central steppe, and the Iran plateau. The Caspian Sea has a length of 1200 kilometers, on the north-south axe and an average width of 300 kilometers on the east-west axe. In its narrowest part, between the shores of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, it has 200 kilometers, while in the wider part it has 500 kilometers. The Caspian hydrographic basin is of over 3,6 million square kilometers, its main water supply sources being the Volga River in Europe, Kura in Transcaucasia, Ural in Russia, Embay in Kazakhstan, Terek in Turkmenistan and Sofial in Iran. The Caspian Sea is under ocean level at a -28.5 quota. The Caspian Sea's basin shelters the third oil deposit of the world, following the one in the Persian Gulf and Siberia (oil reserves discovered – of 40 billion barrels in the continental plateau and the Caspian Sea's adjacent area, plus reserves estimated to be at a level of 100-200 billion barrels). As for the natural gas identified in the region, 7 trillion cubic meters and 20-22 trillion cubic meters reserves are found. The Caspian region holds, according to the British Petroleum concern, 19.700 million tons of oil reserves, out of which 12,000 in Iran, 6,600 in Russia and 700 in Kazakhstan. As for the natural gas, the same source credits the regions with reserves of 68,610 million tons oil equivalent, out of which Russia – 43,000 million tons, Iran 21,000 million tons and in Turkmenistan 2,600 million tons³⁶.

³³ <http://www.rosneft.ru/Upstream/Exploration/>. Accessed in 05.05.2012.

³⁴ Silviu Neaguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 63.

³⁵ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p. 36.

³⁶ Victor Ionescu, *Caspica – ambientul geopolitic și geostrategic* [Caspica – geopolitical and geostrategical ambient], in „GeoPolitica”, Top Form Publishing House, Bucharest, no.16-17, 2006, p. 61.

Around these tremendous resources, there are three concentric state circles, which are involved in the fight for their controlling: 1. The producer states from the ex-USSR space -Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. 2. States through which one may achieve the transit for oil and gas: Russia, Iran and Turkey. 3. The energy consumer states: USA, EU and China.³⁷ For Russia, the Caspian game is both economic and strategic, having the fear that the western powers might not interfere in its influence area. Russia is also determined in controlling the Caspian resources export means, in order to control its ISC associates and make political pressures over the European states.³⁸

The carbon reserves. In 2008 Russia had carbon reserves estimated to be of 157 billions tons, exploiting the same year 327 million tons³⁹. In Russia, out of the carbon production total, 80-85% is being used in the electric power stations, for the production of coke and for the domestic use, while 15-20% is being exported⁴⁰.

The Moscow's carbon basin holds 10% of the country's production total and contains only energetic carbon. It is a very important area, being located in the proximity of the Moscow industrial area, which is a very large energy consumer. The Peciora basin, situated in the northern side of the Russian Federation's European part, within the Peciora arctic river area, feeds the Sankt Petersburg industrial area with carbon, and here one may find mainly coking carbon. In the Asian part of Russia 90% from the carbon reserves are concentrated, the largest basin being Kuznetsk, situated within the basin of the Obi River, on his tributary river Tomi. The carbon basin holds 200 layers with all sorts of carbons. By using the carbon from here and the iron ore reserves from nearby, the big metallurgical complex from the south part of the Western Siberia has developed. Other carbon basins from the Asian part of Russia are: Minusinsk, in the Enisei upper basin, Ceremhovo in the western part of the Baikal Lake, Tunguska, in the central-siberian area, the one on the middle course of the Lena River. In the northern extreme of Russia, one can find the young basins from Tamar, Indighirka and Kolyma, while in the Far Orient we can find the Burea, Sucean basins as well as those located in the island of Sakhalin⁴¹.

Russia holds the largest reserves of peat in the world, evaluated at 150 billions of tons, located in the northern part of the European area, in the western and eastern Siberia⁴².

In the areas affected by the Mesozoic orogenesis we can find rich carbon deposits, among which – those in Siberia, the Lena basins and the Transbaikalia ones⁴³. Russia holds 49.1 billion tons of coal, 107, 9 billion tons of lignite⁴⁴.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁹ Silviu Neguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Iron ores reserves. Russia occupies the first rank in the world at the general iron ore reserves and has proved it by producing 264 billion tons. The iron ore in Russia differs depending on depth, has an iron content of 16-32%, and is described by high resistance and a complex mineral composition. The iron ore deposits are situated in the European area of the country. The largest deposit in the Russian Federation is one of the largest in the world, i.e. the Kursk magnetic anomaly. From all the iron ore reserves found in Russia, the peak is reached here, especially since more than 16% of the ore may be used without enrichment. The magmatic deposits (titan-magnetite and limonite titanomagnetite) are known in Karelia (Pudzhgorsk), Ural, the Altai Mountains (Harlovsk), Sayan, Transbaikalia (Kruchininsk), the Carbonatite deposits – titanomagnetite and apatite-magnetite combinations, deposits of the Baltic shield (Afrikanda, Kovdor) and the Siberian Platform (Gulinsk). The continental deposits of Hydro-goethite – lacertian –Marsh from Jurassic are explored by a big number of small enterprises in the European (Tula, Lipetsk and other areas). The ores are described by low iron content 30-40%). The Metamorphogenic deposits of Precambrian ferruginous quartzites, appear in the regions centered on the Kola and Karelia Peninsulas (Olenegorsk Kirovogirskoe, Kostomuksha, etc., in the Mihailovsk platform, Lebedinskoe, Stoilensk, etc.), on the Southern Ural (Taratashskoe, Zizany-Komarovskoe – iron deposits), Tuva (Mugurskoe), in Yakutia (Aldan – iron ore), in the Baikal-Amur Artery (the Chara-Tokkinsk fields group), the Far Orient (Ussuri and the Malohingansk fields group). The largest deposits of this type appear in sedimentary form, and partially metamorphosed sediment within volcanic rocks. The ferruginous quartzites containing 32-37% iron are low in phosphorus and sulfur, while the ore is mainly composed of magnetite and hematite. The formation of ferruginous quartzites is the most representative, the ore crust being rich and containing 70% Fe, with a small part of sulfur and phosphorus⁴⁵. In the Ural mountain region, one may find iron deposits, copper, molybdenum, nickel, gold, silver, platinum⁴⁶.

The Moscow and Sankt Petersburg are known for the production of special steels obtained through the electric siderurgy, the iron ores being brought from Karelia, the Kola, peninsula, the Lipetsk basins and Kursk-Belgorod. Another area is the Ural, with centers such as Magnitogorsk, Celeabinsk, Ekaterinburg. The Siberian siderurgy is developed in the Novokuznetsk, Novosibirsk, Kermerovo and the Taished areas⁴⁷. In 2008, Russia was ranked the 5th world producer of iron ore

⁴³ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p. 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁴⁵ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012.

⁴⁶ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p. 36.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

with a production of 110 millions of tons⁴⁸. In 2008, Russia occupied the fourth place in the world at the production of steel, with 74 billions of tons, representing 5.4% of the world production⁴⁹. In the same year, Russia occupied the 3rd place at the cast iron and ferroalloys production, with 52 million tons, representing 5.4% of the world production⁵⁰.

The manganese ores reserves. The manganese ore deposits of the Russian Federation territory are numerous, yet small, mainly the carbonate type. The state has exploited almost 150 million tons – 2.7% of the world's production total (2002). The largest of them is in Ural – Yurkinsk, Catherine, Berezovski and others (carbonate ore), Novoberezovskoe – oxide ore. The northern Ural basin ore is described by a manganese content of almost 21%. In the western part of the Ural, the sediment platform from Magnitogorsk is associated with numerous small deposits of oxidized manganese ores.

There are smaller deposits of manganese in: Enisei, Salair, Angarsk, on the Baikal Lake coast, northern Caucasus (Labinsk). In Russia, the dominant carbonate ore type is contained by more than 90% of the Russian reserves. Also, deposits are to be found in Tininsk (the Sverdlovsk region), Gromovsk (the Cita region), and deposits with proven and estimated reserves in Parnoksk (Komi republic) Marsyatsk, Ivdelsk, Berezovsk, Noviy Berezovsk, Iujniy Berezovsk (the Sverdlovsk region), Usinsk (the Kemerovo region), Nicolaev (the Irkutsk) region. Most of the proven reserves of Russia (80%) are focused in the Usinsk deposit, situated in the region of Kemerovo. The total capacity of the ore area is larger than 150 meters from the surface, the oxidized is found at a depth of 30 up to 75 meters, while the proven reserves are of 79.69 million tons of ore with an average manganese content of 19,4%. The carbonate ores are diverse, some of them being rich in phosphorus and iron while the manganese obtained is from 12-14% up to 20%⁵¹.

The titanium ores reserves. In Russia, these are divided into two indigenous – groups and placer. There are ores in the southern Ural (Kopansk, Medvedev, Malkalsk). The same ores are to be found also in Pudozhgirscoe (Karelia), Kruchininsk (Transbaikalia). The metamorphic deposits are known in the ancient crystalline schists from Kuznechihinsk and Shubinsk from the southern part of the Ural. The bases of titanium mineral resources are the Placer deposits in Russia. Significant reserves are concentrated in the apathite deposits from Khibin⁵².

⁴⁸ Silviu Neguț (Coordinator), *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 97.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.105.

⁵¹ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012.

⁵² *Ibid.*

The chrome reserves. Important reserves of chrome are to be found in the Saranivsk, basin, the Gabbro massive. In the Ural also known are the Kliuchevsk territory deposits, with the shape of dunitite-harzburgite rocks⁵³.

The vanadium reserves. Vanadium is exported on a large scale under the shape of gabbropyroxenite-dunitite rocks, in the process of formation. There are also small vanadium deposits in the Caspian Sea areas, of the Kurile Islands and the Volga-Ural islands⁵⁴.

The aluminum reserves. In 2008, Russia has been ranked no. 2 at the aluminum production, with 4,200 thousand tons, representing 10.6% of the world's total⁵⁵.

The Russian federation disposes of important bauxite, nepheline resources, as well as other types of primary aluminum. The bauxite resources are explored in the northern Ural, Southern Ural and Western Siberia. Residual deposits may be found in the Belgorod and Timan regions. Nepheline deposits are in Kiya Shaltirsk, Kuznetsk and Alatau. Potassium raw material can be found in Transbaikalia. In Russia there is an acute lack of primary aluminum, because of the great lack of quality bauxite, and reasonable perspectives as to their findings. The most promising source of this material is in Serednetimansk (200 million tons), the north-western part of the Komi republic, Vorikvinsk (150 million tons), Verhneschugirsk (66 million tons). These deposits are situated in uninhabited areas, their extraction having been opened at the end of the '70's⁵⁶.

The nickel and cobalt reserves. Russia holds the first place in the world in nickel reserves. It has 6,600 tons of nickel reserves (13.2%). The main sources of nickel and cobalt are the magmatic ore deposits situated in Norilsk, from the region of Krasnoyarsk and Kola. The ore organisms are disposed in lenticular strips or veins up to 50 m. The sulfur ores from these deposits are complex: they contain copper, cobalt, nickel, platinum. Nickel and cobalt deposits are known in Ural (Seorv, Cheremshansk, Sinarsk, Lipovsk, Buruktalsk). Russia is among the first five states, holders of copper reserves⁵⁷. In 2006, Russia occupied the 5th place in the world regarding the refined copper production, with 870 thousand tons, representing 5.6% of the world's total. Russia occupies place 6 in the world at the copper ore production, with 750 thousand tons in 2008⁵⁸.

Tin reserves. When it comes to the tin reserves, Russia holds one of the first ranks in the world, that is, it is situated on the 6th place, holding 7.6% of the world's total. The Placer deposits' reserves hold less than 14%. Almost 95% of the Russian

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Silviu Neaguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 120.

⁵⁶ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012

⁵⁷ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p. 205.

⁵⁸ Silviu Neaguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 117.

explored reserves are concentrated in the Far East region, 41% in Yakutia, 20% in Habarovsk and Magadan, while 13% in the Primorsk region. The leader role in the industrial extraction is ensured by the primary deposits of chlorite and tourmaline. The largest tin deposits are known in Yakutia (Tashca, Burgochansk, Kestersk), Chukotka (Iultinsk, Valkumeysk, Pirkakaysk), in the Habarovsk region (Perevalnoe Komsomolsk), the Primorsk region (Crystal, Arseniev, Levitsky, Dubrovski), Transbaikalia (Hapcheranginsk, Sherlovaya, Etikinsk), Karelia (Kitelsk)⁵⁹.

Polymetal reserves. In Russia, the zinc total reserves are up to 2.7 million tons. Almost 82% of the stock is found in the Ural and eastern Siberia regions, other 18% are within the western Siberia, Far East and north Caucasus regions (Sadonsk, Zgidsk, Arhonsk, Elbrus). The largest zinc deposits in Russia are found at Holodninsk, Lakeside, Korbalihinsk, Uzelginsk, Uchalinsk and Nikolaev⁶⁰.

Uranium reserves. In 2006, Russia was ranked 5 at the production of uranium, with 3,262 tons, representing 8.1% of the world's total⁶¹. Within the Russian federation authorities' records for 2002, 54 uranium deposit stocks are included. Out of these, only 16 are mentioned with a global estimation balance of 180 tons. The largest part of these reserves is concentrated in 15 ore deposits from the regions of Streltsovsky in Transbaikalia. These deposits' reserves, reported to the production level, may take 15-20 years. In another document of the state balance of the Russian Federation, the uranium deposit from Dalmatovsk is appropriate for the developing of the leaching methods, the reserves are limited and will allow the extraction for 20 years, and will produce 500 tons of uranium per year⁶².

Gold reserves. The gold reserves held by the Russian Federation occupy the fourth place in the world. Russia has five large deposits, has explored more than 200 indigenous deposits, and 114 gold complex deposits. The largest part of the gold reserves balance is concentrated in the eastern Siberia. In Russia, there are gold ore deposits of different genetic types, in Siberia (Olhovsk). The most frequent clean gold-sulfur include the regions Berezovsk (Ural), Darasunsk (Transbaikalia). Russia holds large gold lands, the main exploitations being concentrated in five regions: two of them are on the upper course of the Lena River, while the other three are in Amur's middle basin, in western Siberia, in Eastern Siberia and north of Lake Aral⁶³. In 2008, Russia was ranked two in the world, regarding the platinum production (25 tons), representing 12.5% of the world's production⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Silviu Neagu (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 130.

⁶² <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012

⁶³ Silviu Neagu (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p.126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.128.

Silver reserves. Russia occupies the first place in the world's silver reserves, the main (73%) are concentrated on the complex ore fields, non-ferrous metals and gold. Among the most complex silver deposits (23.2% of these reserves) are described by a mixture of copper-sulfur (Uzelskoe, Podolsk-Ural), in the zinc and plumb deposits – they can be found in Gorevsk, lake Kholodninsk, Provskoie, Vozdvysensk, and in the region of Cita, Rubtsovsk, Korbalinsk and Altai, while in the deposits of copper-nickel, copper-sulphur, they are found in Otcabirsk, Talnakh and Udokan. The main silver ore reserve (98%) is in Okotsk-Chukchi and the Eastern part of Sikhote-Alin, the volcanic belt⁶⁵.

Antimony reserves. With the antimony stocks, Russia is the first among the CSI Countries. Antimony is located in the main *vein*, the Eniseysk hydrothermal deposits type (Razdolninsk and Udereysk), Yakutia (Sarilah, Sentachanskij)⁶⁶.

Non-metallic industrial raw material reserves. The Russian Federation's subsoil is rich in certain types of raw materials (asbestos, graphite, mica etc.). The asbestos deposits are represented by certain genetic and mineral types, but it is the chrysotile asbestos which is found in much quantity. The largest deposits belong to the regions of Bazenovskoye of Krasnouralsk from Ural, Kiembaysk in the south area of the Ural, Aktovraskoe, Sayan, Ilchirskoe and Molodiojnoe from Transbaikalia. The graphite deposits are known in the eastern Ural, Siberia, and the Far East. The majority of them are metamorphic (in taiga, the Ural Mountains, eastern Siberia and the Far East). The Botogolskoe deposit within the eastern Sayan Mountains is of nepheline-magma type. The largest crystalline ores deposits are found in the Urals, in the taiga in the Irkutsk region and with amorphous structure in the Krasnoyarsk region⁶⁷.

Diamond resources. In Russia, the first diamond has been discovered in the region of Perm. In Siberia, the first diamond was found in 1897 (Enisei), its dimension being of 2/3 karats. Another diamond has been discovered in Siberia in 1948. There are endogenous deposits. *Diamonddiefurous* is to be found in the Yacutia province. The endogenous deposits of the Siberian platform contain kimberlites ores, spread in an alluvial way (the main source of diamond exploitation is left to the intermediaries), while the Ural and Yakutia deposits are best known. One of the largest world industrial diamond deposits is found in Popigai⁶⁸.

Non-metallic construction materials. Non-metallic construction materials are the sand and rock ores deposits, materials used in certain constructions. There are almost 100 types of mineral raw materials. The industrial deposits are associated with alluvial, marine, glacial, wind (sand) deposits. In the state records almost 8,500

⁶⁵ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

deposits appear out of which 80% appear as brick, tile, clay materials, chalk raw material and construction materials. The largest deposits are Sichevskoe, operated in the Moscow areas (the 162.9 million cubic meters deposits), Kirsinskoe in Kirov (124,800,000 cubic meters) and Vyazemskoye from Smolensk (104,500,000 cubic meters). The most sand and rock deposits are limited at the alluvial deposits. As covering material, the granite along with the grano-diorites, senates, gneiss-granites, basalts, andesitic, are being used. The Russian Federation's depths contain large quantities of raw material for cement⁶⁹.

Hydroenergetic resources. Russia disposes of large hydro-energetic resources, over 80% of them being situated in the Asian part. With Volga being the largest European River with 3688 km and its tributary Kama, of 2032 km, they have been the subject of certain complex adjustments, achieved mainly in the 13 Hydro Power Stations with a final power of over 13,500 MW. Hydrographic improvements have been made also on the big Siberian Rivers: Obi, Enisei, Angara, Lena, Amur⁷⁰. In 2006, Russia was producing electric power in nuclear power stations of almost 5.6% of the world's production that is 156 billions of KWh⁷¹.

In 2007, Russia occupied rank 4 in the world, among the electric power producers with a range of 5.3% of the world's production.⁷² Russia currently holds the 4th place among the countries with nuclear power installed in 2006⁷³.

Forestry fund. Russia holds 8513 thousand square kilometers of forests (22% of those existent on the planet)⁷⁴.

Fisheries. In 2007 Russia was ranked 10 worldwide, at the amount of fish caught, with 3.4 million tons⁷⁵.

Wheat production. In 2007 Russia was ranked the 4th in the world at wheat production with 49.4 million tons, that is 8.1% of the world's production.⁷⁶

Conclusions

It is obvious that, geopolitically thinking, Russia has great difficulties when it comes to demography, because of the decrease of birth rate, to the poor demographic density, low life expectancy and its population's precarious general health state. All the same, Russia is nowadays the richest country in the world.

⁶⁹ <http://tpu.ru/> Томский политехнический университет. Accessed in 20.05.2012.

⁷⁰ Bebe Negoiescu, Gheorghe Vlăsceanu, *Geografie economică. Resursele Terrei*, p.175.

⁷¹ Silviu Neaguț (Coordinator) et al., *Geografie economică mondială*, p. 81.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.165.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

The American geostrategist Zbigniew Brezinski said that a state, in order to reach the status of world super-power must have to get the following in four decisive fields: from the military point of view have an unmatched world extension; from the economical point of view to be a rich state, from the technological point of view to hold the first place in at least some of the innovation's peak branches; from the cultural point of view to dominate a great part of the world by its attraction.

Thus analyzing Russia's situation one may observe that, from the military point of view it cannot control the oceans and the seas of the world, neither does it holds advanced military bases, or in key positions, even though it holds sufficiently developed conventional forces and nuclear arsenal. From the economical point of view Russia hasn't been and is not a super-power, the Russian State being on its way to upgrade its economical infrastructure. Instead, it has become an energetic superpower of the world, even if it does not have a high productivity economy, which would confirm and sustain its geopolitical options. From the technological point of view, Russia has appropriate capabilities, holds technologies necessary to the exploration of the cosmic space and production of sophisticated weapons, but still, it doesn't succeed in dominating any of the world economy peak sectors. From the cultural point of view, Russia performs an attraction degree only for the Russian minorities in the ex-soviet space, its cultural influence into the world being currently limited. Contemporary Russia is no longer a super-power, even though it holds a major role in the energetic and natural resources field both in Europe and Asia.⁷⁷

Currently, Russia hasn't been able to ensure itself a status of super-power, compared to that of the USA, because of some main reasons: from the military point of view, it is unable to control the oceans of the world, although it holds some reasonable naval capacities; also, it cannot control the Euro-Asian continental area, though it holds terrestrial forces, at a high level of quality and quantity, as well as the fact that it does not hold advanced military bases or disposed in key positions, which would allow it to issue claims. Russia holds well developed nuclear arsenals, and cosmic technology, significant airline capacities and a very well trained reaction force⁷⁸. The Moscow's decisional factors have not give up on their traditional policy of territorial extension and trying to regain the universal, world dominant power status⁷⁹.

The field in which Russia is truly a super-power is the energetic one, the

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

⁷⁸ Ionuț Constantin, *Evoluții Geopolitice în Asia Centrală: Politica României față de statele din regiune (1991-2007)* [Geopolitical evolutions in Central Asia: Romania's policy towards the region states], Bucharest, Top Form: Univers Științific Publishing House, 2011, p. 77.

⁷⁹ Radu Ștefan Vergatti, *Puncte de vedere asupra geopoliticii ruse* [Points of view over the Russian geopolitics], in „GeoPolitica”, Bucharest, Top Form Publishing House, no. 24 , 2007, p.153.

paradox being that in spite of this potential, the Russian economy is not as developed as to be helped in the fight for the Euro-Asian and world supremacy⁸⁰.

Russia will continue to be, for a certain 10-15 years amount of time, a major world actor on the energetic market. Because of the existence of a protection system from the part of the state, the monopoly type, there are no appropriate programs of re-technology or development of the hydrocarbons production, and there have also been cases of not respecting some agreements with international companies. Russia still depends economically on the income obtained from the oil and natural gas exports⁸¹. The Russian authorities have taken over the control of the energetic sectors and are willing to attract foreign investors, given the situation. Hydrocarbons represent 20% of the GDP and 40% of the budget casings⁸².

Currently, the external policy of the Russian Federation is being built on three development directions:

- a. Russia will play the role of the world supplier of energy and energetic power.
- b. Advanced cooperation between the Russian Federation and EU, with the development of some special relations with France and Germany.
- c. Reconciliation of Russia with the West, as a basis of the external policy pragmatism, Russia being determined to protect its interests in a firm manner, without reaching a confrontation, using mainly the Euro-Asians paradigm in the detriment of the euro-Atlantic one⁸³.

We consider that Russia could become a real super-power in the next two decades if it will solve its demographical problems and will build a Western-style army and economy, based on its huge economic resources.

⁸⁰ Ionuț Constantin, *Evoluții Geopolitice în Asia Centrală: Politica României față de statele din regiune (1991-2007)*, p. 77.

⁸¹ Dragoș Bănescu, *Politica energetică a Rusiei* [Russia's energetical policy], in „GeoPolitica”, Bucharest, Top Form Publishing House, no. 24, 2007, p. 81.

⁸² Stan Petrescu, *Federația Rusă între revenirea la statutul de superputere și pragmatism* [The Russian Federation between regaining the super-power status and pragmatism], in „GeoPolitica”, Top Form Publishing House, Bucharest, no. 24, 2007, p. 35.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.