UDK 327
https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2403563B
Original Scientific Article
Received 18.04.2024. Accepted 07.06.2024.

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIETY
VOL. 35, NO. 3, 459–730

To cite text:
Byrd, Dustin J. 2024. "From 'We Want to Destroy the Regime' to 'We Want to Destroy the World Order': Russian Multipolarity and the Enlistment of the Post-Arab Spring Dār Al-islām." Philosophy and Society 35 (3): 563–584.

Dustin J. Byrd

FROM "WE WANT TO DESTROY THE REGIME" TO "WE WANT TO DESTROY THE WORLD ORDER": RUSSIAN MULTIPOLARITY AND THE ENLISTMENT OF THE POST-ARAB SPRING DĀR AL-ISLĀM

ABSTRACT
The Arab Spring produced new optimism in the Middle East regarding the possibility of democracy at the heart of the Muslim world. However, as the years passed, such optimism abated, leaving bitterness and cynicism in its wake. During the Arab Spring, Vladimir Putin watched in horror as numerous "strong men" lost power, or nearly lost power, including his ally, Bashar al-Assad. Determined not to allow what he saw as the West's meddling in the Middle East provide a template for his own removal from power, Putin embarked on an anti-Western campaign to create a "multipolar world," one that would liberate the strong men rulers from the demands of the "rules-based order," i.e., the "unipolar world." Key to the success of this campaign was the fostering of an alliance between the *Russkii Mir* (Russian World) and the *dār al-Islām* (Abode of Islam). Together with other parts of the world, such a coalition would resist the collective power of the Western world and attempt to bring about global conditions wherein "traditional" peoples can express their cultural, political, and economic particularities without being subject to the corrosive influence of the West. Key to this anti-Occident ideology is the far-right Russian philosopher, Alexander Dugin, and his neo-Eurasianist ideology. This essay explores how Dugin's "reactionary modernist" ideology contributes to the struggles against the unipolar world, while at the same time arguing that his philosophy will most likely not be successful within the *dār al-Islām* for a variety of political, social, and religious reasons. If the promises of the Arab Spring are ever to come to fruition, this article argues, it will not be through a palingenetic Russia led by Putin.

KEYWORDS
Vladimir Putin, Alexander Dugin, Unipolarity, Multipolarity, Reactionary Modernism, New Middle Ages, Russkii Mir, al-Dajjal, Fitnah, Axis of Resistance.

Dustin J. Byrd: Professor of Philosophy and Religion, The University of Olivet, USA: dustinjbyrd@gmail.com.

Introduction

The early 2010s saw an explosion of political uprisings throughout the Arab world. Dubbed the "Arab Spring" (*al-rabīʿ al-ʿarabī*), these protest movements, which sought the removal of long-standing dictators, occurred first in Tunisia, then spread to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Large-scale street protests also occurred to a lesser degree in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco, and Oman. As those in the streets demanded the removal of their governments, they were met by severe state repression by military forces, counterdemonstrations, and pro-government militias. While some were successful in deposing their rulers, such as the removal of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt (2011), Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (2011), and Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia (2012), others remained unsuccessful, leaving their dictators and royal families entrenched in power. Nevertheless, as the dictators began to fall, a feeling of change swept through the Middle East, a change that attempted to address decades of authoritarianism, economic stagnation, kleptocracy, corruption, and systematic human rights violations. While many Western commentators, political pundits, and politicians, celebrated what they thought was the outburst of long-repressed democratic desires, in Moscow, Vladimir Putin watched in horror, as seemingly secure authoritarian regimes began to crumble under the weight of the protests. Putin did not see a dawn of a new democratic age emerging in the Arab world. Rather, he saw the meddling of Western powers in a region that was vitally important to his Eurasian geopolitics – as the Middle East is geographically important to secure the underbelly of Russia, as well as manage Russia's own Muslim population. For Putin, the Western powers, led by the United States, were not only willing to use peaceful protests to advance their own geopolitical objectives, but they also supported violent insurgencies and coups against those who stood in the way of their objectives, injecting instability in a region that desperately needed stability. Putin, already dealing with an unhappy population at home due to the "tandemocracy,"[1] keenly understood that the Arab Spring, along with the "color revolutions" of Eastern Europe which proceeded the Arab Spring, could serve as a blueprint for his own removal from office – an outcome he was keen to avoid.[2]

In this essay, I will discuss how the Arab Spring and its Western "sponsors" accelerated an already existing rightward turn in the geo-political ideology of the Kremlin, which forwarded the idea of a "multipolar world" as a future

1 At the time of the Arab Spring, Putin was serving as Prime Minister but was widely seen as the ultimate power behind his Presidential acolyte, Dmitry Medvedev, who served as President of the Russian Federation from May 7, 2008, to May 7, 2012, directly after Putin's first two terms as President. As was expected, in 2012, Vladimir Putin was elected to a third term as President. This unusual swapping of power in Moscow has been called the "Medvedev-Putin tandemocracy" (Тандем Медведев—Путин).

2 The "color revolutions" refer to a variety of protests in post-Soviet states that resulted in a change of government, including the "Rose Revolution" in George (2003); the "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine (2004), and the "Tulip Revolution" in Kyrgyzstan (2005).

alternative to the present "unipolar world." The concept of "multipolarity" has been developed most thoroughly by the enigmatic Russian philosopher, Alexander Dugin, in his Fourth Political Theory and his ideology of Neo-Eurasianism (Dugin 2012, Dugin 2014). If such a challenge to Western dominance in the world is to succeed, Dugin argues that the "Islamic civilization" (*dār al-Islām*) must unify and join the Russian "civilization-state," as well as other independent civilizations such as the Chinese and Indian civilizations, in opposing the West's unipolar dominance. The only way to stop the dysgenic chaos that comes with Western liberal democracy and its militaristic interventions into the affairs of sovereign states is for distinct civilizations to combine forces and defeat the hegemonic West. In this world-historical project, the subaltern Muslim world, especially the Arab world, is central to materializing multipolarity. This essay will both explain Dugin's (and the Kremlin's) position on the necessity of multipolarity in international relations, as well as offer a critique of it, as I find it to be fundamentally flawed on various points, especially as it relates to Islam, Muslims, and the *dār al-Islām*.

The Birth of Unipolarity

Unipolarity, or the hegemony of the West, emerged after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, which was celebrated as a world historical event by Western liberal theorists such as Francis Fukuyama in his famous book, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Fukuyama 1992, Nad 2022: 139).[3] "Post-historical" liberal democracy and capitalism had seemingly triumphed over authoritarianism and communism, and after the reunification of Germany (1989) as well as the Maastricht Treaty's founding of the European Union (1992), there were no other viable alternatives to the model of governance and economy preferred by Western nations. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had been brought to its knees, and those countries that were previously dependent on it looked Westward for their democratic future (Nad 2022: 139). Additionally, it was assumed that those "third world" nations still trapped in totalitarian systems, many of which were in the Muslim world, would inevitably succumb to their neoliberal fate. However, according to the critics of this new world order, unipolarity did not bring about a state of international ataraxia. Rather, the emerging unipolar condition was challenged by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War of 1991, two Russian wars on Chechnya (1994–1996, 1999–2009), the Yugoslav Wars (1991–1995), the Kosovo War (1998–1999), as well as a variety of smaller conflicts in Africa, Latin America, North Africa, and Central Asia. The 1990s also saw major terror attacks on the United States in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as at home on the World Trade

3 The fall of the Soviet Union was famously described by Putin as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century," as it greatly reduced the size of Russia while leaving millions of Russians within the borders of the newly created countries on Russia's periphery.

Center in New York City (1993) and on the Alfred B. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (1995), with the culmination of such attacks happening with al-Qaeda's attack on the U.S. on September 11th, 2001. Despite these challenges, and sometimes taking advantage of them, Western unipolarity consolidated its power via international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This Western domination of global institutions, combined with the U.S.'s long military reach, created a condition wherein the Western interests eclipsed the interests of the rest, economically, culturally, and politically, all in the name of a "rules-based international order" (RBIO). Thus, this unipolar condition led to Western entities' (both states and institutions) abilities to intervene into non-Western civilizations with ease, and thus determine their political, economic, and cultural development, with little to no meaningful opposition (Perkins 2004).

Putin's Rightward Turn: Against Liberal Unipolarity

President Vladimir Putin was handed power of the Russian Federation upon the resignation of Boris Yeltsin on December 31st, 1999. Soon after, elections were held, and the little-known former KGB officer was inaugurated for his first term in office (May 7, 2000) with fanfare invoking the bygone era of the Tsars (Nad 2022: 141–142). Although in his first years he appeared to many in the West as a liberal-oriented reformist, by the mid-2000s, Putin's political orientation had grown more militaristic, nationalist, and virulently anti-Western. In 2007, at the Munich Security Conference, he famously criticized the West's growing hegemony over international relations, its unilateral use of military force on the world stage (especially the 2003 invasion of Iraq), and the instability it creates via its demands for democratic reform in countries with no tradition of democracy. All these criticisms were indicative of the fact that the post-Cold War world was now subject to unipolarity. As U.S. officials, including Senator John McCain watched on, Putin exclaimed that the U.S.-led unipolar world is "a world in which there is one master, one sovereign" (Putin 2007). Years later, Moscow saw the dirty hands of this unipolar world order all over the Arab Spring, as authoritarian (yet stable) regimes were confronted with the demand to democratize, resign, or be toppled. The populist chant, "الشعب يريد إسقاط النظام" ("we want to destroy the regime"), which was heard throughout the Arab world during the Arab Spring, put Putin on notice: the Russian people too may begin to think in such revolutionary ways, and they will have allies in the West.

The three countries that experienced the Arab Spring that were most important to Putin were Egypt, Libya, and Syria. In Egypt, Putin witnessed the downfall of Hosni Mubarak, who had been in power since 1981 and had cultivated strong ties to the United States, who often looked askance at Mubarak's abysmal human rights record and the brutality of his secular regime. In Mubarak's case, not only were the demonstrations in Tahrir "Liberation" Square (*Maydān*

at-Taḥrīr) unrelenting, especially after the Egyptian military and police murdered numerous protesters, but Mubarak was also pressured to abdicate power by then-U.S. President Barak Obama. For Putin, Mubarak's eventual abdication demonstrated that so-called "allies" of the United States rule their nations only at the pleasure of Washington D.C., and that the "democratic" removal of stable authoritarian regimes creates socio-economic chaos and power vacuums, which are often filled by even worse regimes, such as that of "Islamist" Mohamed Morsi and *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* (Muslim Brotherhood) in the case of Egypt (Arafat 2012). At any time, the political-economic leverage the U.S. has on countries could be utilized to remove their leaders from power in the name of "democratization." For Egypt, that leverage included the over $1.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) that the U.S. sent to Egypt each year, which was only seconded to the amount sent to Israel (POMED 2020). Ultimately, Putin's lesson from Egypt was the following: if the unipolar hegemon wants a leader gone, they have the tools to make that happen, with or without a direct *coup d'état* or military intervention. The "revolutionary" mobilization of the people against their ruling regime can be utilized for the expansion of unipolarity.

Another Arab country that Putin watched closely was Libya. Since the 1969 *coup d'état* of the Libyan King Idris I, the flamboyant and often unpredictable Muammar Qaddafi ruled what he declared in 1977 to be the Socialist People's Libya Arab Jamāhīrīyah (people's state) of Libya.[4] Qaddafi's political ideology was tied with Third World liberation and decolonization movements and had cultivated ties with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the 1970s and 1980s, Qaddafi was seen as an important figure in the Middle East and North Africa's resistance to Western domination (Chan 2021). Likewise, Libya was seen as a major sponsor of terrorism by Western nations, especially after the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Although he maintained the claim that he did not order the attack, Qaddafi ultimately took responsibility for the Lockerbie bombing, and in 2008 paid $1.5 billion in compensation the families of the U.S. victims in exchange for normalized relations with the U.S. government (Al-Jazeera 2008). Yet, in 2011, inspired by the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, Libyans took to the streets of Tripoli, Ben Ghazi, and other cities, demanding the overthrow of Qaddafi, who by that time was seen as a despotic relic of an antiquated liberation movement. Despite the normalized relations, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the Obama administration to support the people's overthrow of Qaddafi (Friedersdorf 2015). As the Libyan protests turned into a civil war, Putin watched as the Libyan people, with the assistance of airstrikes by the British Royal Navy and the U.S. Navy, overthrew Qaddafi's government (Stent 2020: 268).[5] Wounded

4 In 1986, this title was revised to the "Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya," which lasted until 2011.

5 Putin was reportedly dismayed at the lack of support for Qaddafi on the part of Dimitry Medvedev, who ordered Russia's ambassador to the United Nations to abstain from voting on the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 instead of vetoing it, which

in a firefight, Gaddafi was seized by members of the National Transitional Council (NTC), who would eventually murder Qaddafi and put his mutilated corpse on display (Pargeter 2012, Chivvis 2014). Videos of Qaddafi's lifeless body being abused by those Qaddafi once ruled over sent a chilling message to dictators around the world.

For Putin, the Western-supported overthrow of another authoritarian leader, one who happened to curry favor with Moscow for decades, was another sign that the unipolar world was lawless, chaotic, and corrosive to established regimes. Regardless of Libya's attempt to normalize its relations with the U.S., the U.S. still supported Qaddafi's overthrow in the name of democracy.

Putin learned a different lesson in Syria: if unipolarity was to be arrested and abated, it would start by first standing up to it. The U.S.'s intervention into the Syrian civil war, which also began with the Arab Spring, was bitterly opposed by Bashar al-Assad and his backers in Moscow. The Kremlin had long-established ties with Syria, beginning with Bashar al-Assad's father, Hafez al-Assad, who had developed such ties already with the Soviet Union (Stent 2020: 269). Putin further strengthened Russia's ties to the Syrian regime by forgiving almost 75% of Syria's $13.5 billion debt to Russia and increasing the arms sales to $4.7 billion (Stent 2020: 270). As such, when the U.S. and other Western countries entered Syria to fight against the Islamist group, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as to topple the al-Assad regime, it was Russia that came to his defense. Russia not only attacked ISIS and the Islamist group, Jabhat al-Nusra, but also the secular anti-Assad Free Syrian Army (FSA), which was backed by the U.S (Stent 2020: 270–271). Despite crossing Obama's "red lines" concerning the use of chemical weapons, the U.S. was reluctant to intervene in Syria beyond the backing of the FSA, possibly due to the heavy Russian involvement, which included Russia's naval base in Tartus and air base in Hmeimim, as well as a large contingent of Wagner mercenaries, led by "Putin's Chef," Yevgeny Prigozhin. The U.S. would eventually pull most of its military assets out of Syria, at least to such a degree that it was no longer attempting to topple the al-Assad regime. Putin understood this as a triumph for his aggressive foreign policy. To stop the expansion of the unipolar world, Russia had to commit itself to the fight. The result of Putin's intervention in Syria, according to Angela Stent, was that Putin "reestablished Russia as a major power in the Middle East and achieved one of his major goals: ensuring Russia has a seat at the table on all major international decisions" (Stent 2020: 274). From the perspective of the Kremlin, the unipolar world had backed off; multipolarity, led by Russia, was on its way.

Yet, trouble wasn't only in the near-abroad for Putin, it was close at home. Running nearly parallel to the Arab Spring (2011–2012) were mass protests in a variety of Russian cities regarding the irregularities in the December 4th, 2011,

effectively green-lighted NATO's attack on Libya. Putin publicly chastised Medvedev's decision, saying, "the West is not to be trusted – once they pocket your concession, they ignore you."

legislative elections and the March 4th, 2012, presidential election, i.e., the latter of which firmly established Putin and Medvedev's "tandemocracy" (Short 2022: 495–537). This "democratic" unrest was also perceived by Putin to have been fomented by the Obama administration, and most specifically neoliberal hawk, Hillary Clinton, who saw Putin's increasingly illiberal regime and its military intervention in Chechnya and Georgia as a threat to the Rules Based International Order.[6] It appeared to Putin that his own regime was at risk of falling victim to the same "democratic uprisings" supported by Washington D.C. that Egypt and Libya succumbed to. Having learned his lessons in Syria regarding the importance of standing up to protest movements inspired and supported by the West, Putin brutally suppressed the 25,000 protestors in Moscow's Pushkin Square. Among those chanting "Russia will be free," were West-oriented reformers Alexei Navalny, Sergey Udaltsov, and Ilya Yashin, and other leaders of an anti-Putin coalition. Despite the intensity of the protests, which went into 2013, Putin, like Bashar al-Assad, survived the opposition, with the help of new draconian laws (foreign agent laws, treason laws, and increased restrictions on public assemblies, the internet, and NGOs, etc.), as well as police violence that suppressed the street protests (Human Rights Watch 2013). Amidst the crackdowns, Putin framed the images of the chaotic nature of the Arab Spring as a reminder of Russia's own anomic situation of the 1990s, wherein Moscow lost its ability to adequately govern the post-communist nation, thus resulting in a period of low wages, lack of resources, rampant corruption, hyperinflation, and pervasive crime. He made it well known to the nation that it was his heavy hand that ended Yeltsin's Western-backed "shock therapy," which had resulted in the 1998 economic crash of the Russian economy. A revolution on par with the Arab Spring could wipe away all the economic and social progress that had been made since Putin took power on December 31st, 1999. A depoliticization of the populace was in order, not a revolution. According to Putin's biographer, Philip Short, Putin's third term marked a period of "deepening change" that was radically different from his first two terms in office, and once the internal threat was adequately suppressed through his newly granted powers, Putin could once again turn his attention to the external threat (Short 2022: 538).

The Arab Spring and the mass protests in Russia against the tandemocracy were enlightening for Putin; it demonstrated to him that the lack of a true countervailing force on the world stage, which would limit the actions of the Western hegemon as the Soviets had done during the Cold War, allowed the

6 Attempting to forward the "Russian Reset" policy, in 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov with a red button with the word "перегрузка" in Cyrillic. While it was meant to say "перезагрузка" (Reset) [perezagruzka], it said "Overload" [peregruzka] in Russian. The Russian Reset policy was meant as a rapproachment between the U.S. and Russia after relations were bitterly strained due to the 2008 Russo-Georgian War, wherein Russia occupied South Ossetia in Georgia. Looking back, this misunderstanding seems to be an ominous sign of what was to come.

West to impose its political and socio-economic will upon subaltern nations, with dissatisfied populations acting as its means of doing so. What was needed to address this international imbalance of power was both internal suppression of the Western-backed opposition, and the building of an anti-Western, anti-unipolar coalition of large and small states that could resist the corrosive power of the West. To produce such a countervailing force, Moscow turned to a palingenetic ultra-nationalist political ideology that would both restore the greatness of Russia and attempt to enlist the post-Arab Spring states as well as other Muslim majority countries into a coalition of civilizations standing firm against Western globalization, neoliberalism, and democracy, i.e., unipolarity.[7] This aspirational coalition, rooted in widespread grievances against the Western world, would be tasked with championing the cause of multipolarity.

Reactionary Modernism and Anti-Western Multipolarity

The Constitution of the Russian Federation does not allow for the government to have an official ideology, as was the case with communism in the Soviet Union (Legalforum 2023).[8] However, such a prohibition does not limit political parties from adopting a guiding ideology. This is true for Russia's dominant party, the All-Russia Political Party, or as it is commonly called, "Russian United," led by Vladimir Putin. While in 2009, at the 11th Party Congress in St. Petersburg, the party proclaimed that "Russian Conservativism" was its official ideology (Trenin 2010: 27). Such a vague title does not adequately reveal the specific content of such "conservativism," which is necessary to distinguish the peculiarities of Russian conservativism from other forms of conservativism. According to Paul Robinson, Putin's Russian Conservativism includes five essential components: (1) a "revival of the Russian Orthodox Church," (2) the "centralization of political authority," (3) the embrace of "growing Russian nationalism," (4) the "increased tensions between Russia and the Western world," and (5) the enactment of "socially conservative legislation" (Robinson 2019: 181). In addition to these five, an additional component should be added: what Alexander Dugin calls "defensive modernization" (Rooney 2023: 58). Post-Bolshevik Russia inherited the Soviet Union's push to modernize through the advancement of science, instrumental reason, and technological knowledge. With this tech-savviness

7 For a comprehensive study of Putin's eclectic political ideology, see Mikhaeil Suslov's book, *Putinism: Post-Soviet Russian Regime Ideology.* Like Alexander Dugin's "Fourth Political Theory," and his Neo-Eurasianism, Putin's political philosophy draws upon right-wing thinkers such as Aleksander Zinov'ev, the 19th century Slavophiles, and Eurasianists. While taking Tsar Alexander III as a model, Putin delved into the writings of the Russian fascist, Ivan Ilyin, whose corpse (from Switzerland) and writings (from the US) he repatriated. Also see Michel Eltchaninoff's book, *Inside the Mind of Vladimir Putin,* especially pages 45–56.

8 This fact has not stopped numerous prominent Russian idealogues from calling for a new state ideology based on traditional moral and spiritual values, as it is seen to be a necessary defense mechanism against Western liberalism, individualism, and secularity.

combined with the palingenetic cultural demands of Russian Conservativism, Putin's Russia can accurately be described as a "reactionary modernist" regime, one that attempts to remain both at the forefront of technology while simultaneously protecting its pre-modern traditional values and identity (Herf 1998: 1–17). Thus, this Janus-facing political ideology attempts to reconcile the anti-modern and irrationalist elements within Russian nationalism, especially those elements rooted in Russian Orthodoxy, with post-metaphysical autonomous reason and techne, the hallmarks of Western modernity. Together, they create a future-oriented remembrance and embrace of the past to bring about a technologically advanced and militarily powerful "retrotopia" (Bauman 2017: 5).[9] As such, Putin's Russia is a palingenetic ultra-nationalist project, one that is meant to form a retrotopian state out of the cultural content of pre-Soviet Russian Imperialism, and the scientific content of Soviet communism. This reactionary-modernist state is a challenge to the assumption that cultural modernization (liberalization) is inherently wedded to technological modernization. Russia seeks to demonstrate that when palingenetic conservativism and technological modernism are brought together, it produces a viable alternative to the modern liberal state and the atomized, post-modern, libertine society it creates. In the case of Russia, such a palingenetic ultra-nationalist state should have the capacity and willingness to spearhead the struggle against Western unipolarity, both in the realm of culture and technology.

Considering this, it is not accurate to think of Putin's Russia as being wholly anti-modernist, as that only accounts for the *cultural* trends in Russia. Moscow is fully aware that an anachronistic "return" to the Russian past – the "new Middle Ages" as described by Nicolas Berdyaev – without a concurrent advancement in technology would leave Russia vulnerable to the technologically superior West (Berdyaev 2009: 67–120, Khapaeva 2024: 36–70). Thus, despite the cultural embrace of the values and identity of pre-modern Russia, rooted in Tsar Alexander I's imperial doctrine of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality," Russia has no choice but to remain at the forefront of technological advances, for without doing so it cannot wage an effective resistance to Western unipolarity, nor can it protect the cultural conservativism the regime advocates. However, according to Dugin, such a "progress in weaponry" and other "aspects of modernization" is lamentable; it means Russia is "going deeper and deeper into the hell of the modernity" (Rooney 2023: 59). Nevertheless, the anti-Modernist elements in Putin's political philosophy, which he shares with Dugin, will become especially important to building a coalition with other "traditional" (and aggrieved) states, including those in the Muslim world.

9 By the term "retrotopia," the Polish theorist, Zygmunt Bauman, refers to "visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past, instead of being tied to the not-yet-unborn and so inexistent future." While his concept of retrotopia is primarily about cultural nostalgia, reactionary modernists attempt to build a political present with the socio-political and religious content of the past without the reactionary rejection of technology that is common in romantic thought, i.e., Heidegger et al.

Despite this mission, Putin is well aware that such an attempt to climb back into the role of a world-historical force, as Russia was when it was at the core of the Soviet Union, cannot be done unless Russia realizes two imperatives: (1) Russia must return to the borders of the Soviet Empire (or at minimum the borders of the Tsarist Empire), and (2) it must develop strong ties with other aggrieved non-Western "civilizations" that can serve as independent poles in a multipolar world. To the first point, Neo-Eurasianist philosophy, which informs (but does not determine) Putin's politics, argues that the entirety of the "Russkii Mir" (Russian World) must be reintegrated into a singular "civilization-state," either by alliance or by force, which helps explain why Moscow finds it necessary to keep Ukraine securely within the Russosphere (Rooney 2023: 99–113). To the second point, one of the civilizations that Moscow looks to develop alliances with is the *dār al-Islām*, especially the Arab, Turkish, and Iranian states, which are located geographically in the underbelly of Russia, and are also strategically important to Western interests (Stent 2020: 258–292).[10] The first imperative is a matter for another discussion; we will focus on the second in his study.

Islam and Muslims in a Russian-led Multipolar World: Enter Alexander Dugin

The most prominent theorist of multipolarity in Russia today is Alexander Dugin. A member of the "Old Believers" sect of Russian Orthodoxy, Dugin alloys the geopolitical theories of the Nazi jurist Carl Schmitt and Karl Haushofer, Heideggerian existentialism, with the esoteric traditionalism of René Guénon and Julius Evola. Additionally, his political philosophy incorporates the cultural politics of France's *Nouvelle Droite*, Russian Orthodox political theology, Ivan Ilyin's form of Russian fascism, and the Eurasianism of Nikolai Danilevsky, Nikolai Trubetskoy, Petr Suvchinsky, and Petr Savitsky, alongside the Russian biopolitics of Lev Gumilev. Dugin's religio-political philosophy, which is an eclectic mix of recycled thought riddled with inconsistencies, is decidedly far-right in nature, and for this, he is often described as a "fascist" by his critics (Clover 2016: 174).[11]

Dugin's philosophy is decidedly anti-Western, anti-Liberal, and anti-Democratic. He advocates for the return to Tsardom (under Putin if necessary) and the maximalization of the Russosphere, i.e., a Russian Empire that dominates the Eurasian expanse – from Vladivostok to Lisbon (Brands 2023). Long before the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Dugin advocated for the forceful reintegration of Ukraine into Russia, to "kill, kill, kill Ukrainians," and even risk

10 According to Angela Stent, Russia also has strengthened ties with Saudi Arabia and Israel, to the ire of the United States.

11 Dugin's one-time collaborator, Eduard Limonov, described Dugin as the "St. Cyril and Methodius of fascism," invoking the Christian missionaries who brought Christianity to the Slavs.

nuclear exchange with the West if Russia loses its 2022 "Special Military Operation" (SMO) in Ukraine (Clover 2016: 327, Rooney 2023: 103).[12] "We would prefer to destroy mankind… if there is no Russia in the world, let such a world die" (Rooney 2023: 59). As the "Third Rome," Dugin believes that Russia is the latest "Katechon" (Restrainer) of the Apocalypse, as described in St. Paul's 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians, and therefore has the messianic duty to resist the "Son of Perdition," i.e., the Anti-Christ. Dugin identifies the United States – the chief source of chaos, disorder, and instability in the world today – as the Anti-Christ (Byrd 2024, Meyendorff 2003). When asked about holy war in the Russian Orthodox tradition, Dugin states:

> In the Orthodox Christian tradition, an empire is not only in the material world, but it is a kind of reflection, a mirror, of the eternal heavenly kingdom. And the status of the empire, the ontology of empire and emperor is to be a Katechon; that is, to be a kind of obstacle to Satan invading the world. It is a defense of the border, a defense of the fortress, and the empire was considered to be a holy fortress in the path of Satan, and to fight and die for the empire was considered to be a religious duty that was not egoistic, that was not material in the sense of gathering more objects and accumulating riches, but the idea is/was the sacred… After the fall of Constantinople, according to the Russian Orthodox tradition, the place and the function of the Katechon – Empire and Emperor – shifted to Russia (Rooney 2023: 80).

If Russia were to be defeated in this modern "holy war" (Dugin's term), then the reign of the Anti-Christ (Western unipolarity) is complete, and there is no point in allowing the world to continue (Rooney 2023: 79).[13]

Operating within this worldview, Dugin has long argued that the world outside of Russia is dependent upon Russia to stop the advancement of the "demonic" unipolarity of the West. Yet, Russia is a "subaltern empire," a limited empire operating beneath the power of the hegemonic empire, the U.S.-led West, struggling to be taken seriously as a global power (Morozov 2015). In order to achieve this recognition, and to bring about meaningful resistance to the hegemon, the subaltern empire must build conservative coalitions of aggrieved nations and civilizations that are willing to combat the unipolar condition and thus rescue the world from globalism.

Russia's return to the world-historical stage, especially after it successfully defended Bashar al-Assad from the United States and its Syrian allies, along with its unilateral invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, has led Dugin to believe the beginning of the end of the unipolar world has begun. According to Dugin, the latter was Russia's "final break with the West" (Dugin 2024a). In his

12 Dugin would later deny that his "kill, kill, kill" comment was directed towards Ukrainians in general but was rather about the Ukrainian perpetrators of the Odessa "Trade Union massacre" that happened during the Euromaidan uprising in May 2014.
13 Dugin argues that a "holy war" is simply the "conscious participation of the being on the side of God," and that "any war for any sacred goal is holy."

article, "Multipolarity: The Eras of the Great Transition," Dugin argues that we are in an interregnum, not fully unipolar but not quite yet multipolar. He states:

> We live in an era of significant transition. The era of the unipolar world is coming to an end, giving way to an age of multipolarity. Changes in the global architecture of the world order are fundamental... in opposition to unipolar hegemony, a new – multipolar – world is being born. This is the response of great ancient and unique civilizations, sovereign states, and peoples to the challenge of globalism (Dugin 2024b).

Among the emerging poles, Dugin identifies the following:

> It can already be said that global humanity is actively building independent civilizational poles. These are primarily Russia, awakening from its slumber; China, making a rapid leap forward; *the spiritually mobilized Islamic world*; and India, gigantic in demography and economic potential. Africa and Latin America are on their way, steadily moving towards integration and sovereignty of their vast spaces (Dugin 2024b. Emphasis added).

The "spiritually mobilized Islamic world" is especially important for Dugin, as he believes American-style liberalism, universalized via globalization, has had devastating effects on the Muslim world. Additionally, since 1953, when the CIA orchestrated a coup d'état of the Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddeq in Iran, up to the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), the U.S. has meddled in the Muslim world so thoroughly that it has created mass resentment among the Muslims. This was exasperated with the Arab Spring, as the West's support for the overthrow of dictatorial – yet stable – regimes, along with the false promises of democracy, caused additional socio-political chaos and the death of hundreds of thousands of Muslims. The deep-seated resentment that developed in response to these actions is precisely what Alexander Dugin seeks to exploit and therefore deliver to Vladimir Putin.

Dugin's geopolitical vision for the Muslim world is a vision of unity, wherein the leaders of the Muslim world would consolidate into a unified civilizational pole that would join the reconstituted Russian Empire in their anti-Western struggle. "The West has made Islam its Enemy," Dugin reminds Muslims, as he dubs the West to be the "civilization of the Anti-Christ," i.e., the "civilization of al-Dajjal" (Dugin 2023d). Just like Ukraine cannot be abandoned to the Anti-Christ, so too must the Muslim world not be abandoned to al-Dajjal. To "decolonize" the Muslim world from Western influence is to eradicate the presence of al-Dajjal in the *dār al-Islām*.

From Dugin's writings, we can ascertain three fundamental principles by which Dugin seeks to create an alliance between the Katechonic Russian Empire and the "spiritually mobilized" Muslim world: First, Dugin believes that *Islam* is the primary adhesive in the Muslim world. It is what makes Islamic civilization distinct from other civilizations, and thus for Dugin, in the absence of a unifying Caliphate, Muslims must make a palingenetic return to their Islamic roots and overcome historical forms of *fitnah* (division). Uniting under

the banner of Muhammad is the only way to overcome the *divide et impera* conditions that were imposed on the Muslim world during Western colonization, which are exploited by the neo-colonization inherent within globalization. Without a unifying return to Islam, Muslim will remain fractured, disunited, and therefore unable to resist the hegemon. Disunited, one segment of the Muslim world will be played against another, a fragmentary state that allows the hegemon to neutralize an "Islamic" resistance to its global dominance. From Dugin's perspective, the West must prevent the Muslim world from ever becoming a unified Islamic empire, i.e., a "civilization-state," like China and Russia (albeit without Ukraine). If it were to achieve the status of a unified civilization-state, it would be a powerful pole, encompassing one-fifth of the world's population (Dugin 2023a). Knowing this, Dugin envisions a palingenetic "Islamic Empire, with Baghdad as its logical center" – a new "Abbasid caliphate… unified by a powerful religion [and] underlying ideology" (Dugin 2023a).

The second of Dugin's fundamental principles is the imperative to identify the enemy in this world-historical struggle. Being a disciple of Carl Schmitt, Hitler's court jurist and theologian, Dugin has dubbed the "antithesis" to global liberation via multipolarity as the West in general and the United States in particular (Schmitt 1996: 25–37, Lewis 2021). In Islamic terms, the "enemy" is the civilization defined by *al-Dajjal* – the Anti-Christ. In Dugin's framing of the West, in the name of liberalism, it is a civilization that rejects traditional values, traditional worldviews, traditional ways-of-being-in-the-world, and one that embraces pathological neophilia over anything ancient, culturally secure, and foundational. As such, the West is conceptualized as an underminer of all things native, religious, pre-modern, and traditional, thus making the West the common "enemy" of all subaltern peoples, whose cultures have been damaged and or replaced by the globalized culture and ways-of-being of the capitalist West. Among the victims of this globalized West are the *Russkii Mir* (Russian World) and the *dār al-Islām*.

This leads us to the third fundamental principle of Dugin's aspirant Russian-Muslim coalition: Schmitt's identification of the "friend." Dugin assumes that both being the victim of the West's corrosive culture, political manipulations, and military adventurism, the *Russkii Mir* and the *dār al-Islām* are natural allies. Additionally, and for Dugin this may be even more important, both the Islamic Civilization and the Russia world are *inherently* conservative, i.e., their civilizations are based upon religious identities that are antithetical to the amorality and theomachism of Western modernity. While the West has long abandoned its religious identity and can no longer describe itself as "Christendom," due to its advanced secularization, the Russkii Mir and the Muslim world continue to maintain the importance of religion as a comprehensive way-of-being-in-the-world within their lands. In other words, the Islamic Civilization cannot survive without Islam being at the core of its identity, no more so than Russia can survive without Russian Orthodoxy as its core. The competing claims and historical antagonism between religions, in this case Russian Orthodoxy and Islam (both Sunni and Shi'i), is not the antagonism at the core of

Dugin's multipolar thought. The abiding antagonism in modernity is no longer between religions, but rather is liberal anti-religion against traditional religion. For Dugin, traditional religiosity, in all its forms, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc., is under attack from the secularized West; inter-religious squabbles are of minor importance in the face of the secular behemoth that threatens them all. In this sense, the Russo-Islamic coalition is based on the defense of traditional religion and traditional religious identities from the dysgenic effects of Western liberalism, which undermines all pre-modern religious worldviews in the name of "progress." Dugin believes that "progress," as defined by the West, is inherently antithetical to traditional religion. Although the West still occasionally refers to itself as a "Judeo-Christian" civilization, Dugin rejects that idea as "pure nonsense," due to its comprehensive adoption of the secular-democratic values (Dugin 2023e). He writes, "a society deeply rooted in atheism, materialism, and the legalization of various perversions, having long abandoned theology and traditional values, can neither be considered Christian nor Jewish" (Dugin 2023e). Furthermore, in the name of progress, Dugin writes:

> the West denies all traditional values; it distorts everything one can possibly imagine. It warps Christianity; it doesn't just create an anti-Christian civilization but also distorts it, introducing female priesthood, which is strictly prohibited, gay priests, same-sex marriages... the legalization of various perversions, tattoos, and drugs... Progress is a highly questionable thing (Dugin 2023b).

As such, the West, especially the Eurosphere, which was once the core of the Christian civilization, is now an apostate civilization, one with a "demonic mandate" (Dugin 2023e). As a "God-bearing" people, Russia cannot adopt the mandate of the demonic, for to do so would be to abandon its role as the Katechon – the restrainer of the apocalypse. Likewise, to adopt such cultural liberalism in the Muslim world would be to abandon traditional Islamic ethics, traditional morality, and the responsibility of the *Ummah* (Muslim community) to "enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" (al-Qur'ān, 3:104, 3:110).[14] Thus, for Dugin, it is imperative that traditional civilizations band together as Schmittian "friends" to resist the "utmost evil – the civilization of the Anti-Christ" (Dugin 2023e). As Dugin states, "to defend the sacred Motherland of Russia is... a sacred duty," and to do that effectively it needs to create a multipolar world, wherein global power is dispersed between a variety of imperial poles, many of which Dugin assumes would be more traditional in their cultural and political constitution. Bi-polarity, wherein Russia is a second pole, is not enough to resist the hegemon. Multipolarity is necessary according to Dugin. Thus, this vision of a multipolar world impels Dugin to seek support in the *dār al-Islām* – a part of the world that is both aggrieved by the West and religiously conservative (Rooney 2023: 80). "We are obliged to defend Chinese

14 Variation of this Qur'ānic command can also be found in the following: 9:71, 9:112, and 31:17.

truth, Islamic truth, African truth, Latin-American truth," Dugin says, "in order to find our place in the multipolar system... We have an existential need for multipolarity; it is not only a possibility, it is rather the only way for us to survive" (Rooney 2023: 87).

Fundamentalism, for Dugin, is the modern politicization of the sacred, as opposed to the traditional sacredness of the political (Rooney 2023: 83). Yet, regardless of how the *dār al-Islām* – especially in the Middle East – come to be political, what is ultimately important is that they join with Katechonic Russia in opposing the hegemonic condition of Western unipolarity. Both Shi'i Muslims and Sunni Muslims are subaltern and threatened by the domination of the West. The sectarian *fitnah* between the two is secondary to the existential threat looming over both. For Dugin, it is in the interest of the *Ummah* as a whole to ally with Orthodox Russia against the "civilization of al-Dajjal."

The Wishful Thinking of Dugin and the Russian "Enemy" of Muslims

So far, we've seen that Dugin wishes to unite the Muslim world within itself, as well as unite it with Russia in a grand coalition for the purpose of bringing about the demise of unipolarity and the birth of multipolarity. However, it is doubtful that appealing to the Islamic identity of the Muslim world is not enough to overcome deep-seated forms of *fitnah* in the Ummah, i.e., divisions created by ethno-nationalism, country-specific interests, ruling-class interests, geopolitical concerns, economic interests, the abiding nature of religious sectarianism, and the festering post-colonial wounds, such as the "Kurdish problem," that plague numerous Muslim majority nations. Islam, as a religion or as a civilizational adhesive, does not have the power to transcend the deep divisions in the Muslim world. Even when the collective grievances against the West are mobilized, there is no straight path to Muslim unity. The West's many crimes in the Muslim world, including the unconditional support for Israel and the "incremental genocide" of Palestinians; the West's numerous wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen; its support for corrupt and brutal regimes in the Arab world, are well known. Yet, the *dār al-Islām* remains fractured within a million pieces – not to mention that Western secularization, both cultural and political, has already penetrated the Muslim world, and the opposition to such is rather weak. Fundamentalism, which is an authoritarian "belief attitude," is anachronistic within modernity and lacks mass appeal (Borradori, 2003: 31–32). Western consumerism, it can be argued, is as strong in the large cities in the Muslim world as it is in London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome. Yet, it lives side-by-side with the mosques, which are still full during *Ṣalāh al-Jumuʿa* (Friday prayers) relative to the empty cathedrals and churches of Western and Central Europe. In many ways, the Muslim world has become more reconciled to this cultural Westernization than Putin's Russia, a regime which tries to distinguish between what is Western, and therefore "inauthentic," and what authentically belongs to the Russian civilization. Few if any heads of state in the Muslim

world make that distinction to mobilize political action. That type of cultural puritanism is more akin to the Sunni fundamentalism that Dugin rejects as a "caricature" of Islamic sacred politics (Rooney 2023: 83).

Dugin's appeals to Muslim unity are more wishful thinking than a serious plan to overcome *fitnah* in the Ummah, let alone unite the entire Ummah against the unipolar world. This wishful thinking plays upon the suppressed desires of Muslims themselves for a more integrated sense of community, rooted in a longing for an "imagined community" of the Islamic Golden Ages (Anderson 1983). In reality, this vision of an Islamic super-state has been effectively abandoned since the end of the Ottoman Empire, except for the occasion group supporting a new "Caliphate," such as the ISIS caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Much of the Muslim world is led by individuals who would play the U.S. and the West against Russia for their own benefit, as does the House of Saud under Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salmaan (Stent 2020: 283–288). The Arab Spring, despite its mixed results, did not mobilize the Muslim world into the Russian camp; rather, it diversified the geopolitical entanglements of the Arab world. Strict ideological adherence to Western liberal democracy or the ideology of multipolar resistance advocated by Dugin is a binary logic belonging to a past age, principally the Cold War. There is very little desire to return to such a Manichean geopolitical condition within the Middle East. While it certainly is true that independent poles are rising, especially the Chinese pole, it is doubtful that such poles will ever congeal into the regional empires that Dugin believes are necessary to resist the hegemony of the current global world order. This is especially true for the *dār al-Islām*; it is merely a collective wish among *some* that an Islamic superstate would rise out of the ashes of colonialism. Russia itself remains merely a regional power, both in the Russosphere and in the Arab world via Syria, as opposed to a world-historical force, as it was within the Soviet Union. Putin's "three-day war" in Ukraine, which is now in its second year, has demonstrated that Russia does not even have the requisite power to project its neo-imperial wishes on its neighboring states, especially when the collective West unites to defend its periphery, as it has done since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 22nd, 2022. Such an inability to control its own "zone of influence" does not build confidence in its hoped-for allies. If the multipolar condition is to come about, it is doubtful that it will be led by a reactionary modernist Russia.

Additionally, we must not forget that Russia itself has a long antagonistic history with Muslims within the traditional Russosphere and on its periphery, including former Soviet states. In its eastward expansion, the Tsarist Empire appropriated and colonized much of Muslim majority Central Asia and the Caucuses (Hiro 1995, Dugin 2018). The Russian "civilization-state" remains an empire that dominates millions of Muslims, who are themselves "subaltern" within the hegemonic Russosphere (Etkind 2011, Dugin 2018).[15] This became

15 Dugin believes that Russia by nature is a multiethnic and multi-confessional civilization, but one that is ontologically centered on the Slavic Rus.

especially clear in Russia's latest war on Ukraine, wherein an inordinate number of conscripts came from the Muslim communities in Russia's central Asian Republics (Mackinnon 2022). Historically, Muslims have not only protested Moscow's domination of the predominantly Muslim territories within Russia, but have also fought against Russian rule, with recent examples happening in Chechnya and Dagestan, etc. Tartar Muslims from the Crimea, the descendants of those who were deported by Joseph Stalin, who had hence returned to Ukrainian Crimea post-1991, are currently taking part in the war against Putin's annexation of the "Novorossiya" (Eastern and Southern Ukraine) (Hughes 2023). Just recently, on March 22nd, 2024, members of ISIS-Khorasan attacked Crocus City Hall in Moscow, killing at least 140 individuals and wounding over 400 more, most likely in response to Russia's killing of ISIS members in Syria on behalf of Bashar al-Assad (Chingaev 2024). Although Putin shifted blame to the Ukrainian government, four men, all citizens of the Muslim majority country of Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic, were later arrested and indicted for their attack in Moscow. While numerous Chechens and Syrians fought on the side of Russia in its war on Ukraine, it is clear that many other Muslims see Russia not as a Schmittian "friend," to whom they can ally against the unipolar world, but rather as another Schmittian "enemy," especially after Putin's attacks in Chechnya and Syria.

Despite the long antagonism between the Russian world and the Muslims, in the last decade, Vladimir Putin's push for a multipolar world has attempted to mobilize what has been called the "Axis of Resistance" (*Miḥwar al-Muqāwamah*), an Iranian-led political and military coalition, comprised predominately by Iran and Syria and their allied groups, Hezbollah, ʾAnṣār Allāh (Houthis in Yemen), and Hamas. This coalition has opposed the U.S.'s continual involvement in Syria as well as Israel's continual occupation of Palestine, both of which are viewed as manifestations of the unipolar world's imposition upon the Middle East. However, as previously stated, those countries at the center of the Arab Spring have on occasion developed closer ties with Russia since the uprisings, but by-in-large they have not joined Russia in its latest affront to the unipolar world order, except for Syria. Iran, which is not an Arab state, has been the most involved in Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and is the Muslim majority country most likely to remain in the sphere of Russia besides Syria. For Dugin, this is precisely because Iran, amongst all the "Islamic countries," understands that Russia's emergence as a pole is "in the interests of all emerging geopolitical poles" (Dugin 2023c). However, like Russia, Iran has seen massive protests against the cultural and political conservativism of the Islamic Republic's ruling elites. Such revolts, such as the 2022 "Women, Life, Freedom" (*Zan, Zendegi, Azadī*) uprisings, have also been discredited as being provoked and supported by the West and thus to the benefit of the unipolar world order. Nevertheless, there is growing discontent in the Muslim world, especially in the more conservative nations that Dugin himself believes as being central to the Islamic pole. It very well could be that the more conservative individual Muslim-majority states get, the more likely they will be

incapable of joining a multipolar front against the West, as such states will be consumed by their own inner-antagonisms – the dissenting subaltern against the oppression, tyranny, and dictatorship of the ruling elites.

Conclusion

The Arab Spring was a wake-up call for Vladimir Putin. He witnessed numerous strongman regimes in the Arab world toppled by the people for whom those regimes ruled. The disquiet that burst within the Middle East and North Africa in December 2010, when the Tunisian fruit seller, Mohamed Bouazizi, engaged in self-immolation to protest deteriorating economic conditions and the corruption of the Tunisian state, demonstrated to Putin that the power of the American-led unipolar world could capitalize on any nation's internal dissent to remove a regime they found unfit to rule, even if that regime had been friendly to American interests (Lageman 2020). As such, the inner-enemy of any regime was the friend of the unipolar world, and thus, to save his own rule, Putin increasingly turned to the palingenetic ultra-nationalist thinkers like Alexander Dugin, who had already created a far-right "traditionalist" Neo-Eurasian ideology out of the anti-capitalism of the Soviet Union, the cultural conservativism of the Tsarist Russian Empire, and geopolitical thought from the Third Reich. The subaltern neo-imperial ideology adopted by Putin attempts to confront, arrest, and abate the power of the liberal unipolar world by bringing about the dispersion of global geopolitical and economic power to a variety of civilizations, which in themselves are to serve as "poles," i.e., countervailing forces against Western hegemony. As we have demonstrated, one of the poles central to Dugin's ideology is the Islamic pole, which is predicated on a civilizational unification of the *dār al-Islām*. However, as we have seen, this vision of a unified Muslim world rising to confront the West is more wishful thinking than reality on Dugin's part. The Muslim world, as witnessed by the Arab Spring and its aftermath, is a civilization divided by the same ills as other civilizations: class, race, gender, politics, economics, sectarianism, ideology, etc., and appeals to Islam are unlikely to unify that which is thoroughly divided. While "multipolarity" is a powerful rallying cry for those who wish to see the end of the unipolar world order, it is unlikely to persuade the leaders of the Muslim world to divest in the status quo, especially when that status quo is as lucrative as it is. Russia, the regional power in Eurasia, will most likely remain only a regional power, diminished by international sanctions and its protracted war in Ukraine. While certain Muslim majority states will lend their resources to Russia's neo-imperial adventures, it is highly unlike the Islamic "civilization" will follow, as Dugin hopes. No amount of invoking "al-Dajjal" will mobilize the Muslim world to fight Russia's war.

References:

12th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum. 2023. "Russia's requirement for a state ideology to be drawn up and enshrined in the Constitution." URL: https://legalforum.info/en/news/rossii-neobhodimo-sformirovat-gosudarstvennuju-ideologiju-i-zakrepit-ee-v-konstitutsii/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).

Al-Jazeera. 2008. "Libya pays US victims of attacks." *al-Jazeera*. URL: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2008/10/31/libya-pays-us-victims-of-attacks (last accessed: March 23, 2024).

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of the Spread of Nationalism.* New York, NY: Verso.

Arafat, Alaa al-Din. 2012. *Hosni Mubarak and the Future of Democracy in Egypt.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2017. *Retrotopia.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Berdyaev, Nicolas. 2009. *The End of our Time.* Translated by Donald Attwater. San Rafael, CA: Semantron Press.

Borradori, Giovanna. 2003. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Brands, Hal. 2023. "The Field of Geopolitics offers both Promise and Peril." *Foreign Policy*. URL: https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/12/28/geopolitics-strategy-eurasia-autocracies-democracies-china-russia-us-putin-xi/ (last accessed: April 23, 2024).

Byrd, Dustin J. 2024 (forthcoming). "From St. Paul and Carl Schmitt to Alexander Dugin: The *Katechon* as a Political Category in Empire Building." in *The Russian World, Christian Nationalism and the Rise of the Secular-Sacred: Christianism admidst the Politics of Space,* edited by Sophia Johnson, Mariëtta van der Tol, Zoran Grozdanov, and Petr Kratochvíl. Leiden: Brill.

Chan, Stephen. 2021. *African Political Thought: An Intellectual Quest for Freedom.* London: Hurst & Co. Publishers.

Chingaev, Yaroslav. 2024. "Number of Wounded in Crocus City Hall Attack Rises to 360." *The Moscow Times*. URL: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/03/26/niger-regime-chief-talks-security-cooperation-with-putin-a84641 (last accessed: April 23, 2024).

Chivvis, Christopher. 2014. *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clover, Charles. 2016. *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dugin, Alexander. 2012. *The Fourth Political Theory.* Translated by Mark Sleboda and Michael Millerman. London: Arktos Media, Ltd.

_____. 2014. *Eurasian Mission: An Introduction to Neo-Eurasianism.* London: Arktos Media, Ltd.

_____. 2018. *Ethnos and Society.* London: Arktos Media, Ltd.

_____. 2023a. "Empires as Civilizations." *Arktos Media, Ltd*. URL: https://arktos.com/2023/10/13/empires-as-civilisations/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).

_____. 2023b. "For a New Middle Ages: Against Western Decadence," *Arktos Media, Ltd*. URL: https://arktos.com/2023/10/02/for-a-new-middle-ages-against-western-decadence/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).

_____. 2023c. "From Ukraine to the Middle East: On the Brink of World War 3." *Geopolitika*. URL: https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/ukraine-middle-east-brink-world-war-3 (last accessed: March 23, 2024).

_____. 2023d. "The West has made Islam its Enemy." *Geopolitika*. URL: https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/news/

west-has-made-islam-its-enemy-israel-and-gaza-strip-two-disasters-occurred-one-after-other (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
_____. 2023e. "The West is not 'Judeo-Christian.'" *Arktos Media, Ltd*. URL: https://arktos.com/2023/10/11/the-west-is-not-judeo-christian/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
_____. 2024a. "Against Liberal Totalitarianism." *Katehon.com*. URL: https://katehon.com/en/article/against-liberal-totalitarianism (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
_____. 2024b. "Multipolarity: The Era of the Great Transition." *Geopolitika*. URL: https://www.geopolitika.ru/en/article/multipolarity-era-great-transition (last accessed: April 23, 2024).
Eltchaninoff, Michel. 2015. *Inside the Mind of Vladimir Putin.* London: Hurst and Company.
Etkind, Alexander. 2011. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience.* Malden, MA: Polity Press.
Friedersdorf, Conor. 2015. "Hillary Defends Her Failed War in Libya." *The Atlantic*. URL: https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/10/hillary-clinton-debate-libya/410437/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man.* New York, NY: Free Press.
Herf, Jeffrey. 1998. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Hiro, Dilip. 1995. *Between Marx and Muhammad: The Changing Face of Central Asia.* New York, NY: Harper Collins.
Hughes, Gerald. 2023. "Why Crimean Tartar fighters are playing an increasing role in resistance to Russian Occupation." *The Conversation*. URL: https://theconversation.com/why-crimean-tatar-fighters-are-playing-an-increasing-role-in-resistance-to-russian-occupation-210484 (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Human Rights Watch. 2013. "Laws of Attrition: Crackdown on Russia's Civil Society after Putin's Return to the Presidency." *Human Rights Watch*. URL: https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/04/24/laws-attrition/crackdown-russias-civil-society-after-putins-return-presidency (last accessed: March 23, 2014).
Khapaeva, Dina. 2024. *Putin's Dark Ages: Political Neomedievalism and Re-Stalinization in Russia.* New York, NY: Routledge.
Lageman, Thessa. 2020. "Remembering Mohamed Bouazizi: The man who sparked the Arab Spring." *Al-Jazeera*. URL: https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/12/17/remembering-mohamed-bouazizi-his-death-triggered-the-arab (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Lewis, David G. 2021. *Russia's New Authoritarianism: Putin and the Politics of Order.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Mackinnon, Amy. 2022. "Russia is Sending its Ethnic Minorities to the Meat Grinder." *Foreign Policy*. URL: https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/09/23/russia-partial-military-mobilization-ethnic-minorities/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Meyendorff, John. 2003. *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies.* Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
Morozov, Viatcheslav. 2015. *Russia's Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Nad, Boris. 2022. *After the Virus: The Rebirth of a Multipolar World.* Pima, AZ: Prav Publishing, LLC.
Pargeter, Alison. 2012. *Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Perkins, John. 2004. *Confessions of an Economic Hitman: The Shocking Inside story of how America Really took over the World.* Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
POMED. 2020. "Fact Sheet – U.S. Military Assistance to Egypt: Separating Fact from Fiction." *Project on Middle East Democracy.* URL: https://pomed.org/publication/fact-sheet-u-s-military-assistance-to-egypt-separating-fact-from-fiction/ (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Putin, Vladimir 2007. "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy." *Kremlin.ru.* URL: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034 (last accessed: March 23, 2024).
Robinson, Paul. 2019. *Russian Conservativism.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Rooney, Nicholas. 2023. *Talking to the Wolf: The Alexander Dugin Interviews.* London: Arktos Media, Ltd.
Schmitt, Carl. 1996. *The Concept of the Political.* Translated by George Schwab. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
Short, Philip. 2022. *Putin.* New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.
Stent, Angela. 2020. *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest.* New York, NY: Twelve Books.
Suslov, Mikhail, 2024. *Putinism: Post-Soviet Russian Regime Ideology.* London: Routledge.
Trenin, Dmitri. 2010. "Russia's Conservative Modernization: A Mission Impossible?" *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 30 (1): 27–37.

Dastin Bird

Od „Želimo da uništimo režim" do „Želimo da uništimo svetski poredak": ruska multipolarnost i angažovanje post-arapskog proleća Dar al-Islam

Apstrakt:

Arapsko proleće proizvelo je novi optimizam na Bliskom istoku u pogledu mogućnosti demokratije u srcu muslimanskog sveta. Međutim, kako su godine prolazile, takav optimizam je jenjavao, ostavljajući za sobom gorčinu i cinizam. Tokom Arapskog proleća, Vladimir Putin je sa užasom gledao kako su brojni „diktatori" (skoro) u potpunosti izgubili moć, uključujući i njegovog saveznika Bašara el Asada. Odlučan da ne dozvoli da ono što je video, kao i mešanje Zapada na Bliskom istoku daju šablon za njegovo uklanjanje sa vlasti, Putin je krenuo u anti-zapadnu kampanju s ciljem da stvori „multipolarni svet", svet koji bi oslobodio moćne vladare od zahteva „poretka zasnovanog na pravilima", odnosno od „unipolarnog sveta". Ključ uspeha ove kampanje bilo je negovanje saveza između Ruskog mira i KDar al-Islam-a. Zajedno sa drugim delovima sveta, takva koalicija bi se oduprla kolektivnoj moći zapadnog sveta i pokušala da stvori globalne uslove u kojima „tradicionalni" narodi mogu da izraze svoje kulturne, političke i ekonomske posebnosti, a da pritom ne budu podvrgnuti korozivnom uticaju zapada. Ključ za ovu anti-zapadnu ideologiju je krajnje desničarski ruski filozof Aleksandar Dugin i njegova neo-evroazijska ideologija. Ovaj rad istražuje kako Duginova „reakcionarna modernistička" ideologija doprinosi borbi protiv unipolarnog sveta, dok u isto vreme pokazuje da njegova filozofija najverovatnije neće biti uspešna u Dar al-Islam-u zbog niza političkih, društvenih i verskih razloga. Ako se obećanja arapskog proleća ikada ostvare, ovaj rad pokazuje, to neće biti kroz palingenetičku Rusiju koju vodi Putin.

Ključne reči: Vladimir Putin, Aleksandar Dugin, unipolarnost, multipolarnost, reakcionarni modernizam, novi srednji vek, Ruski mir, al-Dadžal, fitna, osovina otpora.