1. Contents/Introduction
2. Dual Nature of the Empire
3. Spiritual and Physical Geography
4. Economic Superpower: the New Beast
5. Who are the Two Superpowers of the End?
6. Physical Geography: Which Two Territories?
7. Earth-Beast: False Prophet and Money Master
8. Iron-Clay Kingdom = Sea-Earth Beasts' Empire
9. *The Kingdom shall be Divided*
10. Role of Technology
11. What the Future Holds
12. Summary

Appendix 1: Modern Religions, Cultures of Darkness
Appendix 2: How Iron Continues in Today's World
Appendix 3: Background History – Clay-Earth Bloc
Appendix 4: Eighth Head

*

5. Who Are the Two Superpowers of the End?

In Post 3 it was noted that the Beast from the *"the sea"* was represented by Russia, but a question mark still hangs over the identity of the other Beast from *"the earth"*.

But we could deduce this much: whichever nation or superpower it is, it would have to be strong enough and commercialized enough to be capable of administering the world economically. (As mentioned in Post 4, this seems to be the major strong point about the earth-Beast's domain.) Nowadays, that means being a technologically advanced and fully industrialized society. The American empire fits those criteria, but there is no way that superpower, which has remained hostile to Russia in spite of communism's collapse, could ever enter into a close partnership with her. Certainly not in this present Age.

At present, there seem to be two candidates who could partner with Russia and fulfill the Earth-Beast's role on the End Time stage: China and the European Union (EU). Following are some points to consider:

1) NATO and America's rejection of Russian requests to stay out of her backyard has driven Russia to forge closer trade ties with China.

2) China, like the EU, has become a great commercial superpower in recent times. She has partnered closely with Russia to bring about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a massive infrastructure project that seems destined to unite Eurasia into a powerful and prosperous economic bloc. If it were possible, BRI would like also to link European nations to China, thereby laying the groundwork for a vast empire stretching from western Europe to the Far East.

3) The symbolic picture of the *Earth-Beast* in Revelation 13 describes it as speaking *"like a dragon"* – a seeming reference to a phrase from the previous chapter: *"that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan"*. (13:11, 12:9) Although that *Beast* has the small, innocent-looking horns of a lamb, it is easy to see China in this *"dragon"* role; her industriousness and culture of atheist communism speak loudly enough, along with her persecution of religious groups. She could easily fill the *Earth-Beast's* role of being the *False Prophet* (of Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10).

Besides this, she has the wealth and power that can influence the other *Beast* (from the *sea*) to carry out her wishes to a large extent. Perhaps it is more than just coincidence that the dragon happens to be China's national symbol.

4) Could it be then that China and Russia are the two powers that will join forces to rule the world in its final days? (See news article in Footnote 1.)

5) Another possibility: The EU and Russia are natural partners; they are in close proximity and share a similar culture and heritage. Now that the old barrier of communism has been removed, this may clear the way for Russia to enter more into the European orb of democratic nations – not in the present hostile climate, but the situation could change in the future.

6) A closer partnership almost happened a few years ago when Putin proposed a union with Europe to create a vast Eurasian alliance, stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostock. Although that plan has been shelved for the time being because of NATO's (and America's) interference and the turmoil in Ukraine, nevertheless, it shows that the idea exists in

those upper circles of power and may yet be resuscitated at some future time. (See Footnote 2: EU and Russia News Items.)

7) One aspect that Russia and the EU do not have in common are their ruling systems: the EU's Western-style capitalism languishes under American domination, whereas Russia's economy, more state-controlled, has become independent of American control. And because of the situation in Ukraine and the presence of NATO forces near Russia's border, relations between the EU and Russia have soured considerably.

8) Europe does depend on trade with Russia and China, especially for its oil and gas needs. So in the future it would not be surprising to see closer ties develop between these power blocs. (See Footnote 3: EU and Eurasia News Items.)

9) So, will the EU continue to seek refuge with the American superpower? Or will this powerful group of nations start drifting into alliance with Russia and China? Now that Great Britain has left, this is becoming more of a possibility. America's close ties to Britain enabled her to have more influence over EU policies, but in the future that influence will diminish. The EU may very well start tilting towards the organizations that are working to unite Eurasia, thereby distancing itself from the U.S. and keeping its own economy growing. This would, of course, require a major cultural shift within the European Commission and in some member states which harbor hostility to Russia. But it could happen. (See news excerpt in Footnote 4.)

10) Or this possibility? Will all three power blocs – Russia, China, and the European Union – join forces to rule the world of the near future? Russia and China are already in the process of joining forces, and this seems to reflect the picture in Revelation 13 of two powerful Beasts (superpowers) who will dominate the world of the near future. And possibly, the EU, or some EU nations, will also join in, but that may not happen until America has been defeated militarily.

***

At any rate we know that the final empire will be an alliance of

superpowers – a peculiar and different arrangement to how it was in ages past. (See See Footnote 5 news article about the coming new world order.) The *Beast* from the *earth* takes on the role of economic superpower, supporting and promoting the other *Beast* from the *sea*, who takes on the role of military demagogue. And because they operate in different arenas, this will make it easier for them to cooperate as they join forces to forge the final empire of this present Age.

> **Russia presently has over 1 million men who have experienced high-intensity warfare, an industrial base that is geared for the production of weaponry, bombs and munitions, and an ironclad strategic alliance with the world's undisputed economic powerhouse (China) that will certainly come to Moscow's aid if push-comes-to-shove. [from "Going Out with A Bang" by Mike Whitney – November 18, 2024]**

This study will continue then on the assumption that this historical reality will indeed come to pass – an alliance of Russia, China, and possibly the European Union. If that assumption turns out to be misguided in any way, then, hopefully, this author will be flexible enough, by God's grace, to make whatever changes in interpretation are needed.

In fact, this new "assumption" is actually a change from what was assumed previously in this *Shape of the Future* series – that Russia and the EU were the main players, and China was not in the picture at all. If China's and Russia's plans to unite Eurasia come to pass, then this new theory may hit the mark this time and reveal the future shape of geopolitical arrangement in the world.

> ***For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.* (1Corinthians 13:9-10)**

*

Continue to 6: Physical Geography – Which Two Territories?

***

Footnote 1: Russia-China Cooperation

An army of perceptive journalists these days are foretelling the rise of the China-Russia combine and decline of the West. Because of America's sins, God is allowing this to happen. In Revelation 17:17 we learn that *"God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose* [of destroying the *Harlot*]*."* This passage refers to the Beast and his ten nations who will unite forces in order to bring about the collapse of the *Harlot.* And it is God who is making it happen. (See post "Ten Horns Coming into View?".)

In view of America's transgressions, this is a well deserved chastisement (and is a big subject which is covered more thoroughly in the series of posts on Revelation 17-18). Regarding the next empire, even though it will carry out God's will in its beginning stages, we can't be too rose-colored in our outlook on it. For the forces of spiritual Darkness, knowing that their time for judgment is soon coming, will do their best (or worst) to transform the new world order into a totalitarian tyranny.

Excerpt from The long and winding multipolar road By Pepe Escobar July 1, 2021

Earlier this week Putin and Xi held a videoconference. One of the key items was quite significant: the extension of the China-Russia Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, originally signed 20 years ago.

A key provision: "When a situation arises in which one of the contracting parties deems that… it is confronted with the threat of aggression, the contracting parties shall immediately hold contacts and consultations in order to eliminate such threats."

This treaty is at the heart of what is now officially described – by Moscow and Beijing – as a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era". Such a broad definition is warranted because this is a complex multi-level partnership, not an "alliance", designed as a counterbalance and viable alternative to hegemony and unilateralism [of the American empire].

A graphic example is provided by the progressive interpolation of two trade/development strategies, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU), which Putin and Xi again discussed, in connection with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was founded only three months before 9/11.

[RETURN]

*

Footnote 2: News items on EU-Russia cooperation

Although an alliance between the EU and Russia seems unlikely right now, it has been proposed before and is in the minds of leaders, as noted in the following news excerpts:

Putin Envisions a Russia-EU Free Trade Zone
Der Spiegel, 11/25/2010

> **Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin would like to see a free trade agreement between the European Union and Russia. In a Thursday editorial for a German newspaper, he describes his vision of "a unified continental market with a capacity worth trillions of euros."**
>
> **No more tariffs. No more visas. Vastly more economic cooperation between Russia and the European Union. That's the vision presented by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in an editorial contribution to the German daily Süddeutsche Zeitung on Thursday.**
>
> **"We propose the creation of a harmonious economic community stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok," Putin writes. "In the future, we could even consider a free trade zone or even more advanced forms of economic integration. The result would be a unified continental market with a capacity worth trillions of euros."**
>
> **….**
>
> **Putin also proposes much closer collaboration when it comes to energy. "In recent years, cooperation on energy issues between Russia and the EU has attracted much attention and, to be honest, has been much too politicized." He would like to see European and Russian firms working together "from exploration and exploitation of energy resources all the way to the delivery to consumers."**
>
> **…We should try to think 20, 30, even 50 years into the future."**

Two years later, similar ideas were proposed:

Press statement by the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy following the 30th EU-Russia Summit

Russia and the EU have a lot to gain from cooperating. Our economies are strongly linked: 45 % of Russia's exports go to the EU, while 35 % of Russia's imports come from the EU. We are neighbours on our continent… We must work together to guarantee security and stability on the European continent, to tackle global challenges and governance issues, and to promote economic growth.

….

Further progress has to be made in the negotiations towards a New Agreement, which can put our future relations on a solid legal basis. The EU is very eager to progress faster in these negotiations.

We have to continue our efforts to find a peaceful political solution on Syria in full support of Mr Brahimi's efforts…

…we remain committed to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict…

By working together, the EU and Russia can make a decisive contribution to global governance and regional conflict resolution, to global economic governance in the G 8 and G 20, and to a broad range of international and regional issues.

(21 December, 2012)

(Note: Because of recent events in Ukraine, Euro-Russian relations have suffered a major setback since the above statements were made. Will this scuttle Putin's vision of future unification with the EU? Perhaps, but time often has a way of healing old wounds, especially in the fluid domain of politics where alliances often shift unexpectedly in response to the demands of nations' self-interest.)

At any rate, in these statements, perhaps we are getting a glimpse, or mini-preview, into the future when Europe, while distancing itself from America, will forge ties with and work to strengthen the upcoming final empire – as pictured in Revelation 13, the *Earth-Beast* working to establish the rule and reign of the *Sea-Beast*, the *Antichrist*. Or, if not in the near future, then in a more distant future when the U.S. collapses militarily (as envisioned in Revelation 17). (See Post on this subject.)

It should be kept in mind, there are many worthwhile goals that China, the EU and Russia would like to achieve – tackling various world problems, which the present U.S.-dominated world order has proven itself incapable of solving. So at this stage the rise of these new world powers should not

be viewed in a sinister light; it is simply a matter of God allowing this merger of superpowers as a means of correcting the injustices that have accumulated over the years.

Of course, we know that, eventually as always, the forces of Darkness will hijack the process and try to harness it into serving their own destructive ends. We get a hint of this in Ezekiel 38 about the invasion of *"Gog"* from the *"far north"* into Israel and the Mid East: *"On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan."* (38:10) But until then, the recent developments happening between China and Russia (and the EU and Russia) should be viewed as a welcome and needed re-balancing of power in the world.

[RETURN]

*

Footnote 3: News items concerning EU becoming part of Eurasia

From "Why Russia is Driving the West Crazy" by Pepe Escobar, 10 February 2021

The logic is impeccable. The two geoeconomic hubs of Eurasia are Europe and East Asia. Moscow wants to connect them economically into a supercontinent: that's where Greater Eurasia joins China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). …

….

Meanwhile, Diesen is confident that "the Eurasian land powers will eventually incorporate Europe and other states on the inner periphery of Eurasia. Political loyalties will incrementally shift as economic interests turn to the East, and Europe is gradually becoming the western peninsula of Greater Eurasia"…

From "Sochi Probes the Utopia of a Multipolar World" by Pepe Escobar, 20 October 2021

With the inevitability of a EU more and more geoeconomically intertwined with China, dysfunctional NATO at best may keep on prowling…

From "How West, Central, and South Asia are Interconnecting" by Pepe

Escobar, 2 January 2021)

Arguably Moscow's top strategic priority is to decouple the EU from any US/NATO-imposed Dr. Strangelove impulses. So a EU trade alliance with Beijing – now in progress, via their investment treaty – cannot but be a win-win, as it spells out closer European integration with the Eurasian century, driven by China but with Russia, crucially, positioned as the premier security provider.

From "Trump and the Gordian Knot, Year Three" by Patrick Armstrong September 12, 2020

Washington's demands, stripped of the highfalutin accompanying rhetoric of freedom, are: join its sanctions against China and Iran; buy its gas; buy its weapons; if not, risk being declared "adversaries" in a sanctions war. Germany is defiant on Huawei, Iran, Nord Stream and weaponry; much of Europe is as well and Berlin's example will have much effect on the others. [In recent news Germany has caved in to American demands in the wake of the war in Ukraine, so it may be some time yet before the EU ever teams up with China and Russia.]

From "America's real adversaries are its European and other allies: The U.S. aim is to keep them from trading with China and Russia" by Michael Hudson, 7 February 2022, *The Saker*

At issue is how long the United States can block its allies from taking advantage of China's economic growth. Will Germany, France and other NATO countries seek prosperity for themselves instead of letting the U.S. dollar standard and trade preferences siphon off their economic surplus?

[RETURN]

*

Footnote 4: Brexit, the EU, and China

In a power play not seen since Stalin and Mao joined forces in the 1950s, the alliance between Putin's raw military force and Xi's relentless economic pressure may indeed slowly be pulling Europe away from America. Complicating the U.S. position, Britain's exit from the European Union cost Washington its most forceful advocate inside Brussels' labyrinthine corridors of power. (from "Eurasia's Ring of Fire – The Epic

Struggle over the Epicenter of U.S. Global Power" by Alfred McCoy, *Tom Dispatch,* 16 January 2022)

[RETURN]

*

Footnote 5: Rise of a New World Order

But really, as I say, we are talking about the birthing of a new order…

And of course, there's an enormous amount of hope invested in this. And this is true, that is to say, it's the topic of discussion and it's invested with a lot of hope practically everywhere but in the West…

… what was the common theme? That development, modernization had to take place according to the choices made by the people of every country.

It could not take place on the basis of the one-size-fits-all neoliberal recipe doled out by the West, which is, of course, has historically been a recipe for subordination.

Everyone was instead talking about a new, fairer, democratic world order, which would reflect the interests of all the people of the world, of all of humanity, including what is increasingly being alluded to as the world majority, that is to say the ex-Western world.

And this is precisely the new world order that the West is trying to prevent. It's trying to prevent the emergence of it with its wars, its sanctions, its diplomacy…

…the West is huffing and puffing. It's going to try as hard as it can in preventing the emergence of this new order, but I do not believe on the basis of everything I know that it can possibly succeed.

It can huff and it can puff, but it cannot blow down the structures that the global majority is building. Indeed, it's going to find that its own structures, the so-called rules-based international order are actually built out of straw or at best wood while the global majority is building its house step-by-step, albeit slowly, but it is building it, pardon the pun, but with bricks [Brics].

(from "Multipolarity: China, Russia, Israel, India, and the difficult birth of a new world" – discussion among Radhika Desai, Michael Hudson, Pepe Escobar on October 16, 2023)

[RETURN]

*

Continue to 6: Physical Geography – Which Two Territories?