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Riga Dialogue: Towards a Shared Security Environment

Afterthoughts from the Riga Security Seminar 2015

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Scientific editor Andris Sprūds

"Riga Dialogue: Towards a Shared Security Environment. Afterthoughts from the Riga Security Seminar 2015" contains opinion pieces by leading security experts on Trans-Atlantic, pan-European and regional developments. The publication also includes a summary of "Riga Security Seminar 2015: Upholding European Security under New Circumstances", which took place in Riga, Latvia, April 9th–10th, 2015. The annual high-level venue and following *Afterthoughts* has been organized by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and supported by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the European Leadership Network.

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs or its partner institutions

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

by Andris Sprūds*

The publication "Riga Dialogue: Towards a Shared Security Environment. Afterthoughts from the Riga Security Seminar 2015" embraces opinion pieces by leading experts on Trans-Atlantic, pan-European and regional security developments, as well as diplomatic challenges and openings for dialogue. "Afterthoughts" provides a summary of insights, additional reflections and follow-up to the comprehensive exchange of views and perspectives expressed during the Riga Security Seminar "Upholding European Security under New Circumstances", which took place in Riga in April 2015.

The contributors to the seminar and publication acknowledge the gravity of the existing challenges and the importance of vision and mutual dialogue. The feeling of crisis and insecurity has been thick in the air recently. The security architecture in Europe and the wider Baltic Sea region has been shaken by the events in Ukraine. Russia's interference in the country, the annexation of Crimea and the bloody conflict in the Donbas region have become important "game changers" in regional and global politics. The reciprocal sanctions between the West and Russia, a perceived continuous rivalry of integration projects, and growing tensions have undermined the existing security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area. Perceptions of engagement and expectations of wider regional cooperative frameworks have apparently been replaced by increasing mistrust, mutual deterrence strategies, and the weaponization of mass media and social media. As a result, a variety of security and perceptual landscapes co-exist in the wider European region.

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The question of whether we are experiencing an emerging new world (dis)order has not been solely driven by the conflict in Ukraine. We have seen a transformative shift of the tectonic plates of international politics and economics for years. Protracted turmoil in the Middle East, an expansion of Islamic State ideals beyond Iraq and Syria, bloody terrorist attacks worldwide, continuous nascent tensions in South East Asia, the Grexit and Brexit dilemmas within the EU and challenges to the credibility of the Eurozone have left a lasting impact on global and regional traditional and non-traditional security agendas.

The Baltic Sea region has been one of growing stability, engagement, and tranquility for last two decades. The membership of the Baltic countries in a community of "like minded" states in the EU and NATO has reduced geopolitical "grey zones" and extended opportunities for growth, confidence-building and dialogue. The favorable regional environment has encouraged the new fully-fledged members of the EU and NATO to launch pro-active and constructive regional and international engagement policies. Euro-Atlantic integration has contributed to intensified economic interactions and expanded multilateral institutional frameworks in the Baltic Sea region, including with Russia. During Latvia's presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2015, it demonstrated a willingness to promote a constructive regional agenda and strengthen regional partnerships. However, the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's assertiveness in the neighborhood has once more invoked the ghosts of a tragic past, perceptions of insecurity, and concerns of a destabilization of the region. As a result, the Baltic countries have a greater appreciation of increased political and military solidarity and presence in the region of their Trans-Atlantic allies.

The stakes are high. And therefore dialogue is imperative. The risks of conflict escalation and reciprocal coercive diplomacy at the moment necessitate mechanisms and measures for conflict management and prevention, and arms control rather than confidence-building. Notwithstanding this, there remains a willingness to develop cooperative initiatives and promote confidence-building on the continent. This may become a precursor for a return to dialogue and cooperation.

The emerging security challenges make it even more important to engage a wide range of stakeholders and establish partnerships. The successful implementation of the annual high-level Riga Security Seminar and "Afterthoughts" has been enabled by a number of joint efforts. The venue and publication have been a result of lasting cooperation between the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and its international partner institutions. Generous support and strong encouragement from the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in the Baltic countries has been absolutely indispensible for bringing the entire project to a successful outcome. The European Leadership Network has played an instrumental role in ensuring the participation of a number of distinguished participants. The contributions made by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Nuclear Threat Initiative and the European Leadership Network have been highly appreciated by Latvian and regional stakeholders. This establishes a solid foundation for continued dialogue and intellectual engagement on security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area in the long run. And this provides strong momentum for and commitment to the annual high-level "Riga Dialogue".

CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE MIDST OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS: CONCERNS AND OPPORTUNITIES

by Łukasz Kulesa*

At the June 2015 "GLOBSEC" conference in Bratislava, an event which every year brings together Central Europe's top foreign and security policy leaders, one could witness a show of the political unity (of sorts) of the Visegrad Group. The prime ministers of Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, plus Poland's deputy prime minister, who were all seated in one panel, were careful to avoid confronting one another openly even when they disagreed on specific issues. Although in 2014 some experts pronounced the Visegrad group dead or near-dead due to serious differences in the members' policies towards Russia and Ukraine, a year later a visible effort was being made to keep the group together.

The Ukraine crisis has seriously tested the durability of the links between the Visegrad Four, and between Central European countries more generally. There is still a danger that Central Europe will *de facto* politically disintegrate into three parts. The "northern" belt, bringing together capitals from Tallinn to Warsaw with links to Sweden and Finland, will continue to see Russia as a major threat and focus on building a "pocket of resistance" against its assertiveness. A "southern" group made up of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary will continue to pay a lip service to NATO and the EU's

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policy of pressuring Russia, but will focus primarily on maintaining and, when possible, expanding economic links to Russia. The countries of the southern group will try to benefit from balancing their position as members of NATO and the EU that are more open towards Moscow. Finally, Romania and Bulgaria will concentrate on the specific challenges of the Black Sea region, cultivating their ties with the US and turning their back on their northern colleagues (who never fully accepted them as a part of Central Europe, anyway).

If such a nightmare scenario comes to fruition, the image of 'Central Europe' (composed roughly of the countries East of Germany that were admitted to NATO and the EU after 1999) as a political unit with a distinct identity and a number of common interests, will be damaged beyond repair. Simply put, Central Europe as a political construct will cease to exist. In the short-term perspective, the consequences of this may not necessarily be disastrous. Some may even welcome such a development as a long-overdue reality check on the condition of the region. In this interpretation, the political, economic and social landscape of Central Europe has become too diverse to be accommodated under one political label, and it is better to conduct a "quiet funeral" for Central Europe while remaining potential partners for case-by-case coalitions, rather than continue with the illusion of unity.

But in the mid- to long-term perspective, such a "quiet funeral" for Central Europe could be detrimental to the security of the countries concerned. The interests of specific Central European countries will be much more difficult to realize within organizations such as the UN, the OSCE, the EU or NATO without the assumption of block support from other states of the region, which they still enjoy today. It will be much easier for Russia or any other actor to use "divide and conquer" tactics to gain a foothold in the region, with detrimental effects for European security. Finally, unique links between Central European societies and the political class, rooted in their common culture and history and sustained through present cooperation, could be lost, making increased tensions or even conflicts between them more likely in the future.

Central Europe's political identity before the Ukraine crisis

Geographically, politically and culturally Central Europe remains a contested concept. Different historical approaches, such as the German Mitteleuropa plans, the legacy of Habsburg Empire integration, or various Central European confederation schemes, further muddy the waters. But despite all the caveats and disputes between historians, it may be argued that the modern political concept of Central Europe gained prominence and gradually received recognition following the end of the Cold War. This concept situated the region not on the semi-Asiatic outskirts of Europe, as the term "Eastern Europe" would suggest, but rightfully and naturally in the middle of the continent and in the middle of all the integration processes there. Inside the region, the re-adoption of a Central European identity was supported by the "back to Europe" narrative, which underlined that the countries and societies of Central Europe were forcefully detached from the rest of the continent by the Soviet Union, but that deep inside they remained "proper" Europeans and thus share a cultural heritage and history with their Western partners. It may be added that Belarus and Ukraine represent the still-detached elements of Central Europe. If they choose a pro-European integration path and manage to leave Russia's orbit, they too should reclaim their place as Central Europeans.

Starting from the early 1990s, the countries of the region labeling themselves as Central Europeans was seen as a facilitation of their integration into NATO and the European Union. It also proved helpful in developing their relationship with the United States. As each country advanced its own case for NATO/EU membership, it soon became clear that coordinating their actions and jointly presenting their case as Central Europeans would bring added value. By and large, the countries of the region helped one another on their road to membership in NATO and the EU. Once inside the EU, Central Europeans struggled hard to prove that the region is not only a recipient of funds and exporter of labor, but also a champion of the EU integration process. Some countries took extra effort to join the

vanguard of EU-related modernization: Estonia's e-governance and the eagerness of Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to join euro are good examples. Importantly, Visegrad cooperation survived the entry of the four countries into NATO and the EU. When common interests were identified, especially in the EU context, the V4 turned out to be a helpful instrument in coordinating common positions and fighting for the implementation of these positions in Brussels. The "Visegrad Plus" format of meetings that took place with other countries seemed to put the V4 firmly in the middle of a trans-regional network that included all the Central European, Eastern European and Balkan countries.

With regards to their relationship with the US, it was crucial, especially in the 1990s, to maintain a positive image of Central Europe in the minds of American decision-makers and in public opinion. Hence, the emergence of a democratic and prosperous Central Europe was directly linked with the US policy to create a Europe that is "whole, free and at peace with itself". Regional powers also highlighted that Central Europe was meeting all US expectations by being consistently pro-Atlanticist in its security policy, entrepreneurial and free-market oriented in its economics, and supportive of the US global human rights and freedom agenda. It is no coincidence that all the Central European governments expressed support for the US at the time of the 2003 Iraq intervention, prompting US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to favorably contrast their stance with that of "Old Europe".

However, there were problems behind the façade of Central European unity and its positive, progressive image. The legacy of the past complicated the development of a common political agenda on a number of issues. Polish–Lithuanian quarrels over language and minority rights proved to be an obstacle in bringing the Visegrad Group and the Baltic Three closer, including in the areas of infrastructure and energy policy. There were also renewed tensions between Hungary and neighboring Slovakia and Romania over the situation of ethnic Hungarians living in the two countries and over Budapest's policy towards them. Finally, the assertive mode in which the Victor Orban-led government was exercising power in Hungary emerged as a major source of discomfort. On the one hand, Hungary was treated

as an important regional partner and "one of us". Thus, most Central Europeans supported wider international fora engagement with the Hungarian government instead of harsh condemnation or the isolation of Budapest. On the other hand, indirect association with some of the harshest rhetoric and actions of the Orban government was a liability for other Central Europeans.

Attitudes towards Russia and the Ukraine crisis

Central Europe's relationship with Russia and the issue of responding to its foreign and security policy seemed to be another area in which the political image of a united Central Europe diverged from the reality on the ground. According to conventional wisdom, due to their historical experiences from the Tsarist and Soviet periods, Central Europeans were particularly wary of resurging Russian expansionism. As a consequence, they were thought to be suspicious of Moscow and eager to distance themselves from Russia politically and economically, while countering Russia's attempts to gain influence in the region. Central Europeans were also supposed to be supportive of pro-European forces in the joint neighborhood area (as evidenced by their support for the Polish-Swedish-Czech Eastern Partnership initiative), believing that integration with Euro-Atlantic structures is more beneficial for their societies than strengthening links with Russia would be. The position of Central Europe has often been caricatured as one-dimensional and its representatives were often accused of being natural-born "Russophobes".

In fact, relations with Russia have been much more complicated. Even within one country, over the past 20 years relations often fluctuated depending on the attitude of the political leadership at the time and Moscow's willingness (or lack of willingness) to engage. Tensions were sometimes brought to the surface, for example during the cyber-attack against Estonia in 2007, but a number of Central European countries had their own "mini-resets" and "new openings" in their relationships with Russia prior to the Ukraine crisis. Most of them have also developed

good economic relations with Russia, often finding export niches in the vast Russian market (in addition to an energy relationship and various levels of dependence on Russia in the oil and gas sectors). Some went as far as opening up investment in strategic sectors such as nuclear energy to Russian companies or creating favorable conditions for business cooperation and for general Russian investment. As a result, the attitude of Central Europe towards Russia can be described as diverse, but overall realistic: the countries are not turning a blind eye to negative developments, but are engaging in efforts to cooperate with Russia and at least keep lines of communication open.

Most importantly, it does not appear that either relations with Russia or the prospect of a deterioration of the relationship with Russia were seriously and adequately discussed by the leaders of Central Europe. It seems that it was assumed that, at a time of crisis, the countries of the region would rally around the NATO and US flags. However, even during the 2008 Russian intervention in Georgia there were notable differences within the region. The leaders of Poland and the three Baltic States took part in an audacious trip to Tbilisi in the midst of the crisis to demonstrate their support for Georgia, while some other Central European countries took a much more cautious approach to the crisis.

During the present crisis, which started with the Maidan demonstrations in late 2013 but deteriorated into a full-fledged confrontation with Russia during the Kyiv revolution and Russia's takeover of Crimea, these differences re-appeared with full strength. For Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland (Romania also finds itself close to this group), Russia's reaction to the Ukrainian revolution confirmed their worst predictions about Russia emerging as an aggressive, revisionist country, potentially posing a direct threat to their own sovereignty. According to the vast majority of decision-makers in these countries, as well as members of strategic communities and public opinion, Russia revealed its "true nature" during the Ukraine crisis. As a consequence, the challenge to the European security system posed by its actions cannot be defused by accommodation, but only by establishing clear red lines and resisting Russia's actions. A change of Russia's behavior can be achieved through applying political and economic pressure

on Moscow, gradually making the costs of sustaining the current policy too high to bear. These countries also reject any notion that the past behavior of the West may have had a role in prompting Russia to take its current path. Regarding regional politics, it seems that these countries expected that all Central European countries share their assessment of Russia and the developments in Ukraine, and that therefore a common Central European position on Russia that is consistent with their view would emerge almost naturally.

For the "southerners" (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary), there was no comparable sense of direct threat emanating from Russia. For Hungary (and to some extent Slovakia), the possibility of growing unrest in Western areas of Ukraine and the negative impact on the situation of minorities there seemed to be more worrying than Russia's actions, especially in the early stages of the crisis. Overall, the southern Central European countries appeared to be concerned that they may be dragged too deep into the crisis and that NATO and the EU may over-react to the situation. Keeping a low profile and avoiding antagonizing Russia seemed to be the best policy for them. Hence, for example, the negative reaction of these states to the ideas floated in 2014 of establishing a permanent NATO presence along Europe's eastern flank. The Slovakian and Czech governments went as far as declaring that they would not want to have NATO troops deployed on their soil.

In contrast to the northerners, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and especially Hungary seemed to assume that the acute phase of the crisis in relations with Russia would not last long. According to this line of thinking, those (smaller) countries that hastily limit or sever their links with Russia could find themselves punished once their political and economic relationships with Moscow resumed, while the bigger EU and NATO states would not be hurt. However, they believed that those countries that avoided anti-Russian extremes and demonstrated a willingness to maintain a constructive relationship with Moscow would be treated preferentially when relations went back to "business as usual".

Internally, there were many calls for looking at the Ukraine crisis mainly from the economic standpoint of a particular country's interests and taking into account the economic damage (or lost

profits) that would be connected with the introduction of sanctions and limitations on doing business with Russia. It was underlined that specific companies and important entrepreneurs or regions would be directly hit by the worsening of economic relations. The views of some individual leaders, for example Czech President Milos Zeman and the Hungarian Prime Minister Orban, on Russia and the Ukraine crisis seem to be colored by their critical stance towards the European Union and the United States, which they sometimes accuse of interfering in their countries' domestic affairs.

It is not suggested that any of these countries can be labeled or treated as "pro-Russian". Inside each southern Central European state there have been vocal groups in the political class and strategic community that reject the low-profile approach to the crisis and call for taking a more visible pro-Ukrainian stance and showing more boldness in joining the actions of NATO and the EU to force Russia to de-escalate the crisis and end its military engagement in Ukraine. It needs to be noted that, despite all the reservations and caution displayed, no country vetoed the adoption of NATO reassurance measures or the approval and subsequent prolongation of the EU sanctions packages. Each country also contributed (albeit modestly) to the NATO reassurance activities along the eastern flank and offered support for Ukraine, including engagement with reform efforts and sharing the lessons learned from their own transformation. With regards to Slovakia, its agreement in April 2014 to start to reverse the flow of natural gas from the EU to Ukraine was essential in reducing Russian pressure on Kyiv.

As the fighting in eastern Ukraine continued, the overall crisis deepened, and Russia showed no willingness to change its position, initial hopes that a Central European country could "sit on the fence" and wait out the crisis while maintaining good relations with Russia had to be re-examined. It seems that although they kept emphasizing the need for dialogue and kept bilateral channels of communication open (which included a visit by Vladimir Putin to Hungary in February 2015), no southern Central European country wanted to find itself in open conflict with the United States and major European countries over

their policy towards Russia. So, for example, when Czech President Zeman visited Moscow in 2015 for the May 9th commemorations of the end of the Second World War and held a meeting with President Putin (he skipped the military parade in Red Square), he did it against the advice of his own government and acted almost in a personal capacity—certainly not as the representative of any pro-Russian "block" within Central Europe.

Challenges and opportunities for Central European cooperation

As indicated earlier, the official line from Central European capitals seems to be that "everything is back to normal" in regional cooperation after the crisis of 2014. It is definitely a mistake to pronounce the death of Central Europe as a political idea. In addition to historical and cultural similarities, there are still common political interests stemming from Central Europe's geopolitical position, its links with a turbulent Eastern Europe, and from the similar expectations that the countries have regarding the future development of the EU. While no longer "instinctively" pro-Atlanticist and pro-American, all the countries of the region continue to recognize the benefits of NATO membership and of US engagement in European security. For some countries, the crisis even opened up an opportunity to leave behind old quarrels and "reset" their relationship to allow for closer cooperation—this is hopefully taking place right now in the Polish–Lithuanian relations.

The current turbulence demonstrates, however, that it can no longer be taken for granted that Central European countries will have a similar approach to all crises involving Russia. Particular countries' geographical distance from Russia and thus their different viewpoint regarding the possibility and consequences of a military confrontation with the country certainly plays a role, but there also seems to be a wider mismatch regarding the way in which these countries perceive Russia's place in Europe. These different

pre-conceptions shape the way in which they formulate their own policy, and also the way they look at regional cooperation on *foreign affairs* and the policy of NATO and the EU.

A problem arises when these different views are not seriously discussed at the highest political level. It seems that before the current crisis it was tacitly accepted that since the leaders of Central Europe have different views on Russia, debating them in depth would only expose fault lines within the region and complicate the prospects of cooperation in other "safer" areas. It turned out, however, that after the outbreak of the crisis it was too late to iron out their differences and come out with a strong and coherent position for all the countries situated between the Baltic and the Black Seas. It also precluded Central Europeans from taking any significant regional initiatives with regard both to the situation in Ukraine and to the wider Russia–West relationship. Instead, countries chose to act through national channels, using close-knit cooperation frameworks such as the Baltic Three, or going beyond the region to work with Germany or Sweden as preferable partners.

In the Visegrad Group, it will be the task of the Czech Presidency in 2015 and 2016 to give a new sense of purpose to cooperation on Eastern European affairs. But more broadly, it seems that in the coming months Poland may be best-poised to initiate an honest, inclusive dialogue on future policy towards Russia and Ukraine between all the Central European leaders. Poland remains a pivotal country geographically, with interests both in the northern and the southern parts of the region. President Andrzej Duda, inaugurated in August 2015, identified in his election campaign the "re-building" of close cooperation on foreign and security matters with the Visegrad countries and the Baltic Three as one of his priorities. Poland will also host the next NATO summit in July 2016, which increases the chances of pushing through a Central European vision of the Alliance—provided that such a vision can be formulated.

The precondition for a successful dialogue is the willingness to listen to partners and formulate a compromise position. It is unlikely that the "southern" countries would agree to support a Polish/Baltic

approach towards Russia (which they consider as too hawkish) or vice versa—that the northerners would support opening up to Moscow without preconditions. But if a compromise long-term approach to Russia and the Eastern neighborhood is agreed upon and pronounced via a strong message from regional leaders, it could put Central Europe back on the political map of the continent. This would increase the political weight and visibility of all the countries involved (in Russia as well as the EU), demonstrate to NATO and EU partners their pro-active approach, and hopefully provide a positive example of the European spirit of cooperation in a difficult moment of the European integration project.

This may be one of the last chances to salvage a "wider" Central Europe as a politically significant group of states which can influence European politics in crucial foreign policy areas. The developments of recent months suggest that alternatives to "Central Europe" are already in the making. The Slavkov triangle initiative, involving the Czech Republic, Austria and Slovakia, was unveiled in January 2015. Although the stated focus is on trans-border cooperation, infrastructure and energy projects, it may also offer these countries a vehicle to cooperate without the burden of image problems (represented by Hungary) and without an anti-Russian edge (represented by Poland and the Baltic Three). In the north, there is a visible intensification of cooperation among the Baltic Sea countries, with a focus on security-related cooperation. Notably, in a research paper titled "The Coming Storm", published in June 2015, Edward Lucas called for closer cooperation between the "NBP9" countries: including the Nordic Five (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), Poland and the Baltic Three—claiming that this group shares a unique common assessment of Russia and can form a defense cluster against Moscow's advances.

While these new concepts and initiatives may promise to deliver results in the short-term, it would be a waste to substitute the recognizable and still-strong political "brand" of Central Europe with a number of smaller, less influential initiatives and coalitions of the willing.

TOWARDS A NEW STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST

by Igor Yurgens*

Russian–Western relations have taken a negative turn. Both sides are facing serious challenges, with more costs than gains associated with the developments. With respect to the Ukrainian crisis, Russia has already lost more than it has obtained. With falling oil prices and a falling ruble alongside Western sanctions, the country's economic troubles are already substantial and may further be increased.

In the Russian foreign policy magazine Russia in *Global Affairs*, Alexei Arbatov of Moscow's Institute of World Economy and International Relations observes that "in the early 1990s the US had a unique historical chance to lead the creation of a new, multilateral world order. However, it unwisely lost this chance. The US suddenly saw itself as 'the only superpower in the world'. Gripped by euphoria, it began to substitute international law with the law of force, legitimate decisions of the UN Security Council with the directives of the US, and OSCE prerogatives with NATO actions."[1]

"This policy laid time bombs under the new world order: NATO's eastward enlargement, the forceful partitioning of Yugoslavia and Serbia, the illegal invasion of Iraq, the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the failure to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear

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1 Arbatov, Alexey. "Collapse of the World Order?" *Russia in Global Affairs*, September 23, 2014, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Collapse-of- the- World-Order-16987

Test Ban Treaty. The US treated Russia as if it were the losing country, although it was Russia that put an end to the Soviet Empire and the Cold War".[2] "What 'world imperialism' was formerly blamed for—the policy of building up weapons, muscle-flexing, the establishment of military bases abroad and rivalry in the arms trade—is now lauded in Russia. Nuclear weapons have acquired an exceptionally positive meaning."[3]

The alienation of Europe will definitely be uncomfortable for Moscow. The European Union's share of foreign investments in Russia exceeds 60%. Russia needs Western technologies and know-how, while China and other BRICS countries can hardly be substitutes for modernization. Large-scale modernization is a must for Russia, unless it is not repelled by the prospect of always lagging behind current and new global trends, as well as losing all hope for maintaining competitive positions in non-military spheres.

At the same time, the harder the West tries to isolate Russia, the more Western actions strengthen the forces inside the country that embrace the Iron Curtain. They prefer to live in the past and ignore the new environment of the 21st century. This seriously complicates efforts to find compromises. In turn, for the West a renewed version of the Cold War would be highly disruptive to their plans to provide global and regional stability. It would also significantly shrink their economic presence in Russia while enlarging that of the other countries, China in particular.

Ukraine is faced with a major "furcation" where all sides are pondering over the possibly fundamental decision of where to turn. In making their decision they should be more concerned with economic issues, but without underestimating problems of security, probably placing the former a little higher upon the agenda list.

Ukraine is on the verge of a default. The gigantic amounts of financial resources required for economic recovery are simply not

2 Arbatov, Alexey. "Collapse of the World Order ?" *Russia in Global Affairs*, September 23, 2014, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Collapse- of- the- World- Order-16987

3 Power, Jonathan. "Not worth a new Cold War," *Daily Times*, May 20, 2015, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/20-May-2015/not-worth-a-new-cold- war

available from the West or from Russia and its Eurasian allies. If nothing is done, the "black hole" of Ukraine's economy in the center of Europe will create a long-term economic threat to all, including subsequently enhancing instability both domestically and regionally.

In the case of a gradual resolution of the conflict in and around Ukraine, Russia has no compelling reason to reject economic cooperation with Kiev. One of the key tasks will be to develop a mechanism for information exchange that allows for effective control of the supply of goods from Ukraine within the existing free trade regime while, if necessary, also allowing for the possibility to apply protective measures for the Customs Union, as stipulated in Appendix 6 of the Treaty of October 18th, 2011. In parallel, the groundwork should be laid for a long-term solution for the establishment of a sufficient set of trade regimes between the Eurasian Economic Union, Ukraine and the European Union.

The Ukrainian crisis has created a situation in which internal and external stakeholders and observers are best served by finding a solution that creates a legal framework for economic reconstruction and the political stabilization of the Ukrainian state. This can be achieved while moving forward on the path towards economic agreements between Ukraine, the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union.

The long-term objective of this path is to build mutually beneficial and concerted sets of agreements for a trilateral partnership between the EU, Ukraine and the EEU. These agreements should go beyond simplistic free trade zone regimes to include more profound and comprehensive agreements, including agreements between the EU and the EEU. Due to the structure of their foreign trade, the countries of the EEU are not interested in a simple agreement introducing the free trade of goods—it is in their interest to achieve a comprehensive agreement providing for deep economic integration, which would encompass dozens of different issues.

Among these issues are: the trade of goods; rules for e-trade; the elimination of non-tariff barriers; the free movement of capital; the liberalization of access to financial markets; regulatory convergence (norms and standards); intellectual property rights; the mutual recognition of diplomas, including for professional education; visa

free travel, including readmission agreements; the Kaliningrad region; neighborhood programs for border regions; large-scale educational exchange programs (Erasmus Mundus and others); the development of international transport infrastructure (automotive and rail corridors); the Third Energy Package; the creation of a common electricity market; establishing rules for economic competition; and mechanisms for conflict mediation. In the short-term, it would be useful to sign several documents related to these issues.

- Ukraine and the EEU should sign a protocol on the elimination of technical trade barriers. The signing of such a protocol is stipulated in a December 17th, 2012 Agreement between the Customs Union and the CIS countries outside the Customs Union. Ukraine and the EEU should also sign a document on the electronic exchange of customs declaration information.

- The two parties should sign protocol on establishing a new mechanism for joint control over the origin of goods that would make the supplier liable for the falsification of any such information.

Along with the existing CIS free trade agreement and other agreements stipulating Ukraine's obligations in other areas (the use of national currencies in settlements, guarantees of investor rights, and agreements on investment projects, for example), such agreements should become an indelible part of an international plan to rebuild the Ukrainian economy with the participation of Russia, the EU, the US, international financial institutions and other donors.

Since the Minsk II agreements the situation has become slightly better, but calming the most acute stage of the confrontation in eastern Ukraine seems to be only the beginning of a more difficult and costly phase of organizing the Ukrainian recovery. In this scenario, joint efforts with Russia would be a test and a driver for overcoming other difficult issues between both sides. The consequences of economic disaster fraught with drastic political destabilization in Ukraine would be a tremendous burden for both Russia and the West.

The whole international system of economic cooperation and crisis management would be discredited. In order to overcome fractures in Europe, creating a new platform for cooperation in dealing with the Ukrainian conflict is necessary. This platform should give greater weight to bolstering the economic dimension, which has so far been eclipsed by political and military concerns.

To take wider steps in this direction, both the EU's Eastern Partnership and Russia's Eurasian economic integration project should be seriously corrected. This correction would require consultations and continuous contact between the European Commission and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). They should be oriented towards achieving compromises on united efforts for assisting Kiev and the revival of its trade ties with Russia. At present this may sound highly problematic, but there is no objective alternative if both sides want to avoid further and more dangerous alienation.

With the exception of ties in the machinery and military industry, it is more in the interests of Kiev to return to the previous levels of trade and economic cooperation with Moscow than vice versa. Accordingly, it is in the interest of the EU to reach compromises with Russia and the EEU while staying firm on the Association Agreement. Otherwise, it would require drastic financial flows to keep the Ukrainian sympathies with their "European choice".

Along with EU-EEC contacts, one could imagine a road map for a comprehensive program of economic aid for Ukraine involving Russia, the EU, the US and international financial institutions. Together with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement between Ukraine and the EU and the free-trade agreement of the CIS, which still involves Ukraine, such a road map could constitute a basis for future close cooperation between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union.

At the same time, Russia faces the economic strength of the US and EU, which produce half of the world's wealth. With its less than 2% of global GDP, Russia is hardly capable of winning a boxing match—particularly since 50% of its trade turnover is with the EU. Until the Ukrainian conflict, taxes on the EU's energy imports made up almost half of Moscow's federal budget.

Sanctions have solidified Russia's new and unfavorable position in the system of Western-dominated international, political and economic relations. Though Russia is not considered a rogue nation, many in the West see it as a problem country and an unhelpful actor. Such positioning leads to worsening conditions on Russia's domestic front.

Despite the increasing effect of sanctions, President Putin is not likely to change his policy approach due to the pressure. Instead, the Putin government has been looking for ways to minimize the sanctions' impact on the country and to ensure the survival of the current political and economic system.

Moscow would like to keep up with the idea that "Russia is a besieged fortress" to rally the elite and the public. This may be an easier sell for the Kremlin with sanctions getting more severe. These will do real damage to Western-oriented internationalists inside Russia. Although there is a new generation of Russian business leaders and so-called global Russians, who live partly or permanently abroad (4-6 million. people) and who find Western values to be highly compatible with their mode of life, this group was relatively weak even before the Ukrainian crisis. Sanctions have further weakened their voice in domestic debates.

Moreover, isolationists in the Kremlin are numerically and vocally stronger, and will continue being so with the prolongation of sanctions and the further worsening of relations with the West. In the absence of any visible carrots from the West, using the stick endlessly will only strengthen the neo-conservative segment of the Russian elite and population. Although the country already feels an increased strain on its budget, public expenditures and living standards, the existing situation may remain unchanged for an indefinite period of time.

In changing its relations with the West, Moscow is looking more intensively for new alliances, markets and lenders. The main targets of Moscow's ambitions are the Asia-Pacific region as well as its BRICS partners. To Russian eyes the West is not uniform and comprises a number of developed countries (including some in the Pacific region) with different interests and relations with Russia.

But obviously higher stakes are placed on relations with Beijing. Nevertheless, the incumbent Russian leadership is unlikely to have any immediate interest in becoming too dependent upon China. It may perceive the country as the lesser of two evils. Russians have already been debating prospects of becoming a "China junior", being a country in the "economic periphery of China" or even establishing itself in a "satellite role". However, the majority of the public is not prepared to accept these roles.

At the same time, even non-conservative economists say that the most appropriate and balanced reaction in the new chapter should be to become oriented as a "pivot to Asia". This rechanneling of traditional Russian ties is aimed at increasing Russia's finance and trade cooperation with sovereign funds and public companies in the developing economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are willing to expand their exposure to Russia. But it would not be an easy task to replace the 80% of foreign direct investment in Russia that comes from the countries that are imposing sanctions.

Russia has other cards to play. One of them is to expand its economic retaliation against Ukraine, which Moscow is already doing by shrinking levels of trade in agricultural commodities and industrial products. And it is capable of more. Again, this should be taken into account when working out scenarios for conflict resolution on acceptable terms.

Many in Russia have expressed concern that the country cannot respond to tough Western measures without exacerbating the economic damage caused by them. Any actions taken by Moscow to curtail economic and technological cooperation, and any restrictions imposed on Western businesses in Russia, would entail immediate losses to the nation's citizens and government. Nevertheless, if Russia's isolationists gain more and more political influence, these experts may no longer have significant input in policy formulation. So far, Russia has not yet reached this point.

Russia is too big to isolate itself completely, however, and partial isolation is likely to have unintended consequences that go against the West's intent in imposing sanctions and freezing dialogue on important challenges. It is up to Washington and Brussels to think

about whether it is in the West's interest to strengthen isolationist forces in Russia and provide incentives for Russia's "pivot" away from the West and towards China, Africa and Latin America.

Many experts and citizens in Russia agree on one point, though it is not expressed in the state-controlled mass-media. There have been two winners in the Ukrainian crises—Crimea, where a vast majority of the population had longed to join Russia, and China. Neither Russia nor the West has improved their position as a result of the crisis. Western shared interests in cooperation with Moscow on many challenges—ranging from non-proliferation and terrorism to endeavors in Arctic—dictate that the further isolation of Russia would be detrimental to global and regional stability and to domestic processes in Russia.

Russia, in turn, with its shrinking list of allies and partners and its increased social and economic challenges, will hardly find easy solutions in this drastically changing environment. Both sides should consider that no one would benefit from starting a new version of Cold War.

THE NEW STATUS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST: A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER?

by Margarita Šešelgytė*

Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine and the occupation of Crimea there have been ongoing discussions as to what the strategic goals of the Russian president are: to preserve the regime and remain in power for an unlimited time, to restore the Soviet Union, or to establish a new international order in which Russia gains more influence. This chapter argues that all those goals are interrelated and that the latter two are likely to be supporting the first one. In other words, in order to remain in power Vladimir Putin has to present to the Russian citizens a "grand plan", one which would enable them to feel successful, satisfied and proud of their country despite deteriorating democratic standards and a worsening economic situation.

For many in Russia, the Soviet Union marks the time when Russia was at the peak of its greatness. Consequently, its dissolution is considered to be a negative change. Therefore, narratives about the revival of the Soviet Union and exclusive zones of interest in the territories of the former Soviet Union are reciprocated by Russian society. Moreover, despite all the efforts of the Western community to integrate Russia into the contemporary international system and to modernize it (Russia was a member of the G8, had special relations with the EU and NATO, continues to be a member of WTO and maintains a wide network of economic relations with European countries), Russia has been gradually losing its relevance. Its economy has not grown as

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fast as the economies of the rest of the BRICS countries, democratic reforms and modernization have stalled, and its influence in the world, even in the countries that Russian politicians tend to define as the "near abroad", has been shrinking. The Europeanization of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have been the most obvious indicators of this trend. A stagnating economy and decreasing democratic standards in Russia have dampened public support for the regime and pushed it to desperately search for a "grand plan" to make society feel successful, happy and proud of their country.

Efforts of the Russian regime to recreate a narrative of "great power" have coincided with several important developments on the international level. First of all, the rapid economic growth of developing countries and a relative stagnation of Western economies have stimulated discussions about the changing power balance in the international system. Secondly, a changing power balance in Asia Pacific has encouraged the USA to redirect its strategic priorities, decreasing its participation in European affairs. Thirdly, the European Union was hit by a major economic crisis, was struggling to recover and preoccupied with internal issues rather than international ones. These developments have created a temporary power vacuum in Europe and also a window of opportunity for Russia to advance its influence. It might be argued that a decrease of internal support for the regime and the window of opportunity on the international level have created favorable conditions for Putin's "grand plan", while events in Ukraine after the failure of Victor Yanukovych to sign the Association agreement with the EU triggered the motion.

In a 2014 Valdai forum speech, Vladimir Putin called for the creation of a new world order based on new rules. The current one, which according to him was produced after World War II, did not reflect the reality of the aftermath of the Cold War and did not ensure security and stability.[1] The underlying idea of the speech was

1 "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," October 24, 2014, Excerpts from transcript of the final plenary meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club's XI session http://en.kremlinru/events/president/news/46860

that within this new international order Russia has to play a more influential role in international affairs. The main challenge for the implementation of this idea is that neither economic indicators nor the "power of attraction" allows Russia to play in the same league as the US, China or the EU, and therefore Putin is trying to advocate a world order based on principles that on the one hand would allow Russia to increase its relative power internationally and on the other hand would help to accumulate support for his regime. The main power assets that still enable Russia to be referred to as a super power are its territory, its military capabilities (to a certain extent), its permanent seat on the UN Security Council and most importantly its nuclear status. The only international order where Russia can still be considered as a super power is a system based on the primacy of military power, alongside principles of balance of power and ultimate sovereignty in the internal affairs. The relatively strong Russian military, and most importantly its nuclear weapons, would allow Russia to play power games in such an international system and thereby would increase its influence. Consequently, because of its declining relevance Russia is challenging the current international order, its institutions, values and main principles, and is trying to propose its own rules for the game. Moreover, as far as this endeavor is convincing to the Russian society as a way to return Russia to the status of superpower, despite its economic decline and the deterioration of democratic standards in Russia, the regime in Moscow might feel quite safe. This chapter aims to discuss particularities of the current international order, to outline the ways that Russia is trying to degrade that order and to elaborate on the ways to preserve it.

Is current international order obsolete?

The current international order evolved at the end of the Cold War. That time was marked by the end of significant divisions and antagonisms between members of international community and a universal expansion of the liberal democratic order. Francis Fukuyama

enthusiastically called this moment the end of history[2] and there was hope for more peaceful international relations in the future. John G. Ikenberry argues that the current world order is the result of two projects—the creation of a modern state and the empowerment of a liberal order on the international level.[3] The main principles of this order are sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference. A liberal international order is also associated with the empowerment of small states and the individual, the universality of human rights, the expansion of multinational economic cooperation, free trade regimes, the free flow of investment, and the increasing relevance of economic and soft power.

The events of September 11th, 2001 and the rise of the BRICS countries have stimulated discussions about a potential change in the current international order. One of the main issues at hand is the debate between democracies and some of the developing countries. Both Russia and China have different attitudes from Western democracies towards the universality of democracy and have argued that with respect to the growing power of non-democratic countries, certain principles of the international order have to be reconsidered. In the Munich Conference of 2007, Vladimir Putin openly accused the US of imposing a unipolar world order through a "hyper-inflated use of force", and called this a "formula for disaster."[4] In fact, contrary to the common believe in the West in the sincerity of Russia's willingness to integrate into the liberal international system and in its gradual democratization, Russia was never happy with the international system that evolved after the Cold war. In 1996 the late Yevgeny Primakov, who at that time assumed the position of foreign minister of the Russian Federation\, already strongly advocated for the creation of a multipolar world as opposed to a unipolar one, with power centers such as the US, Russia, the EU, China, Japan,

2 Fukuyama, Francis. "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, Summer 1989.

3 Ikenberry, John. "The Future of the Liberal Order", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011, p.2.

4 Watson, Rob. "Putin's speech: Back to cold war?", *BBC NEWS*, February 10, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6350847.stm

ASEAN and Latin America. As Ariel Cohen argues, by promoting this multipolar model Primakov aimed to "dilute American international power" and to "strengthen America's foes and weaken its allies" in various regions.[5] Sergey Lavrov, the current Russian foreign minister, has called the moment Primakov took over the Russian Foreign Ministry a "dramatic turn of Russia's foreign policy". According to him "Russia left the path our Western partners had tried to make it follow after the breakup of the Soviet Union and embarked on a track of its own".[6] The driving idea behind this independent track was opposition to US primacy and opposition to liberal democracy. Most of Russia's closest allies were not democracies.

It might be argued that until 2007 Russia was still hoping to get a better place in the existing international system, or at least to get reassurances of its primacy in the post-Soviet territories. The euro-integration ambitions of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, however, convinced Putin's regime that this would not be possible without additional effort. Putin's speech in the Valdai forum in 2014 already reflected his belief in the inevitable decay of the current international order. He defined the current status of international relations as a "game without the rules" and emphasized the necessity to write new rules to prevent new conflicts.[7] However, it is still not clear under which format these rules will be created and who will devise the new rules. Though the regime constantly tries to mobilize its allies among those who are not satisfied with the current international order, it should be noted that the group of supporters is too thin to establish a coalition of alternative "rules of the game" within the international system. Moreover, it seems that most of the discussions about changes to the international order circulate around issues of power redistribution

5 Cohen, Ariel. *The 'Primakov Doctrine': Russia's Zero-Sum Game with the United States*, Heritage Foundation, December 15, 1997.

6 Sysoyev, Grigory. "Lavrov predicts historians may coin new term: the Primakov Doctrine," *TASS*, October 28, 2014, http://tass.ru/en/russia/756973

7 "Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club," October 24, 2014, Excerpts from transcript of the final plenary meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club's XI session http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860

and not the necessity to change the main principles and rules of the game; a majority of the developing countries therefore support a liberal international order, as it provides a framework for their growth. J. Ikenberry argues that the current liberal international order "is not just a collection of liberal democratic states but an international mutual-aid society—a sort of global political club that provides members with tools for economic and political advancement."8 According to him, China and other emerging powers do not contest the basic rules and principles of that order because it is beneficial for them, but "want to gain more authority and leadership" within the existing system. Growing economies in the rest of the BRICS countries allow them to claim more influence in the existing system, whereas Russia is more interested in maintaining its position in the exclusive club of big military powers with nuclear weapons that make the main decisions on international security issues.

How is Russia trying to damage the liberal international order?

An inability to negotiate a better position within the existing international order or to present an attractive alternative to it leaves the Russian regime with not many options left. In order to convince Russian society of its increasing influence and ability to have a say in international affairs, the Russian regime is trying to attack the current international order. First of all, it strikes by raising doubts about the functionality and adequacy of the current order while at the same time trying to convince Russian society and potential allies that the current order is dangerous for international security. Secondly, through its destructive behavior Russia is corrupting and damaging the main principles of the current international order. Principles of sovereignty and territorial indivisibility were harshly breached when

8 Ikenberry, John. "The Future of the Liberal Order", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011, p.2.

Russia annexed South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and again later with the occupation and annexation of Crimea.

When accused of breaching international law, Russia often brings up the "precedent of Kosovo" as an example of a breakaway territory that unilaterally declared independence. However, it should be noted that the Kosovo case is entirely different from the cases of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Crimea. The advisory opinion of International Court of Justice on the unilateral independence of Kosovo clearly concluded that the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence was in accordance with international law. Moreover, it defined what was illegal in the declaration of independence, stating that "the illegality attached to the declarations of independence thus stemmed not from the unilateral character of these declarations as such, but from the fact that they were, or would have been, connected with the unlawful use of force or other egregious violations of norms of general international law, in particular those of a peremptory character (jus cogens)."[9] The use of force in Crimea and Abkhazia makes their declarations of independence illegal. Moreover, in advocating for Russia's role in protecting Russian speaking minorities in other sovereign countries, the Russian regime is breaching the principle of non-interference. Russia attacks the institutions and norms that are the foundation of the current international order. By occupying and annexing South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Crimea, Russia has violated the Helsinki Final Act of 1975—thereby, as Stephen Blank argues, "ripping apart the post-Cold War settlement based on the indivisibility of European security".[10] Additionally, by occupying Crimea Russia has breached two other agreements, under which it had assumed responsibility

9 "Accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo." *Summary of the advisory opinion*, International Court of Justice, The Hague, The Netherlands, 2010/22.

10 Blank, Stephen. "America and the Russian - Georgian War", *Mediterranean Quarterly,* Vol 20, Number 4, Fall 2009.

for Ukraine's security—the Tashkent Treaty[11] and the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances.[12]

In March of 2015, Russia announced a unilateral withdrawal from the CFE (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe) Treaty, impeding monitoring of the movement of Russia's armed forces and increasing the likelihood of an unexpected military attack in the region. Testing a banned ground-launched cruise missile has brought into question the functioning of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Although Russia still supports the OSCE and UN SC as formats where Russia has decision power, due to its destructive activities the ability of these formats to work effectively often is diluted. Through destructive acts toward international institutions, Russia intentionally tries to demonstrate that the current international order is not effective and does not reflect the changing reality and current balance of power, and therefore that it needs to be revised. Therefore, Putin and his administration are ardently advocating various new formats for security cooperation to replace the existing ones. In December 2006, then-Minister of Defense Sergey Ivanov offered a scheme for the division of "spheres of influence" between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.[13] In July 2014, during a meeting with Russian ambassadors serving abroad, Vladimir Putin commanded his ambassadors to start working on preparing a new framework for international cooperation—"a joint space of economic and humanitarian cooperation from Lisbon to Vladivostok", excluding the US and based on absolute non-interference in internal political

11 "Agreement on the Principles and Procedures for the Implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe," May 15, 1992, http://fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/tashka.htm

12 "Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances," Council on Foreign Relations, December 5, 1994, http://www.cfr.org/nonproliferation-arms-control-and-disarmament/budapest-memorandums-security-assurances-1994/p32484

13 Blank, Stephen. "America and the Russian - Georgian War", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol 20, Number 4, Fall 2009, p 387.

matters.[14] It might be argued that the Russian regime in general has little respect in international institutions except those within which major decisions in international affairs are made.

The principle of non-interference is one of the principles of international order that comes from the Westphalia conferences and entrenches the ultimate sovereignty of the state within its territory. Current discussions about the implementation of this principle in Western liberal democracies involve the concept of the ultimate responsibility of the state for its people. Should the latter be put at risk, the legitimacy of the former is in question. In situations where the state fails to deliver protection and security for its people, other states have a right or even a duty to interfere (known as the "Responsibility to Protect"). Russia, on the other hand, as well as countries like China and to a certain extent Brazil, argue that interference in the other states' affairs under the pretext of the protection of human rights usually has underlying political interests and should not be tolerated in international relations. The annexation of Crimea, and the reaction of Western powers to it, has been used once again as a new impetus for this debate.

Finally, Russia is trying to challenge the liberal values that the current international system is based on. It raises doubts about the universality of liberal values, arguing that liberal values are not the values that represent most of the world and they do not have cultural grounding in countries such as Russia or China. Moreover, Russia is trying to expose the so-called "hypocrisy" of the West, maintaining that Western powers are applying double standards in their protection of human rights. Dmitry Peskov, a spokesperson for Putin after the Valdai conference of 2014, has remarked that democracy and human rights were not debated during the conference because they simply lost their relevance: "world experts nowadays are losing their interest in the traditional set of burning points". He argued that "everyone is sick and tired of this issue of human rights" and that Putin "understands pretty well that there are no general Western

14 Felgenhauer, Pavel. "Putin: Ukraine is a Battlefield for the New World Order," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume: 11 Issue: 121, July 3, 2014.

values".[15] Moreover, according to the Russian regime, by protecting human rights the West has lost its rigor and distanced itself from so-called "traditional values". In his annual state of nation speech, Putin painted a picture of Russia as the world's "last bastion" against countries bent upon destroying traditional values—he stated that Russia will defend itself against "genderless and fruitless so-called tolerance" which allows "good and evil" to be equal.[16] His opposition to Western values on the one hand is meant to sow doubt about the current international order and its principles, thereby devastating the normative power of the West, while on the other hand the position is very convenient for combating domestic opposition and maintaining political stability within the country. In fact, it could be argued that an attack on liberal values is of the utmost importance for the regime, as liberalism and democracy are the direct antitheses to the current regime and therefore represent the most serious threat to its survival.

The vulnerabilities of the West

One of the main challenges for the West in standing for the current international order lies in its own weaknesses and inability to appropriately respond to Russia's destructive behavior. First of all, Western powers lack unity. Although sanctions against the destructive behavior of the Russian regime were imposed, the time it took to reach a common decision and the strictness of punishment reflected major disagreements among European countries and did not impress either advocates for harsher measures or, as it seems, Russia itself. The inability to make timely and adequate common decisions not only

15 Barry, Ellen. "Putin, in Need of Cohesion, Pushes Patriotism," *New York Times*, November 20, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/21/world/europe/vladimir-putin-pushes-patriotism-in-russia.html

16 Luhn, Alec. "President Vladimir Putin hails Russia's 'defence of traditional values' in his state of the nation speech," *the Independent,* December 12, 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/president-vladimir-putin-hails-russias-defence-of-traditional-values-in-his-state-of-the-nation-speech-9001470.html

undermined the effect of the decisions, but also provided the time and grounds for Russia to set up back door activities within the West. As a result of two decades of ardent efforts by Western powers to integrate Russia into various Western institutions, Russia understands very well how those institutions function and how to influence their decision making processes. An extensive network of business and political partners in the West is employed for that purpose. All sorts of political radicals are also used to transmit the Russian narrative and to criticize Western values and the Western way of life, to raise doubts about the effectiveness of democracy and European integration. Moreover, Russia quite successfully manipulates European countries, dividing them by offering preferential bilateral economic relations and political support for some. At the same time it spreads doubt about the unity of Europe and the justice of the current international system. These trends are particularly dangerous because they ruin the current international order from within—as Stephen Blank argues, "a disunited Europe bifurcated by blocks in which Russia has a free hand to do as it pleases would undermine all of the work of past generations for a peaceful, whole and free Europe."[17] An even more dangerous issue is the inability of European countries to recognize the covert and potentially damaging intentions of the Russian regime. Trade relations are usually treated separately from the political issues in liberal democracies, whereas in Russia the boundaries between the two are blurred, and therefore by trading with Russia sometimes Europeans support the strategies of the Russian regime without realizing it. It should also be noted that as the crisis in Ukraine evolved, Europeans were almost willing to be outwitted by Russia because it was so inconvenient to change the mode of the relations between the EU and Russia from partnership to rivalry. This change would be a challenge for European economies, which are still fragile and recovering from a major crisis. Additionally, a majority of Western societies are accustomed to living peacefully, securely and wealthily and are not ready to compromise their living standards and

17 Blank, Stephen. "America and the Russian - Georgian War", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol 20, Number 4, Fall 2009, p 384.

"peaceful" way of life in order to punish Russia for breaching international law and attacking Western values. From the Russian perspective this is seen as one of the main Western vulnerabilities, and that view might provoke even more destructive behavior from the Russian regime.

Despite all the weaknesses of the Western powers, positive steps in addressing Russia's challenge of the international order also deserve to be mentioned. First of all, although economic sanctions against Russia are often criticized as not timely, too feeble and mocked by the Russian regime, they are a very important instrument in fighting the destructive behavior of Russia. Economic sanctions do not put into question the main principles of the current liberal international order—in fact, they reinforce the argument about the importance of economic interdependence and the belief that destructive behavior at the end of the day should not be attractive. Moreover, economic sanctions are having a sustainable effect on the Russian economy, if maybe a bit slow: on the one hand, they mean there are fewer resources for Russia to use to act destructively on the international stage, and on the other hand in the long run they might reduce support among Russian society for the regime. Moreover, and most importantly, the decision to impose economic sanctions on Russia, despite differences in the packages of sanctions from the EU and the US, has demonstrated the unity of Western powers. Even the EU, where there were quite a few discussions about the necessity of economic sanctions, has managed to make a unified decision, which in turn strengthens the face of the EU among its members and increases trust between the EU members.

On June 11th, 2015, the European Parliament adopted a report on the state of EU-Russia relations.[18] Although it is only a declarative document that does not have binding power, it again demonstrates the unity of the EU and also indicates a change in the discourse, which is becoming stricter—within the report, Russia no longer is considered a strategic partner but a country breaching the European

18 "Report on the State of EU-Russia relations (2015/2001(INI))," Committee on Foreign Relations, European Parliament, A8-0162/2015, May 13, 2015, http:/www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2015-0162+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN#title1

order and European values (the report was adopted with 494 votes in favor, 135 against and 69 abstentions). The report underlines that any future relations with Russia must not be conducted at the expense of international principles, European values and standards, or international commitments. Gabrielius Landsbergis, the European parliamentarian who was put in charge of preparing the report, noted that it "sends a strong message that Europe really does have a backbone when it comes to issues such as Russia".[19] It should be noted that Russia still has a lot of influence in the European decision making process and in affecting change in the EU—the worsening of Russian relations is not irreversible, but these steps demonstrate an increasing understanding of the dangers that Russia presents and a growing political will to respond to them.

Conclusions

Recent steps that have taken place in the EU to respond to the destructive behavior of Russia—not only economic sanctions and the EP report, but also actions taken in integrating the EU energy market and addressing the challenge posed by informational warfare—demonstrate a change in the EU's attitude towards Russia, where Russia is increasingly perceived as a competitor rather than strategic partner. However, it should be noted that these changes, as well as the unity required to support these changes, are still very fragile. EU members have different views on how EU–Russia relations should be framed in the future, and Russia tries to exploit these differences. In order to address Russia's destructive behavior and preserve the liberal international order, the West has to base its actions on three important pillars.

First of all, the consistency of actions is essential. Economic

19 Landsbergis, Gabrielius. "Sanctions against Russia are already bearing fruit", June 6, 2015, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20150325STO37718/html/Gabrielius-Landsbergis-Sanctions-against-Russia-are-already-bearing-fruit

sanctions work well—therefore, it is very important for the EU not to change its course of action at the first sign of positive behavior on the Russian side, as historical experience demonstrates that Russia's behavior might change very fast. A deterioration of relations might be dangerous, but so is delusional cooperation. Cooperation should be based on respect for the major principles of the current liberal international order. If Russia refuses to abide by the principles of the international order, cooperation should stall.

Secondly, a strong respect for the principles and values of the international order on the part of the Western states is crucial. It is of the utmost importance not to compromise these principles, because compromises create an atmosphere of double standards and uncertainty, which encourages destructive behavior. Moreover, Russia employs an extensive communication campaign aimed at sowing doubt about the principles of the international system and Western values, creating alternative narratives that attempt to exploit any deviation from these principles. Compromises also destroy trust among the Western countries. The Western community has to invest in protecting its unity, as this one of the main targets for Russia. This is a very difficult task, but could be encouraged by fostering an atmosphere of mutual understanding and discouraging deviation from common positions.

Finally, the vigilance and resilience of Western societies towards Russian attacks should be enhanced. The Russian regime is conducting an extensive information campaign around the world. In masterfully constructed narratives about the current international order, the West, and Western values, it becomes very difficult to distinguish the truth from lies. Confusion within society triggered by these information attacks is also eroding the liberal international order.

THE MEANS AND ENDS OF RUSSIA'S SECURITY STRATEGY

by Uģis Romanovs*

It can be said that the cause of the fundamental geopolitical change in Europe is Russia implementing its national interests, particularly in "transforming the Russian Federation into a world power"[1]. It must be admitted that Europe has a certain role in this change as well, as their response to Russian actions in Chechnya and Georgia was driven by realism rather than idealism, taking into account the existence of Russia's nuclear arsenal, Russia's geographical location, its permanent position in the UN Security Council and various material considerations. Furthermore, the West's reaction to the annexation of Crimea and the Kremlin's actions in Eastern Ukraine demonstrated the fragmented nature of political cohesion of Europe.

Russian aggression against Ukraine highlighted the incompatibility of the aims of Russia and Europe and revealed to the world the Kremlin's true position in the international system. Firstly, Russia is growing as an anti-Western power whose efforts are primarily aimed at countering what the Kremlin considers to be the aggressive expansion of NATO and US ideology and military infrastructure into the geopolitical sphere of Russia's interests. The spectrum of activities exercised by Russia in this respect is very broad; however, all of them are oriented at undermining the security guaranties made by the US and NATO, blocking and abandoning the democratic and social values of the West, and preventing surrounding countries from becoming liberal, democratic and well-governed.

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1 "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020." May 12, 2009, http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020

Secondly, the Kremlin is exploiting the "imperfect nature of legal instruments and mechanisms"[2], which ironically is highlighted in the Russia Security Strategy 2020 as an "ever-increasing threat to international security"[3]. Furthermore, the robust propaganda system disregards the fact that Putin "thumbed his nose at the agreements and commitments that had kept the peace in Europe"[4] and creates an illusion for audiences in Russia that the great leader of the country stands on the moral high-ground. This propaganda is effectively spread across post-Soviet territories and beyond.

Thirdly, events in Georgia and Ukraine clearly demonstrated the Kremlin's readiness to use its military power in pursuit of its political goals, as well as highlighting the scope of potential consequences for crossing the "red lines" drawn by Moscow. It is important to note that since 2008 the Kremlin has been consistently developing its military capabilities, and judging by the content of these reforms it can be assumed that Putin is readying the country's military to confront the West and the US.

Challenges and concerns

The reform of Russia's military has been widely discussed and often criticized as slow and chaotic. Nevertheless, the reforms and rearmament of the armed forces is one of the top priorities for the Kremlin, and the defense budget is constantly growing. Despite the economic challenges Russia has been exposed to recently, the estimated funds allocated to defense in 2015 will reach 4.2% of GDP (88.3 billion USD), whereas in 2014 it was 3.5%.[5]

2 "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020." May 12, 2009, http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020

3 "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020." May 12, 2009, http://rustrans.wikidot.com/russia-s-national-security-strategy-to-2020

4 Kramer, David J. "The Ukraine Invasion, One Year Later". *World Affairs*, March/ April 2015

5 "Chapter Five: Russia and Eurasia," *The Military Balance*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 10, 2015, p.154

Disregarding the availability of financial resources, the implementation of the rearmament program will still be slowed down by the stagnating character of the Russian defense industry and the punitive measures by Western governments. Therefore, Moscow will try to find ways to compensate for its military capability gaps by, firstly, exercising nuclear diplomacy. The importance of its nuclear arsenal has become a routine topic in the Kremlin's rhetoric and is starting to challenge certain aspects of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Putin's speech to the Expanded Meeting of the Defense Ministry Board illustrates the Kremlin's position colorfully: (...) we must develop all components of our strategic nuclear forces, which play a very important part in maintaining global balance and essentially rule out the possibility of a large-scale attack against Russia. In 2015, the strategic nuclear forces will receive more than 50 intercontinental ballistic missiles. You can imagine what a powerful force this is. We must continue modernizing our strategic aviation and put the two missile-carrying submarines (…) on combat duty.[6]

Secondly, based on its experience in Ukraine, Moscow will most likely continue designing ever more sophisticated hybrid methods of warfare by incorporating the vulnerabilities and gaps in the various instruments of national and international legislation, the traditionally slow character of the Alliance's decision-making processes, and a variety of factors in the social, political, military and economic domains.

Thirdly, Russia is repositioning forces and infrastructure in a way that would allow the country to gain maximum operational and strategic advantages for a possible military confrontation with the West. By assessing the level of effort the Kremlin has been putting into beefing up its military capabilities in very close vicinity to the Baltic States since 2008, it can be assumed that the region is being prepared for a challenge to the Alliance, militarily if required. The Kremlin's rhetoric in response to Washington's plans to store military

6 "Expanded meeting of the Defence Ministry Board," December 19, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47257

equipment in Eastern Europe adds plausibility to this hypothesis. In a news conference on June 16th, 2015, Putin stated that "we will be forced to aim our armed forces... at those territories from where the threat comes".[7] Furthermore, Russian Defense Ministry official General Yuri Yakubov said the Russian response was likely to include a speeding up of the deployment of Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad, and a beefing up of Russian forces in the ex-Soviet state of Belarus.[8]

Here are some more examples that illustrate recent developments along the borders with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania:

- In 2009, the 25th Motorized Rifle Brigade was established as a completely new unit at the Vladimirsky Lager military base. Vladimirsky Lager is in Estonia's immediate vicinity, on the eastern side of the lake that separates the two countries.

- In the summer of 2013, the Ostrov Air Base was (re)opened in Pskov Oblast, next to the Latvian border. In a remarkably short time—by the spring of 2014—Ostrov housed a full-scale army aviation (helicopter) brigade. It is equipped with about 50 of the newest attack and transport helicopters.

- In the summer of 2013, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that it had stationed planes at the Lida Air Base near the Belarus–Lithuania border. By the end of the year, four Russian fighter aircrafts had been deployed to the base.[9]

7 Dyomkin, Denis and Winning, Alexander. "Putin: Russia Would Direct Armed Forces at Aggressors," *The Moscow Times*, June16, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/16/us-russia-putin-arms-idUSKBN0OW2HT20150616

8 Baczynska, Gabriela and Szary, Wiktor. "Russia Says It Will Retaliate if U.S. Weapons Stationed on Borders," *The Moscow Times*, June 16, 2015, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russia-says-it-will-retaliate-if-us-weapons-stationed-on-borders/523724.html

9 Kaas, Kaarel. "Russian Armed Forces in the Baltic Sea Region," *Diplomaatia*, pp. 1-10, June/July 2014, p. 6

- The Russian air defense system fully covers the Baltic Region, thus creating a favorable air situation for Russia from the very beginning of any potential conflict.

- Ballistic rockets are positioned so that they can reach all the most important strategic locations in the region, including ports, airports, communication nodes and other similar targets.

In spite of all their efforts, it must be admitted that the Baltic States' military forces still do not have the capability to inflict enough damage to affect the strategic outcomes of an attacking party. Finally, the Baltic region offers the possibility for Russia to introduce a wide spectrum of various scenarios, from a full attack to the application of complex modular low intensity scenarios.

Opportunities

The methods applied by Kremlin in pursuit of its security and foreign policy objectives, and the pragmatic build-up of military forces and infrastructure in very close vicinity to the Baltic region, imply that there is a possibility that Russia could choose the Baltic region as a battleground to confront the West and US militarily. At the same time, the Baltic States have become the eastern outpost of Western values and geopolitical stability in Europe. Therefore, the responsibility for reinforcing this front belongs to more than just Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Failure to build a politically and practically feasible course of action capable of countering the rise of Russia "would mean the virtual collapse, not only of the Alliance, but also of our security relationships around the world"[10].

The nature of the security environment in Europe has changed permanently, as has the content of conflict and war. Objectives

10 Hooker, Richard D. Jr., *Understanding U.S. Grand Strategy*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Orbis, May 2015

are achieved by using various tools of direct and indirect influence, which are applied through all levels of war across the political, social, military and information domains simultaneously. There is no distinct start or end point of the confrontation. National borders have become irrelevant as a confrontation in one European state will influence the security balance of the whole region. Consequently, the conditions of war and peace are being brought closer together than ever before—therefore, modern conflict contains a significant number of non-rational and ambiguous features that are very difficult to capture and understand. Therefore, the first attribute required for building strong defense system in Europe is a unified understanding of the security situation, the drivers of Russia's actions, and the nature and tools of modern war. This precondition will limit the ability to generalize observations and is central to building national and Alliance defense policy and systems, and also directs the actions necessary for security and stability. Furthermore, it will slow down and eliminate the effectiveness of the Kremlin's propaganda machine.

Due to a changed strategic environment, the ways and military means of European nations that were prepared to secure national security aims are out of balance. The main task for Europe is re-establishing this equilibrium. NATO and US assurance measures are a short term solution that cannot be considered a relevant way to confront existing threats. To do that, European nations have to realign and redistribute their military capabilities across state borders so that they are relevant to the new security threats, provide adequate deterrence measures, ensure sufficient situational awareness, and are ready to prevail in every domain of modern warfare.

"A military threat could not be countered by the declining European soft power or by diplomatic talks alone. Soft power, without convincing hard power, is hot air."[11] This means that there needs to be a redirection of the national military capability development towards the most exposed region of Europe to compensate for the

11 Pabriks, Artis. "European security: stop sleeping and wake up", *European View* (2014) vol. 13, pp. 259–268, p. 266

critical military requirement gaps there, which could never be filled by 2% of the GDP of three Baltic States alone. As Elias Götz put it, "poking the Russian bear with a stick in the eye and letting smaller neighboring countries take the swipe of his paw is the worst policy of all"[12]. In practical terms, for European countries this would mean the introduction of the following military capabilities into the Baltic region:

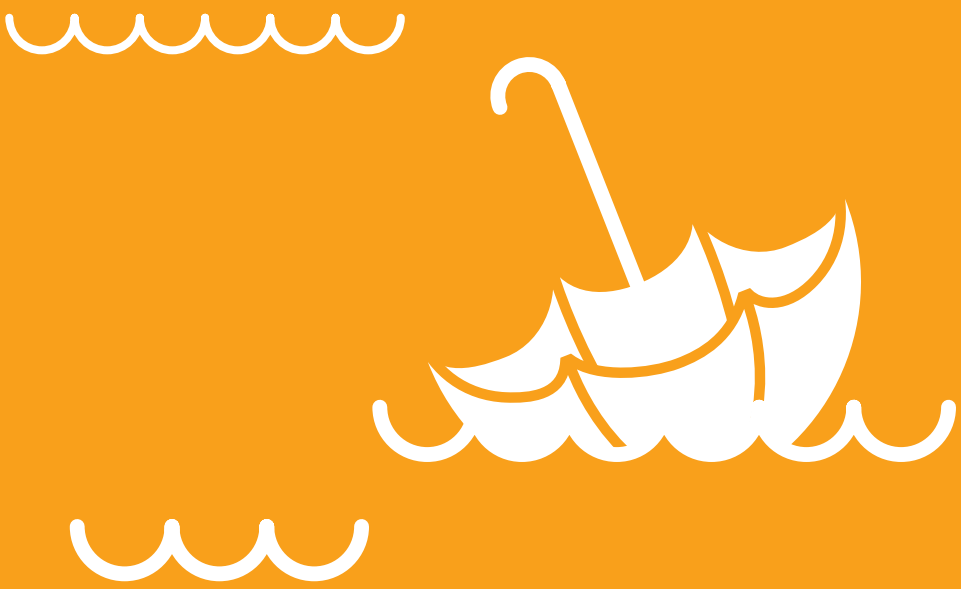
- The capability to exercise command in the Baltic Sea with the primary purpose of maintaining the capability to utilize sea lines of communication and deny Russia freedom of action at sea.

- The establishment of an effective and functional air and missile defense shield, providing security to the host nation infrastructure and improving the odds for having a favorable air situation from the very start of an operation.

- Storing heavy equipment and logistic stocks, thus enabling the immediate and continues capability to conduct land operations, primarily against regular units, as well as supporting the establishment of territorially dispersed maintenance and repair capabilities for allied equipment and weapons.

- The capability on very short notice to support local territorial forces in conducting operations against irregular and paramilitary formations.

12 Götz, Elias. "It's geopolitics, stupid: explaining Russia's Ukraine policy", *Global Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 3–10, 2015, p. 10



RUSSIAN HYBRID WARFARE AND ESTONIA

by Merle Maigre*

Russia's actions in and around Ukraine have reinforced the notion that the security environment in Europe is becoming increasingly unpredictable. Estonia's policy towards the Russian conflict with Ukraine has first and foremost been influenced by security concerns. For Estonia, the scope of the crisis extends beyond Ukraine to the security of the Baltic region as a whole.[1] What is Russia's thinking on hybrid warfare, and what countermeasures can be taken at a national level? These questions are important when considering the challenges, concerns and opportunities for the Baltic States in the midst of the Ukraine crisis.

Hybrid warfare

The European security debate now pays far more attention to different types of warfare, and especially to hybrid warfare. Over the past two years, "hybrid war" has become one of the most widely used terms in politics and strategy. However, its meaning and definition can vary. The term "hybrid" can stand for both the ambiguity and deniability of military action, as well as signify the coordinated use of all instruments of state power.

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1 Maigre, Merle. "A Region Disunited? Central European Responses to the Russia-Ukraine Crisis" (ed. Joerg Forbig). The German Marshall Fund. February 19, 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/region-disunited-central-european-responses-russia-ukraine-crisis#sthash.8TjPdLKP.dpuf

Looking at the Russian conceptual thinking on "hybrid warfare" makes sense, as Russia seems to be the country of origin of the current concept. The term "hybrid warfare" has been used extensively by the Russian Chief of the General Staff of the Army General Valeriy Gerasimov. In a February 2013 article, Gerasimov described how armed conflicts have adopted new military methods, calling it "new generation warfare". According to his description, under this model military action is started by groups of troops during peacetime without war being officially declared. Non-contact clashes occur between highly maneuverable inter-specific fighting groups with the overall goal of defeating the enemy's military and economic power through short-term precise strikes aimed at strategic military and civilian infrastructure.[2]

For Russia, hybrid warfare is not about defeating countries, but influencing and possibly coercing them to move in a desired direction. The purpose of Russia's hybrid attacks is to pressure, influence, and destabilize another country without necessarily conducting territorial grabs. Hybrid warfare comprises actions that are aimed at exploiting the so-called "protest-potential" within a target country to create paramilitary formations that would operate alongside with Russian Special Operations Forces. Simultaneously, a country would be subjected to external pressure—possibly in a wide range of domains—to accomplish either regime change or to achieve the change of policy.[3]

The Russian military prefers not to use conventional assets and instead to create an asymmetric confrontation with the enemy, but if need be campaign objectives can be achieved by conventional means swiftly and decisively. Hybrid warfare, or "non-linear warfare"

2 Герасимов, Валерий. "Новые вызовы требуют переосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий" ("New challenges need to rethink the forms and methods of warfare actions"), *Военно-промышленный окурьер*, No. 8 (476), February 27, 2013, http://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632 . For a specific discussion, see also Berzins, Janis, "Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy". National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, April 2014, http://www.naa.mil.lv/~/media/NAA/AZPC/Publikacijas/PP%2002-2014.ashx

3 Ideas put forward by Erik Männik in his presentation on hybrid warfare to the EU Political and Steering Committee ambassadors on April 30, 2015.

as outlined by Gerasimov, is but one of the Kremlin's many *modus operandi*. It is not new, nor is it a unique strategy to the Russian military. Other methods may include the threat of using nuclear weapons, the deployment of massive amounts of conventional heavy weapons, and creating frozen conflicts as a means of pressure.[4]

The principle of the coordinated use of various instruments of state power goes back far, with military history including numerous examples of the use of a combination of regular and irregular forms of warfare. It is also interesting to note the similarities between the current Russian thinking on hybrid warfare and the strategy of the Soviet Union as outlined in George F. Kennan's Long Telegram from 1946.[5]

Kennan saw the need for the Soviet empire to rely on communists and communist organizations in addition to other pan-Slavic movements that could be "hijacked" and aligned with Soviet interests, as well as on the Russian Orthodox Church, to increase Soviet influence within other states. Kennan also noted that the Soviet Union was ready to sow discord and exploit differences within and between Western powers to maximize Soviet influence.[6] The Russian military's thinking on hybrid warfare has, in its entirety, been put into practice in Ukraine over the past two years.[7]

4 Maigre, Merle. "Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO," *GMF Policy Brief,* February 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/nothing-new-hybrid-warfare-estonian-experience-and-recommendations-nato

5 Comparison used by Erik Männik in his presentation on hybrid warfare to the EU Political and Steering Committee ambassadors on April 30, 2015.

6 "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State." February 22, 1946, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm

7 Maigre, Merle. "Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO," *GMF Policy Brief*, February 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/nothing-new-hybrid-warfare-estonian-experience-and-recommendations-nato

The Estonian experience

Russian provocations in the Baltic Sea region have escalated, including frequent military exercises and flyovers by strategic bombers. In September 2014, Russia abducted a security officer from inside Estonia and detained a Lithuanian-flagged fishing vessel operating near Murmansk. Other Baltic and Nordic states experienced similar Russian aggression in 2014–2015.[8]

What are the possible implications of these hybrid warfare trends for national defense planners and policy professionals in the Baltic region? Above all, it is important to recognize that national governments have a primary role to deter and defend against traditional and hybrid threats, as well as to cooperate and coordinate their efforts both bilaterally and with international organizations such as NATO, the European Union, and the United Nations. Drawing from Estonia's experience, the quick implementation of a number of counter-measures against hybrid warfare would benefit national-level defense.[9]

- **Improving early warning systems and situational awareness** Surveillance and counter-intelligence have to be well prepared. A broad, systematic monitoring of sentiment in various sections of society is important. Critical questions include: how data gets analyzed, what role intelligence reports play in strategic decision-making, and how the Allies can support each other with intelligence sharing.

8 Maigre, Merle. "A Region Disunited? Central European Responses to the Russia-Ukraine Crisis" (ed. Joerg Forbig). The German Marshall Fund. February 19, 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/region-disunited-central-european-responses-russia-ukraine-crisis#sthash.8TjPdLKP.dpuf

9 Maigre, Merle. "Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO," *GMF Policy Brief*, February 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/nothing-new-hybrid-warfare-estonian-experience-and-recommendations-nato

- **Strengthening national defense capabilities**

  The Estonian armed forces should continue to develop their defense capabilities in order to be able to quickly react in times of crisis and so that they can rely on substantial firepower. Early response is critical. Interoperability, sustainability, good equipment, regular training and exercises are also of key importance.

- **Maintaining a long-term allied presence**

  A sustained multinational presence of Allied forces reinforces the capacity of national forces. NATO is taking steps in the right direction, especially with decisions about the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, whereby some 4,000–6,000 troops will be able to deploy to the front line within a matter of days from 2016 onwards. For the "front-line" states, this requires the construction of bases, training grounds, and fuel and ammunition depots that can be used on short notice.

- **Internal security**

  In the preliminary phase of a hybrid crisis, security services, the police force and the border guard play a crucial role. Therefore, there needs to be an adequate focus on developing the capacities and financing of internal security. Four areas in particular have to be looked at carefully.[10]11First is the development of border security and customs and migration control capabilities, which will be critical in cutting off an opponent's supply of weapons and explosives, blocking infiltration by the adversary's intelligence and special forces, and hindering the movement of insurgents to safe havens. Effective maritime control and control of the land border are particularly important. Second is developing counter-terrorism measures and capabilities, including reinforcing critical infrastructure with physical security measures. Third is focusing on mobile riot control capabilities to quickly respond

10 Ideas put forward in November 2014 by Tomas Jermalavicius, researh fellow at the International Centre for Defence and Security, Tallinn, Estonia.

to mass protests and smaller instances of breakdowns in public order. And finally, making sure there is enough judicial capacity to deal with an increased number of detained individuals suspected of insurgent activities.

- **Cyber defense**

  In building resilience against cyber-attacks on government and banking systems, the importance of public–private partnerships and inter-agency cooperation is significant. It is useful to have a central coordinator that is responsible for the protection of critical information infrastructure, including the functioning of vital services. Also, regular training and exercises are of importance.

- **Supporting regional development**

  The feeling of economic insecurity is connected with reduced loyalty to the central government. A low level of economic development reinforces vulnerability to corruption and outside influence. Therefore, an effective and pragmatic policy to promote regional development should be considered a matter of national security.

- **Increasing resilience against malicious propaganda**

  Russian propaganda largely relies on four tactics: dismiss the critic, distort the facts, distract from the main issue, and dismay the audience.[11] As a result of the weaponization of the information sphere by the Kremlin, everything is relative and all versions of the truth could be considered equal. What can countries do about this?

  A shield against conscious lies must be maintained. Therefore, international media has to rely purely on facts. Just like the

11 Nimmo, Ben. "Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It", *Stopfake.org*, May 19, 2015, http://www.stopfake.org/en/anatomy-of-an-info-war-how-russia-spropaganda-machine-works-and-how-to-counter-it/

Austrian-British philosopher Karl Popper maintained, "We cannot prove the truth, but we can prove what is untrue". Furthermore, the West should respond by emphasizing its own narrative concerning the freedom of choice and democracy. This is an area where the Baltic States can play a leading role. Additionally, independent experts should publicly identify the key Russian tactics and expose the Kremlin's network of paid commentators and pseudo-journalists.1213As experts on Russia's weaponization of information, Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss suggest in a study published in November 2014 that "public information campaigns about how disinformation works are needed to foster more critical thought towards the messages that are being 'buzzed' at the public."

Strengthening social cohesion and liberal democracy

As Juhan Kivirähk, a leading Estonian sociologist and an expert on integration, has said, "the aim of Russia's efforts to consolidate the Russian-speaking population in Estonia is not to make them a part of Estonian society, but rather to push them outside of society and to lead them into confrontation with it."[13]. The best way to counter Russian diversions is to build stronger social cohesion, and to make sure that market democracy works, that human rights and the rule of law are respected, and that government and business stay clear of corruption.[14]

12 Nimmo, Ben. "Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It", *Stopfake.org*, May 19, 2015, http://www.stopfake.org/en/anatomy-of-an-info-war-how-russia-s-propaganda-machine-works-and-how-to-counter-it/

13 Kivirähk, Juhan. "How to address the 'Humanitarian Dimension of Russian Foreign policy?'" *Diplomaatia.* November 2009, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/nothing-new-hybrid-warfare-estonian-experience-and-recommendations-nato

14 Maigre, Merle. "Nothing New in Hybrid Warfare: The Estonian Experience and Recommendations for NATO," *GMF Policy Brief*, February 2015, http://www.gmfus.org/publications/nothing-new-hybrid-warfare-estonian-experience-and-recommendations-nato

Conclusion

Hybrid warfare has a military as well as a political side. While it is true that national governments have the primary role in deterring and defending against hybrid threats, NATO also has a strong role to play, along with the EU, UN and others. Hybrid warfare requires flexibility in responses, since every scenario will be different from the previous one. The next conflict may not follow the Ukrainian pattern. Therefore, it would make sense for the Allies to place systematic vulnerabilities at the centre of a hybrid security policy. Also, Allies could keep sharing their best practices and the lessons learned from all relevant ongoing conflicts, including the one in Ukraine.

A NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE ON RUSSIA'S SAGACIOUSNESS AND CHALLENGE TO EUROPEAN SECURITY

by Anke Schmidt-Felzmann*

"[T]ell the truth, do justice, and be afraid of nobody"[1]

These are the words that Estonian President Lennar Meri pronounced in his speech to a Northern German audience in 1994, just as the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was concluded. They capture in a nutshell the fundamental principles that must guide European leaders in their efforts to promote stability and security in Europe in the face of challenges posed by contemporary Russia.

War in Europe is no longer a remote possibility, but became a reality in Ukraine in the spring of 2014. After Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea, the aggression against eastern Ukraine that was instigated and masterminded by Russia's armed forces added a full-blown war, though un-declared, to the country's economic and political crisis. The "Minsk agreements" of September 5th, 2014 and February 12th, 2015 seemed to grant a lifeline to Ukraine and its new

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1 Motto written in Tallinn's townhall (orig. in German) "Fürchte Gott, rede die Wahrheit, tue Recht und scheue niemand" ("Fear God, tell the truth, do justice, and be afraid of nobody"), quoted by Estonian President Lennart Meri in his address in Hamburg. February 25, 1994, https://vp1992-2001.president.ee/eng/k6ned/K6ne.asp?ID=9401

government.[2] But these "ceasefire agreements" put a stop to neither the influx of Russian troops and equipment into Ukraine, nor to attacks from Russia, as reports from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for Ukraine (SMM) confirm.[3] Instead, the death toll and the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees from Ukraine continued to rise. By mid-2015, the situation had worsened further—the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) noted that "[v]iolence in Ukraine has killed 6,500 people in the past year, wounded 16,000 and left 5 million people in need of humanitarian aid. […] With more than 1.3 million registered IDPs, Ukraine has now the ninth largest number of internally displaced in the world." (June 29th, 2015).[4]

The occupation and annexation of Crimea was a wake-up call for European decision-makers, who had put their trust in the Russian president and believed in his commitment to developing a mutually beneficial partnership with the European Union (EU) and its member states, and even with NATO. Just half a year earlier, Russia had been held in very high esteem as "a strategic partner with whom [the EU] had been building a solid and mutually beneficial relationship"[5] At the last EU-Russia summit meeting in late January 2014, just a couple of weeks before Russia occupied and annexed parts of Ukraine, President Putin

2 OSCE press release. "OSCE releases the 12-point protocol agreements reached between Ukraine, Russia and Separatists in Minsk," *Kyiv Post,* September 8, 2014, http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/osce-releases-the-12-point-protocol-agreements-reached-between-ukraine-russia-and-separatists-in-minsk-363816.html ; "Ukraine ceasefire: The 12-point-plan," BBC, February 9, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29162903 ; the text of the agreement of February 12th, 2015 ceasefire agreement is available here: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11408266/Minsk-agreement-on-Ukraine-crisis-text-in-full.html

3 For details, see OSCE "Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine", http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm

4 "Five Things you Need to Know about the Crisis in Ukraine", UNOCHA, June 29, 2015, http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/five-things-you-need-know-about-crisis-ukraine ; and "Internal Displacement Map", UNHCR, July 3, 2015, http://unhcr.org.ua/en/2011-08-26-06-58-56/news-archive/1244-internal-displacement-map

5 European Commission press release IP/13/490. "EU-Russia Summit (Yekaterinburg, 3-4 June)", May 31, 2013, europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-490_en.pdf

solemnly declared that Russia would always and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty and insisted that "Russia has no intention of ever intervening" in Ukraine's affairs.[6] After Russia's occupation of parts of Georgia and the recognition of these "break-away republics" as sovereign states, the occupation and annexation of Crimea and subsequent intrusion of Russian troops and influx of Russian military equipment into eastern Ukraine provided overwhelming evidence of Russia's deliberate and systematic expansion of its "influence" in its neighborhood by military force, violating state boundaries and fundamental international legal principles. It also confirmed, beyond any reasonable doubt, that previous, smaller scale and lower intensity hostile acts were not one-off occurrences, but formed part of a systematic approach that challenges the established European security order, posing a real threat to countries in Russia's direct vicinity and putting at risk stability in countries further afield.

Battlefield Baltic Sea

The countries of the Baltic Sea region have been on high alert since Russia's physical aggression against Ukraine began in early 2014. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt remarked shortly after the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 that "Russia has now become an unpredictable power, and in addition one whose threshold for using military power in its neighborhood is lower than most observers had assumed."[7] Former Latvian Defense Minister Raimonds Vejonis noted nearly a year later, in January 2015, with even greater concern that "Russia demonstrated its willingness to break with international norms, treaties and conventions. Russia proved that

6 President of Russia press release. "Russia-EU Summit, Vladimir Putin took part in the Russia-EU summit meeting", January 28, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20113

7 Bildt, Carl. "Ett oberäkneligt Ryssland", *Blog: Carl Bildt - Alla dessa dagar*, March 18, 2014, https://carlbildt.wordpress.com/2014/03/18/ett-oberakneligt-ryssland/. Author's own translation. Original: "Ryssland har nu blivit en oberäknelig makt, och dessutom med en tröskel för användning av militär makt i sitt närområde som är lägre än vad de flesta tidigare hade utgått från."

in its pursuit of geo-political objectives, it is willing to utilize military means and sponsor terrorist proxies."[8] Nevertheless, since the second "Minsk ceasefire agreement" entered into force on February 15th, 2015, a creeping "normalization" of the war in Ukraine has taken place as the Minsk agreement created the illusion of a reinstatement of peace and stability in the region. Insights from the Ukraine situation, provided by UNOCHA and the OSCE SMM, and even developments in the Baltic Sea region have provided overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Relations with Russia were clearly in a downward spiral, and the countries in the Baltic Sea region have been struggling to defend themselves against an onslaught, in words and action, from the Russian side.

The threat of incidents with civilian casualties in the Baltic Sea region has increased considerably as Russian military forces have started to conduct more and more surveillance operations and military exercises, provoking and intimidating their neighbors in the Baltic Sea region in the air, at sea and even underwater. Many "close encounters" and Russian territorial violations have been documented,[9] and the number of protest notes submitted to Russia has steadily grown. Among the affected countries, Latvia's armed forces have gone as far as to meticulously document every Russian intrusion and "close encounter", keeping a public record of each on the official twitter account @Latvijas_armija. Russian territorial violations started long before the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit took place in November 2013. Some of these have been accidental, but the vast majority of them were apparently deliberate tests of different countries' reaction capacity and military prowess.

Finland, having previously faced numerous Russian intrusions into its airspace that the foreign ministry started documenting as it continued to respond to with formal protests, registered in mid-

8 "Welcome Speech by the Minister of Defence of Latvia, Raimonds Vejonis", January 19, 2015, http://www.sargs.lv/Viedokli/2015/01/19-01.aspx

9 Frear, Thomas; Kulesa, Lukasz; Kearns, Ian. "Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014", European Leadership Network, November 2014, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2014/11/09/6375e3da/Dangerous%20Brinkmanship.pdf

2013 two violations by Russian attack aircraft.[10] Neighboring Sweden registered in March 2013 a simulated attack by the Russian air force that caught the Swedish military unawares during Easter.[11] Considerable Russian intelligence operations in Swedish waters were reported and confirmed half a year later, in September 2013.[12] Another year later, just after the first "Minsk ceasefire agreement" had been concluded in September 2014, the "most serious" violation of Swedish airspace occurred, which Foreign Minister Bildt discussed in great detail on his blog.[13] In October 2014, the intrusion of a submarine into Swedish waters near the capital Stockholm was confirmed. Although the origin of the submarine was not made public, it was confirmed that the submarine received and sent signals to and from the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.[14] Russian officials denied any involvement and Russian Defense Ministry sources that were quoted by Russia's state-controlled RT "news" agency blamed the incident on the Netherlands, alleging that Swedish officials had a "vivid imagination".[15] A much-

10 "Två ryska flygplan misstänks ha kränkt Finlands luftrum", *Yle*, June 11, 2013, http://svenska.yle.fi/artikel/2013/06/11/tva-ryska-flygplan-misstanks-ha-krankt-finlands-luftrum

11 "Rysk flyg övade anfall mot Sverige", *Svenska Dagbladet*, April 22, 2013, http://www.svd.se/ryskt-flyg-ovade-anfall-mot-sverige

12 "Här spionerar Ryssland på Sverige", *Svenska Dagbladet*, September 20, 2013, http://www.svd.se/har-spionerar-ryssland-pa-sverige

13 Bildt, Carl. "Protest mot allvarlig kränkning", September 19, 2014, https://carlbildt.wordpress.com/2014/09/19/protest-mot-allvarlig-krankning/

14 "Skadad rysk ubåt söks i Skärgården", *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 18, 2014, http://www.svd.se/skadad-rysk-ubat-soks-i-skargarden

15 "Mysterious 'Russian sub' off Sweden may be Dutch", *RT*, October 20, 2014, http://www.rt.com/news/197412-sweden-sub-dutch-russia/ ; on April 13th, 2015 (at 16:40), and on June 30th, 2015 (at 09:05), the Russian Foreign Ministry once again dismissed the submarine that had been spotted near Stockholm on their official Facebook pages, "Посольство России в Швеции - Russian Embassy in Sweden", first of all (on April 13th) as the result of a Swedish official's "vivid imagination", and later (on June 30th) as a "foreign phantom submarine" (orig. text: "främmande fantomubåter i Stockholms skärgård") and accused a Swedish security expert community of "cooking up sensationalist stories" (orig text: "vilka nya uppseendeväckande rätter av "det ryska hotet" blir tillagade i det svenska försvarspolitiska köket?").

debated "close encounter" near Copenhagen's airport Kastrup between a Russian military aircraft that had its transponders switched off and a civilian airliner was strongly criticized not just by Danish officials but also by Swedish officials, which provoked an aggressive response by the Russian ambassador to Denmark, who a few months later went as far as threatening Denmark with a Russian nuclear attack. At the time, the ambassador ridiculed Swedish officials as "smoking too much pot" and "imagining things".[16]

Whereas Russian territorial violations, provocations and intimidations have a long tradition in the Baltic Sea region, the various incidents have become more frequent and more widespread from 2013 onwards. Full-blown Russian military attacks on Sweden, Finland, Denmark, or their southern neighbors Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are, nevertheless, quite unlikely. Russia's military build-up, although progressing at a rapid speed, has been hampered by practical difficulties and shrinking financial resources[17], which have hindered Russia's determined efforts to significantly upgrade and modernize its military forces and equipment.[18] However, under the circumstances and against the background of developments in

16 Rostrom Andersson, Sofia. "Ryske ambassadören: 'Svenskarna röker för mycket gräs'", *Aftonbladet*, December 17, 2014, http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article20039339.ab; Ussing, Jakob. "Lidegaard indkalder russisk ambassadør til alvorssnak om farlige flyvninger", Politiko.dk, December 15, 2014, http://www.politiko.dk/nyheder/lidegaard-indkalder-russisk-ambassadoer-til-alvorssnak-om-farlige-flyvninger ; Damkjaer, Ole. "Ambassadør: Lad være med at provokere den russiske bjørn", *Berlinske*, December 16, 2014, http://www.b.dk/globalt/ambassadoer-lad-vaere-med-at-provokere-den-russiske-bjoern

17 For details on some of the problems, see Robertshaw, Samuel, "Why the EU got the Ukrainian crisis wrong", *Global Affairs,* 2015, 1(3), http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2015.1063249 and McDermott, Roger, "The Brain of the Russian Army", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies,* 2014, 27(1), 4-35.

18 See Jacob W. Kipp (2014) "'Smart' Defense From New Threats: Future War From a Russian Perspective," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2014, 27(1), pp 36-62 and Goure, Daniel, "Moscow's Visions of Future War: So Many Conflict Scenarios So Little Time, Money and Forces," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2014, 27(1), pp 63-100.

Georgia since 2008 and in Ukraine since early 2014, "unthinkable" scenarios cannot be excluded from the realm of possibility.[19]

Russia's constantly reiterated claim that NATO and its allies are provoking Russia does not hold up to scrutiny. Multiple cases of Russian disturbances and violations of the Baltic Sea countries' territorial borders have been documented in 2014 and 2015 in which the Russian side interfered in civilian activities in these countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZ) or in international waters. A research expedition for the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) undertaken by the Finnish research vessel *Aranda* was disrupted east of the Swedish island Gotland in both early August and September 2014, when the Russian navy attempted to prevent the vessel from accessing sampling sites in international waters.[20] The crew sighted a submarine at the location and it was suspected that the Russian navy's efforts to stop the research vessel were related to Russian submarine tests in the area. A further encounter took place in April 2015: again, the Russian navy tried to stop the vessel's activity in the area of the navy's activity; on this occasion the *Aranda* crew was eventually informed of the presence of Russian submarines in the area.[21] This fact is worth noting as the Russian foreign ministry has consistently and repeatedly mocked the Swedish armed forces and even claimed that the supreme commander of those forces is delusional concerning the presence of Russian submarines entering Swedish waters. Yet another series of obstructions affected Sweden and Lithuania's joint energy diversification project "NordBalt". This

19 For a possible scenario, see Hooker, Richard D. Jr."Operation Baltic Fortress, 2016", *The RUSI Journal*, 2015, 160(3), pp. 26-36 and Lucas, Edward, *The Coming Storm. Baltic Sea Security Report*, CEPA, June 2015, http://www.cepa.org/sites/default/files/styles/medium/Baltic%20Sea%20Security%20Report-%20%281%29.compressed.pdf

20 "Two belated reports of Russian warship interference", *Yle,* October 11, 2014, http://yle.fi/uutiset/two_belated_reports_of_russian_warship_interference_with_finnish_research_vessel_at_sea/7523596

21 SYKE press release. "RV *Aranda* avoided a Russian submarine," April 22, 2015, http://www.syke.fi/en-US/SYKE_Info/Communications_material/Press_releases/RV_*Aranda*_avoided_a_Russian_submarine_ye(33245)

electricity cable was to connect the two countries across the Baltic Sea. During the construction work, the project suffered repeated disruptions in the laying of the cable as a result of Russian military interference. The Lithuanian foreign ministry with the support of the Swedish foreign ministry submitted several formal protest notes to Russia—the notes strongly condemned each of the Russian navy's attempts to interfere with the construction work of the NordBalt cable.[22]

A much more serious case—and a further clear sign that the Baltic Sea countries are no longer secure from Russian intrusions into their territory—occurred in early September 2014 in Estonia. One of Estonia's Internal Security Service officers, Eston Kohver, was snatched out of Estonian territory, near the Russian border, by Russian security services—as of July 2015, he was still awaiting trial in Russia, despite firm protests from Estonia.[23] The Estonian-Russian border treaty was signed by Estonia and Russia on February 18th, 2014, just a few days before Russia's occupation of Crimea started. While it was cleared by the Duma committee in April 2015, "the time point when the ratification will happen is linked [by the Duma] to the political situation to a certain degree".[24] In September 2014, just two weeks

22 Lithuanian Foreign Ministry press release. "Foreign Ministry of Lithuania summoned the Russian Ambassador to express strong protest," April 30, 2015, http://urm.lt/default/en/news/foreign-ministry-of-lithuania-summoned-the-russian-ambassador-to-express-strong-protest

23 Estonian Foreign Ministry press release. "Estonian Foreign Ministry summoned Russian Ambassador in connection with today's cross-border incident", September 5, 2014, http://vm.ee/en/news/estonian-foreign-ministry-summoned-russian-ambassador-connection-todays-cross-border-incident and "Foreign Minister: Russia has violated international law for 9 months by illegally detaining Eston Kohver", June 2015, http://vm.ee/en/news/foreign-minister-russia-has-violated-international-law-9-months-illegally-detaining-eston

24 Estonian Foreign Ministry press release. "Border treaties between Estonia and Russia were signed by countries' foreign ministers", February 18, 2014, http://vm.ee/en/news/border-treaties-between-estonia-and-russia-were-signed-countries-foreign-ministers and "Duma Committee accepts Estonia-Russia border treaty ratification bill", April 8, 2015, http://vm.ee/en/newsletter/duma-committee-accepts-estonia-russia-border-treaty-ratification-bill ; see also Bahovski, Erkki, "The Timing of the Estonian-Russian Border Treaty", March 13, 2015, http://www.icds.ee/blog/article/the-timing-of-the-estonian-russian-border-treaty-ratification/

after Eston Kohver was kidnapped from Estonia, a Lithuanian fishing vessel, Juros Vilkas, and its crew were captured by Russian border guards in international waters in the Barents Sea and taken to Russia by force.[25] The EU joined Lithuania's foreign ministry in condemning Russia's breaches of international law in this case. Considering only this snapshot of incidents affecting northern and southern Baltic Sea countries, there can hardly be any doubt about the seriousness of the threat posed by the current Russian leadership to European security and stability, nor can there be any doubt about the determination with which Russia, under Vladimir Putin's leadership, pursues its foreign and security policy objectives with a full spectrum of offensive measures.[26]

It is also notable that Russian information operations against a range of European actors have considerably increased in volume and the level of hostility since 2013. Russia's political leadership and diplomatic corps have a long tradition of fabricating accusations that twist the facts to mock the target state and portray its representatives as incompetent, uncooperative and failing to abide by their international commitments.[27] Prime examples from the Baltic Sea region can be found on the Russian Embassy to Sweden's official Facebook pages (in Swedish and Russian)[28], and on the official Twitter account of

25 Lithuanian Foreign Ministry press release. "Lithuanian Foreign Ministry sends a note of protest to Russian Embassy", September 22, 2014, http://urm.lt/default/en/news/lithuanian-foreign-ministry-sends-a-note-of-protest-to-russian-embassy-over-illegal-actions-in-detaining-lithuanias-fishing-vessel- ; and European External Action Service press release no. 140930/01. "Statement on the arrest in international waters and detention of a Lithuanian vessel by authorities of the Russian Federation", September 30, 2014, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140930_01_en.pdf

26 For an overview of the "full-spectrum conflict" pursued by Russia, see Jonsson, Oscar and Seely, Robert, "Full Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal after Ukraine", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2015, 28 (1), 1-22.

27 For a close analysis of false narratives that have been spread to discredit the Ukrainian government and sow doubts about the intentions of European actors vis-a-vis Ukraine and Russia, see McIntosh, Scott, "Kyiv, International Institutions, and the Russian People: Three Aspects of Russia's Current Information Campaign in Ukraine", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 2015, 28(2), pp. 299-306.

28 "Russian Embassy in Sweden Facebook page", https://www.facebook.com/RusEmbassySweden

the embassy @RusEmbSwe. Against the background of Russia's general unfriendly rhetoric, the embassy's special motto—"Russia is closer than you think" ("Ryssland är närmare än man tror")—that's prominently displayed on its homepage[29], which might normally be read as a friendly tourist board slogan encouraging Swedes to visit nearby Russia, can equally be interpreted as a veiled threat.

A good opinion lost…

In 2015, especially since the adoption of the "Minsk II ceasefire agreement", three main issues have come to dominate the debate about the future of relations with Russia: the need to "rebuild trust" with Russia; the futility of sanctions (which have been strongly criticized for not achieving their intended political objectives); and the need to "keep Russia on board" in international efforts to address critical challenges to global security. Strategic reflections about the future of EU-Russia relations have consequently concentrated on a narrow set of issues: whether, and for how long, the EU's targeted sanctions against Russian entities and individuals will remain in place; Russia's response to the sanctions and their effects on the EU (and Ukraine); and under which circumstances the sanctions may be lifted.[30] Officials from Germany, in particular, have insisted that it is necessary now to have "strategic patience" with Russia. But the idea of "strategic patience" places the EU in a rather passive position and assumes implicitly that Russia will "come around" eventually. This is not the first time that European leaders have skirted around the fundamental question of the future of their relations with Russia.[31] But this time, it is deeply problematic that it is generally understood

29 "Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of Sweden," http://www.ryssland.se/index.php/en

30 See European External Action Service "Issues Paper", p. 2, January 19, 2015, http://blogs.ft.com/brusselsblog/files/2015/01/Russia.pdf

31 Schmidt-Felzmann, Anke. "The EU's relations with Russia: off balance and beyond repair?", *The EU's Role in Fighting Global Imbalances*. Antonina Bakardjieva-Engelbrekt, Lars Oxelheim and Thomas Persson (eds), 2015.

to be a question of when and how the EU's sanctions can be lifted, as opposed to whether they should be lifted at all.

Advocates of the approach of "strategic patience", measures to "rebuild trust", and defining modalities for the lifting of sanctions seem to underestimate the rift that has existed in the EU-Russian relationship from very beginning, both regarding Russia's interests and their view of the utility of the relationship. The general assumption seems to be that there is no value in discussing any strategic endgame since cooperation is suspended in most areas of the EU-Russian relationship. The notion of "strategic patience" suggests also that the confrontation is a temporary derailment of the wider partnership with Russia. But as Estonia's foreign minister argued in January 2015, "A country that does not respect the borders of other sovereign countries and which has occupied and annexed part of Ukraine is not a partner, but rather an aggressor."[32] As Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues and Russian hostility against the EU (and NATO) is increasing, it is absolutely vital for the EU and its member states to embark on the difficult process of developing an effective strategic approach to handle Russia's aggression and systematic and long-standing failure to abide by the agreements it (voluntarily) entered into. The reluctance to open up a "can of worms" by holding strategic discussions about the future of relations with Russia benefits neither EU and NATO member states, nor Ukraine—and, what is worse, it puts into question their willingness to defend the fundamental values and principles they believe in.

There are several reasons for the EU's reluctance in this: in part, European leaders shy away from the task because they remember the arduous work that was required to unite all member states behind imposing the sanctions and the first extension of those sanctions. The lack of debate in the EU on the future of EU-Russia relations is

32 Estonian Foreign Ministry press release. "Foreign Minister Keit Pentus Rosimannus: Russia must be treated like an aggressor, not a partner", January 15, 2015, http://vm.ee/en/news/foreign-minister-keit-pentus-rosimannus-russia-must-be-treated-aggressor-not-partner

also due to the January 19th, 2015 "Issues Paper"[33] that the European External Action Service (EEAS) presented to the EU's member states for discussion. Although its main objective was laudable, namely to provide food for thought on how the EU may wish to engage with Russia in the short- to medium-term,[34] the timing and content were both deeply problematic: the "Issues Paper" floated the possibility of gradually moving back to "business as usual" at a time when the war in eastern Ukraine was escalating. Half a year later, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius warned his colleagues in the EU that "[w]e restored normal relations with Russia too quickly after the war in Georgia in 2008. We made a mistake, which has led to events in Ukraine and to Russia's creeping occupations."[35] The "Issues Paper" appeared to suggest exactly that kind of "normalization". It did not sketch out any new "vision" for the EU-Russia relationship, but instead reinstated the old battlefronts in the EU-Russia relationship, notably the EU's long-standing grievances concerning commitments that Russia had made and never lived up to. It also listed Russia's key priorities[36] and reiterated the EU's interest in keeping Russia involved in the resolution of international crises. Moreover, it floated in essence the possibility of granting Russia some of its long-standing wishes in exchange for a Russian withdrawal of troops and equipment from eastern Ukraine. In other words, it essentially proposed rewarding

33 European External Action Service "Issues Paper", January 19, 2015, http://blogs.ft.com/brusselsblog/files/2015/01/Russia.pdf

34 European External Action Service "Issues Paper", January 19, 2015, http://blogs.ft.com/brusselsblog/files/2015/01/Russia.pdf

35 Lithuanian Foreign Ministry press release. "L. Linkevicius: we need to strongly support Ukraine and to take a principled stance on Russia", June 22, 2015, https://www.urm.lt/default/en/news/l-linkevicius-we-need-to-strongly-support-ukraine-and-to-take-a-principled-stance-on-russia

36 This included the full recognition and establishment of formal relations between the EU and the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union; the exemption of Russian energy company Gazprom from the EU's internal energy market rules; visa facilitation and the granting of full visa freedom for Russia; developing the Partnership for Modernization further; and re-instating the practice of high-level EU-Russia summits, which had been suspended in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Russia for its physical, verbal and cyber-onslaught against Ukraine and its aggressive posturing against EU member states.

This was not just the EEAS's "own" idea, but is actually reflective of rather popular views in Brussels and in national capitals that are less exposed to Russian aggression and its consequences. It seems that proponents of "trust building measures" and a "rapprochement" with Russia have lost sight of the fact that the annexation of Crimea and Russia's instigation of the war, and its active and continuing engagement in the fighting in eastern Ukraine, are but two elements in a long history of Russian aggression against a whole range of countries and actors in Europe.[37] For attentive observers, there can hardly be any doubt about the fact that Russia's foreign policy and military ambitions and strategies pose a fundamental threat to European security and stability well beyond Ukraine. Under these circumstances, and in light of the developments that have taken place both domestically in Russia and between Russia and "the West" since the late 1990s, and even given the continuous violation of commitments and fundamental principles, a basis for fruitful negotiations with Russia and a possible rapprochement is fundamentally lacking.

There is no ground for the EU to build upon this, or any reason for the EU to make amends after more than two decades of distinct disappointments. Letting Russia continuously push the boundaries of what is acceptable and allowing Russia to engage in rogue behavior is not just undesirable, but dangerous, and confirms the lingering suspicions that European leaders are neither strategic nor sagacious in their approach to contemporary Russia and that the Russian president "can get away with murder". Despite the extremely poor track record with Russia, the conviction is still deeply rooted in European thinking, especially in Brussels, that deeper cooperation and high levels of political and economic integration will, eventually, guarantee stability and security in the shared neighborhood with Russia.

37 Schmidt-Felzmann, Anke. "Is the EU's failed relationship with Russia the member states' fault?", *L'Europé en Formation*, 4/2014, no. 374, pp 40-60, May 2015, http://www.cairn.info/revue-l-europe-en-formation-2014-4-page-40.htm

The countries in Russia's proximity have, meanwhile, every reason to be concerned about Russia's "next moves", even as others, located at a greater geographic distance, remain convinced that "surely Putin won't attack" since "that would simply be irrational". However, in the absence of any positive developments and gestures to the contrary from Russian leadership—in *actions*, not words—European leaders are well advised to heed Lithuanian Foreign Minister Lincevicius's advice, which he issued as a matter of urgency in mid-2015: to "do what is necessary" to protect their countries' security, and to adopt a strong, principled position towards Russia.[38] They are also well advised to heed the Hanseatic advice inscribed in the Estonian capital's townhall—"to be afraid of nobody"—and to defend the fundamental principles of state conduct and civilized inter-state relations, both in words and in action.

For the foreseeable future, European leaders will have to concentrate on building up their defenses, strengthening their national resilience and cooperating to reinforce stability within the EU and NATO. Solidarity among the countries in the Baltic Sea region is absolutely crucial. As the Swedish foreign policy declaration of February 2015 made clear, "[t]hreats to peace and to our security are best averted collectively and in cooperation with other countries. […] It is impossible to imagine military conflicts in our region that would affect only one country".[39] Quite simply put: against Russian aggression and provocations, "[e]very spike counts!"[40]

38 Lithuanian Foreign Ministry press release. "L. Linkevicius: we need to strongly support Ukraine and to take a principled stance on Russia", June 22, 2015, https://www.urm.lt/default/en/news/l-linkevicius-we-need-to-strongly-support-ukraine-and-to-take-a-principled-stance-on-russia

39 "Statement of Government Policy in the Parliamentary Debate on Foreign Affairs, " February 11, 2015, http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/ 98c376175ed047e4b851715fb0a8541a/statement-of-government-policy-in-the-parliamentary -debate-on-foreign-affairs-2015

40 This was the "battle cry" of the major military exercise "Hedgehog" carried out in Estonia in 2015. For details, see Ilves, Toomas Hendrik "Address marking the 95th anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty", February 2, 2015, https://www.president.ee/en/official-duties/speeches/11046-address-by-president-toomas-hendrik-ilves-marking-the-95th-anniversary-of-the-tartu-peace-treaty-at-the-vanemuine-concert-hall-in-tartu-on-2-february-2015/index.html

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE POLICY THAT IS NOW NEEDED ON RUSSIA. COOPERATION, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. SECURITY, AS FAR AS NECESSARY

by Karsten D. Voigt*

It should remain our aim to establish a regime of pan-European peace that includes Russia. However, the negative experiences of the past year show that this goal is a long way off. These negative experiences, however, are not primarily a result of Western policies. After the largely peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union, pan-European cooperation deepened and accelerated: Russia was included in the Council of Europe and became a partner of the EU and NATO. Trade and cultural exchange was increased, and the network of pan-European relations became denser. While the objective of full membership in the EU and NATO for Russia was never realistic, the West tried, though not consistently enough, to achieve closer cooperation. The Grand Coalition in Berlin started work in the autumn of 2013 with the intention of deepening cooperation with Russia through new initiatives.

Russia has changed

Russia's leadership now claims its foreign policy reorientation is a reaction to Western—and especially American policy. Russia views US policies as the most important source of negative international

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developments in recent years. Yes, President Bush's war against Iraq violated international law and fostered instability in the Middle East. But neither the actions of the United States nor the mistakes of the EU justify the annexation of Crimea, or the political, military and financial support that has been given to separatists in eastern Ukraine.

The reasons for the foreign policy reorientation of Russia lie primarily in its internal politics: President Putin regards the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet communism not as an historic opportunity for building a modern and democratic Russia, but as "the greatest geo-strategic disaster of modern times". Putin's Russia does not want to be recognized internationally as the great power that it still is today, but as what it once was: as an empire and a world power equal to the US. The endeavor to maintain and recover zones of influence is perceived by Russia as its historic right, but by most of its neighbors as Russian revisionism.

Russia was not able to build mutual trust and cooperation with its smaller Western neighbors after the Cold War. While Russia sees US policies as the most important negative factor in its international standing today, I see the mostly negative relationship between Russia and its smaller Western neighbors as the most important foreign policy reason for the increasing alienation between Russia and members of the EU and NATO. This deficit of goodwill becomes an obstacle to creating a constructive relationship with Russia, as most central and south-eastern European countries now participate in discussions on Russia inside the EU and NATO. Germany, as well as other European nations, would damage its positive relationships with most of its eastern neighbors if it failed to take their interests and views into consideration.

Russia seems to underestimate the fact that—notwithstanding a controversial public debate—the German government, a broad majority in the German parliament, and public opinion is against bilateral cooperation with Russia that goes above the heads of the countries in between Russia and Germany. The declared Russian policy to "protect" Russians and Russian-speaking citizens in other nations, well beyond Crimea and eastern Ukraine, has led to an increasing understanding

for the threats perceived by Russia's western neighbors. In the 19th century at the congresses of Vienna and Berlin, and in the 20th century in Jalta, big powers decided the destiny of smaller nations. Such policies are adamantly opposed in today's Germany.

The Westernization of Russia's political culture is now viewed by its leadership as a threat. Russia's reversion to symbols and policies common to the czar period, and the diminishing willingness to critically deal with its Soviet past, is alienating the country from the democratic nations in Europe. But it unifies the current Russian leadership spiritually, and politically connects them with the anti-Western left and right extremes of the European political spectrum. The recourse to pre-democratic values and criticism of the EU find approval with right-wing parties, such as UKIP in Great Britain, the Front National in France, the Lega Norte in Italy, Jobbik in Hungary, the FPthe FPestria, The Alternative for Germany, as well as a large portion of the German party "The Left". At the same time, the democratic centre-left and centre-right parties have intensified their criticism of Russiaties have intensified their cits violations of European treaties and international law. As long as the Russian leadership is characterized by this worldview, its policies will remain a problem for the rest of Europe. However, our constructive pan-European objectives remain in place.

The insight that European peace is only stable with Russia as a part of it remains true. If Russia violates key points of agreed European and international norms, this is no reason to abandon these principles. On the contrary, it is necessary to make Russia return to these principles and norms to make it an equal member of a peaceful European order. There are analysts and politicians who argue that European peace does not need to be based on the norms, rules and values which were agreed upon in the Charta of Paris and in the Council of Europe. Yes, it is true: even in the absence of a common foundation of values, many compromises and pragmatic agreements with Russia are possible. The willingness to continue cooperation with Russia, whenever possible and reasonable, is an expression of our realism. But without a basis of common norms, rules and values we will always be far away from a truly stable European peace.

We should continue pursuing an active dialogue with the Russian leadership and—so far as is still possible—with Russian society. To strive for cooperative solutions does not mean underestimating conflicts of interests and values. To try to understand Russian policies does not necessarily mean we agree with them. Especially during a crisis, intensive communication is an indispensable prerequisite to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. On the other hand, unlike in previous years, we have to accept that the EU and NATO have to take precautions whenever Russian policies pose a danger to Russia's neighbors, to a member of the EU or NATO, or to European security as a whole. Russia has been a partner on Afghanistan, on the issue of the Iranian nuclear program, and in the fight against international terrorism and the drug trade. In other areas, like the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, it has been acting more like an adversary than a partner.

Our sympathy and solidarity should go to the forces striving for democracy in Russia, even if they are currently in the minority. But I do not know of any serious politician in the West who supports a policy of regime change or a colored revolution in Russia. This huge country cannot be changed from the outside against the will of its political leaders and certainly not against the will of the majority of the Russian people. But foreign resources and security policies can counteract the negative effects of modern Russian policies in international relations. They can be used to agree on cooperative actions where common interests are identified. But before there is a profound turning point in Russian politics, it is likely that years—hopefully not decades—will have to pass. In the phase ahead, we will no longer need a policy of complementary cooperation and integration. Instead, the motto for a necessary new Russia policy could be "Cooperation, as far as possible. Security, as far as necessary".

Cooperation and security

If Russian leadership complies with the Minsk agreements, the economic sanctions should also be lifted. Ukraine, Russia and the EU can only implement the security provisions of the Minsk agreements

together. It is a positive that Russia, Ukraine and the EU are discussing the possible negative economic consequences of the Association Agreement and that Russia no longer objects to the Association Agreement being put into force in 2016.

The war in eastern Ukraine is an opportunity to strengthen the OSCE and to make it more capable of intervening. It should be examined whether OSCE peacekeepers could be deployed in eastern Ukraine. Whether the Russian leadership is ready for an improvement of the existing rules and greater transparency in arms control should be explored during the German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016, at the latest. This could mean elements of cooperative security are strengthened in an environment of mistrust and conflict.

Because of its foreign policy, Russia is now regarded by most of its neighbors as a risk. This view is understandable and will only soften if the Russian leadership changes not only their rhetoric, but also their behavior. Above all, they must end their attempts to destabilize Ukraine. Given positive changes in the political environment, negotiations between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union could be successful.

Many are talking today of a new Cold War. Others are expressing their desire to return to the cooperative approaches practiced during the period of detente. This is to some extent understandable. Better, however, if we were to develop new concepts that are more appropriate for today's challenges. On the one hand, the conflict in eastern Ukraine is a hot war. On the other, we are—in contrast to the Cold War—at least on paper united by common principles for a policy of peaceful solutions to conflicts, and by common democratic values and norms. We should not put the institutions, contracts and agreements of the last few decades at risk lightly. If Russia, however, were to undermine this network of relationships, we cannot repair the damage unilaterally. So it was right for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to suspend the voting rights of the Russian delegation.

Today, Russia still has an arsenal of nuclear weapons comparable with that of the USA. But if we compare all the potential available to NATO with Russian capabilities, there is a clear superiority for NATO

in spite of Russia's modernization of military capacities in recent years. This superiority would become apparent in the event of any conflict with NATO countries in the immediate Russian neighborhood. Such security guarantees, however, are not available to the neighbors of Russia that are not members of NATO. This is where the regional military superiority of Russia comes into play, from which the supported separatists in Ukraine are benefiting.

Germany vetoed NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine. This provides an additional incentive for Germany to seek non-military stabilization in Ukraine. This would include a willingness to provide economic assistance to Ukraine and to impose economic sanctions on Russia. However, I venture a prediction: if the Russian leadership and the separatists cannot abide by the Minsk agreements, then the United States and some European NATO countries will begin to provide military assistance to Ukraine.

Germany's policy, in the light of all the risks, is to oppose military support for Ukraine. But it must not be denied that the aspirations of Ukraine to improve its defense capabilities are entirely legitimate. The controversy over tactical means should not jeopardize a common strategy towards Russia. Germany must continue to adopt a policy towards Moscow that respects the interests of its eastern and western neighbors.

During the Cold War, the communist ideology represented by the Soviet Union claimed universal validity. Its attractiveness declined over the decades, but the global claim remained. Today, the political leadership of Russia is defending itself against claims of universal "Western" values. However, none of the concepts resulting from this hodgepodge of resentment can solve the problems of the 21st century. The ideology of the Russian leadership only works where Russia exerts power—and not, for example, because it's economic model is attractive. The EU must, by contrast, contribute to the stabilization of Ukraine and invest in a policy that strengthens Europe's attractiveness in the eyes of Ukrainian citizens.

NEW MECHANISMS FOR STRENGTHENING EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY: TIME FOR A EURO-ATLANTIC SECURITY LEADERSHIP GROUP

by Steven Andreasen*

Since 2009, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, the European Leadership Network, the Russian International Affairs Council and the Munich Security Conference have been working together on a number of initiatives relating to Euro-Atlantic security. In 2012, these four organizations initiated a new project focused on building mutual security in the Euro-Atlantic region. This ongoing project is headed by four distinguished co-chairs—former British Secretary of State for Defense Des Browne, former German Deputy Foreign Minister Wolfgang Ischinger, former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn—and involves 28 other former leaders, senior military officers, defense officials and security experts from across the region.

When the Building Mutual Security (BMS) project issued its final report in the spring of 2013[1] —one year before the current crisis in Europe—some questioned why this group was intent on launching a new initiative that would ultimately recommend a new approach to Euro-Atlantic security. The response from the BMS co-chairs and participants was simply stated: security policies in the Euro-Atlantic had been dangerously outdated for years, there was a corrosive lack

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1 Browne, Des; Ischinger, Wolfgang; Ivanov, Igor; Nunn, Sam. *Building Mutual Security in the Euro-Atlantic Region*. Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2013, https://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/BMS_Long_Report_FINAL.pdf

of trust-building throughout the continent, and there was a real risk that security and stability in the region would break down.

When the BMS recommendations were briefed to leaders and top government officials in the spring and summer of 2013, they were politely received; but it was clear that in most capitals Euro-Atlantic security was not perceived as a front burner issue. That complacency has now been superseded by the most serious crisis in Europe in decades. Euro-Atlantic security is back on the front burner, but in a circumstance that is, to say the least, even more challenging—and still very dangerous.

Building Mutual Security

Even prior to the 2014 crisis, it was clear that 25 years after the Cold War ended there was no program for security across the Euro-Atlantic region. The approach that has been taken has been piecemeal, and has fallen behind political, economic and technological developments. To give just one recent example, the United States and Russia spent two years negotiating and ratifying the New START Treaty between 2009-2010. Yet both sides still have thousands of nuclear warheads on prompt-launch, and there is no agreement between the two countries on the next steps to take toward disarmament. So today, both Washington and Moscow remain postured for mutually assured destruction on a planet-ending scale—just as they were throughout the Cold War.

The consequences of having a piecemeal approach with no shared concept for Euro-Atlantic security include increased risks and increased costs. Again, just in the area of nuclear weapons, countries in the Euro-Atlantic are on the verge of spending hundreds of billions of dollars, roubles, euros and pounds to modernize their nuclear arsenals—with financial commitments to be made over the next few years that will be with us for decades.

On top of this, today's approach to Euro-Atlantic security encourages rigid linkages, whereby every nation insists that its issues be addressed or resolved before any other. That rigidity makes crisis management

more difficult, and makes it hard to address new challenges. Against this backdrop, three keys to a new strategy on Building Mutual Security were recommended in 2013:

- First, the new strategy would include a new process for dialogue. This dialogue would be mandated by heads of state or heads of government, and it would provide a mechanism whereby senior civilian and military leaders are continuously engaged.

- Second, the new strategy would include a new and broader concept of "stability" that takes into account six security baskets: nuclear forces, missile defenses, conventional forces, prompt-strike forces, cyber security, and space. While the BMS project was always focused on security issues, it did not start with these six baskets—rather, they were developed over many months, including through meetings in Munich, Washington and Paris in 2012 involving all participants. The BMS report made clear that progress in these six security baskets could provide an important template for cooperation on broader fronts, including economics, energy, and other vital areas.

- Third, the new strategy would support specific steps that could be taken in phases over the next five years and beyond. In this way, nations could see that their concerns were being discussed and addressed, with specific actions taken in each basket in each phase.

The Euro-Atlantic Security Leadership Group

Of course, no concept for security can succeed without leaders who are committed to addressing and resolving core issues. It is fair to ask whether that is the case now in Europe, but it is also vital to point out that there are things that can and should be done to try and give leaders a greater ability to lead. In that context, three of the BMS co-chairs (Browne, Ivanov and Nunn) proposed a new initiative prior to this

year's Munich Security Conference in an op-ed published by the Project Syndicate Group in February.[2] In their piece, they proposed the creation of a new Euro-Atlantic Security Leadership Group, personally mandated by presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers. The Leadership Group would conduct a continuous high-level dialogue focused on developing specific recommendations on key points relating to the Ukraine crisis, as well as to Euro-Atlantic security more generally, integrating political, economic, and security issues.

The Leadership Group could include representatives from a core group of states directly empowered by and connected to their presidents and prime ministers. To ensure broad membership and transparency across Europe and within existing structures, the Leadership Group would also include a representative from the OSCE, the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union, and NATO. The Leadership Group's first priority would be to address the current crisis in and around Ukraine. It should then propose ways to improve existing structures—for example, by substantially reforming and empowering the OSCE—or to create new structures, if needed.

The Leadership Group proposal was discussed at a luncheon hosted by the authors of the op-ed during the Munich Security Conference in February 2015. While much of the discussion surrounding this year's Munich meetings centered on whether or not to provide defensive arms to Ukraine, in general there was both interest and support for the concept of a Leadership Group during the MSC.

Shortly after the conclusion of the MSC, the Minsk II agreement was reached between Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany. Its uneven implementation since then suggests that full implementation of Minsk II by the end of 2015, as called for in the agreement, is unlikely. At the same time, Russian support for separatists in Ukraine is ongoing, and an increased effort by NATO to reassure Allies, strengthen its defense capabilities and deter Russian aggression

2 Browne, Des; Ivanov, Igor; Nunn, Sam. "Securing the Euro-Atlantic Community," *Project Syndicate*. February 2, 2015, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/ukraine-russia-crisis-european-leadership-by-des-browne-et-al-2015-02

against NATO members is now well underway. As we head into the second half of the year, the risk of a wider war in Ukraine continues—and the risk of dangerous and potentially deadly encounters between NATO and allied armed forces and those of the Russian Federation is also on the rise.

Now is the time

The flames of distrust that have been fanned over the past two years in Europe may take many years to burn themselves out in many capitals. Serious damage has been done, and that damage may well have a lasting impact on security policy in the Euro-Atlantic region.

This provides even more reason for a bold new initiative on Euro-Atlantic security, and soon. A few years ago, President Obama's special assistant and National Security Council senior director for the central region from 2009-2011, Dennis Ross, was interviewed on the state of the Middle East peace process. When asked whether "now is the time" for a Middle East initiative, he responded candidly that there are many who say, for various reasons, that "now is not the time". His response to them: "if you sit back and wait, you will be acted upon… your options shrink, they don't expand".[3]

That same logic now applies to developing a strategy for building mutual security in the Euro-Atlantic region, and for moving ahead with a Euro-Atlantic Security Leadership Group as a first step in that process. The Euro-Atlantic area is central to both regional and global security. It includes 6 of the world's 10 largest economies, 4 of the 5 permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, 4 of the 5 declared nuclear weapon states, and more than 90% of global nuclear inventories.

If security in Europe is allowed to erode even further in the months and years ahead, that erosion will increase both the risks and costs of

3 Warrick, Joby. "Ex-Middle East adviser: 'We still have time' to prevent Iran's nuclear program," *The Washington Post,* December 13, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/ex-middle-east-adviser-we-still-have-time-to-prevent-irans-nuclear-program/2011/12/13/gIQAlfpjsO_story.html

defense for every nation in the region. Moreover, an erosion of security in the Euro-Atlantic area also matters globally: it undermines the ability of Europe to provide leadership on global security challenges at a time when that leadership is desperately needed on issues ranging from nonproliferation to terrorism to climate change.

Now is the time to lead with a Leadership Group—before Europe is split for a new generation.

THE PRINCIPAL THESES OF THE DISCUSSIONS AT "RIGA SECURITY SEMINAR 2015: UPHOLDING EUROPEAN SECURITY UNDER NEW CIRCUMSTANCES" (APRIL 9th–10th, 2015, RIGA, LATVIA

by Elizabete Vizgunova*

Upholding European security under new circumstances: a younger generation task force on Ukraine and Euro-Atlantic security

Inter-Societal Links and Euro-Atlantic Security. The current state of the Ukrainian civil society

- Ukrainian civil society engaged in the parliamentary elections of 2014 in an important and meaningful way—through a popular movement, volunteer groups were created to monitor reforms, and the influence of tycoons on election results was lessened.

- Both the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Maidan events in 2014 were evidence of the power of societal groups of all ages, whether they are composed of successful and well-educated private sector actors or students, in creating a substitute government and new structures of the state.

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- The Maidan events were an example of both an off-line and on-line revolution, with protesting in the streets as well as an important number of independent bloggers competing with the popular media and international media, which are often biased and passive.

- Non-compliance with the popular opinion of the civil society in Ukraine would be to the detriment of the settlement agenda pushed by the Merkel-Hollande-Putin trio.

- The civil society in Ukraine is the "key" for successful reform, and there's a need for charismatic leaders for reforms to actually take place.

The inter-societal dialogue between Ukraine, Russia, other post-Soviet states, and the West

- The accession of Eastern European states to the EU broadened the notion of "Europeans". However, the former Soviet space is not just Eastern Europe, and there's a need for a New Common European Home, with an inclusive definition for all regions concerned.

- There is a need to counterbalance the hate agenda on both sides of the battle. If Russia and Ukraine see each other as enemies, it is impossible to build European security. To do this, a "complex matter mission" or a think-tank could be established.

- A larger number of young professionals from Russia have to interact with colleagues from both the West and East. A tangible move to achieve this from the side of the EU would be a facilitated visa process with Russia, coupled with education opportunities.

- The Baltic experience shows that the prospect of EU enlargement can help countries to push forward with democratic reforms and

make their civil societies involved. The EU could do more in terms of providing financing through the European Neighbourhood Instrument, and could pursue a diversified approach to different civil societies in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The democratic political culture in Ukraine

- In Ukraine, democracy and the regional conflict in the Eastern parts of the country must be discussed on different levels and among different age groups, including people who lived during the Soviet Union.

- A range of actors must be brought into the process of stabilizing democracy. This should include non-NGO civil society groups, such as people from Donbas and the Luhansk People's Republic, the Crimean Tatars, the Hungarian diaspora, and veterans' organizations, to steer the process away from the politicized context of NGOs. However, it must be taken into account that as long as the fighting continues, inter-societal dialogue between the Eastern and Western parts of Ukraine will be hindered.

- Corruption must be overcome by monitoring and advancing judicial reforms and transnational justice issues.

- Improved broadband internet connections would advance the democratization agenda, due to higher blogger activity. Ukrainian politicians care about the opinions of the population and media.

- There must be a discussion on strong leaders and weak leaders, and the detrimental effect that both strong and weak leaders can have on civil societies and democracies.

The steps needed for the organization of civil society in Ukraine to create a peaceful and democratic country

- There is an urgent need for civil society leaders to emerge—without them, civil society groups can become victims of vested interest. An example of this is the Aspen Yalta Initiative, which brings together Russian, Ukrainian and American experts who will become the leaders of generations to come.

- Civil society groups and NGOs together must serve as watch-dogs for democratic values and build bridges between various civil society groups. The results and progress of their work must be reported to the government, which can then use them to draft new economic and humanitarian strategies.

- However, the task of the government and Ukrainian diplomats is equally important—they must create a stable and prosperous Ukraine, and implement effective economic and humanitarian strategies. The military must make all necessary provisions so that people from Luhansk and Donetsk can get through the military enclosures and see the good aspects of living in Ukraine.

- More actions should take place on European and Western territory in terms of education and investment for Ukraine. Western civil societies should also foster a smart and long-term dialogue with Russia on urgent topics.

- Another task for civil society groups in Ukraine is to promote a more coherent historical narrative, which will help to avoid clashes between the Russian and Ukrainian views on history.

- The leaders of Ukrainian civil society should promote an inclusive dialogue and encourage their followers to understand Russian leadership and civil society, as they cannot be excluded from international affairs.

- Organizations and civil society groups should engage in establishing international cooperation with universities, with education serving as a tool of transnational diplomacy. Various tools, such as blog entries and op-eds, can be used to pass information to government officials.

The role that civil society leadership groups play more broadly in advancing the concept of building mutual security throughout the Euro-Atlantic region

- New leadership groups should focus on broader security issues, not only in the context of Ukraine, but also including perspectives from Russia and Europe. Security must become a part of public relations, and high-ranking politicians from the different countries involved must establish personal contacts with each other to work on urgent issues.

- New leadership groups should focus on inclusive dialogue between private citizens and NGOs to strengthen security, and should include people who can link various NGOs and civil society groups as well as advance education exchanges.

- Questions discussed by new leadership groups should include: reviving institutions and evaluating the place of the OSCE in the new regional environment; strengthening civil society and broadening the links between civil societies from Russia, America, Europe, and Ukraine; integration architecture and projects, and solving the problem of "competitive integration".

- These tasks should be divided into three parts, including representatives from all four regions, to see how they overlap or clash, thus reducing uncertainty:

1. Inter-societal dialogue, including professional civil society and universities, covering topics such as capacity building, defining the missing components of dialogue, people-to-people movement, and migration;

2. Long-term security issues, including Ukraine as the territory where geopolitical interests clash; human security and humanitarian issues; structural issues, namely the OSCE and the necessity to renew it as a functional mechanism; and both internal and international security concerns in Ukraine;

3. Economic issues, including the co-existence and the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union; the role of the UN and international organizations; the balance of markets and the balance of power. This would provide the ability to counterbalance military maneuvers with market zones of influence, as Russia and Ukraine are both liberal economies.

- To advance this agenda, there's a need to create a core group of representatives dedicated to its implementation, and link this group to other networks progressively.

Euro-atlantic security through the prism of the Ukraine crisis

Security challenges in Ukraine (the current situation)

- The military conflict in Ukraine has to be differentiated from the internal political crisis. The conflict encompasses economic, political, military, security and psychological dimensions. Yet Russia is motivated by an emotional element—namely, a fear of being encircled or invaded.

- The consequences of the situation include unpredictable outcomes in global economic, political and military spheres, as well as a partial dismantling of the global institutional order.

- Fragile cohesion in the EU could have four potential outcomes: firstly, a Russian proposition, enabling dialogue on red lines and, possibly, a renewal of trust; secondly, a re-escalation and a debate on military aid for Ukraine, complicating a unified Trans-Atlantic approach; thirdly, the collapse of Ukraine, sparking a debate on the commitment of the EU to Ukraine; or lastly, a change of domestic political conditions in the EU, to the detriment of its ability to react.

Regional security dynamics in Central Europe

- The Central and Eastern European views on Russia differ: the Baltics and Poland see a direct link between the expansionist ambitions of the Czarist, the Soviet and the "New" Russia, while the Central European "pragmatists" believe in the political transition made by Russia.

- The same thing has been seen with regard to Ukraine: Poland and the Baltic countries experienced a wave of solidarity, but the Visegrad-3 (the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) see Ukraine as corrupt and unable to handle investment.

- It has to be taken into account that the Visegrad-4 differ from other regional players in their strategic interests—there's the possibility to cooperate on a practical level, exhibited by energy cooperation between Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine, and the broad involvement of Central European players in the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, alongside growing cooperation formats between the Visegrad-4 and the Baltic and Nordic countries.

- Central Europeans could mentor Ukraine through the Eastern Partnership and become involved in the Minsk process, alongside other European countries. This would play into the repartition of tasks between Germany and other EU member states to ensure the equal commitment of EU countries.

The role and interaction of external players

- The EU and NATO are divided by Russian pressure, creating a rift in Trans-Atlantic unity.

- A new security reality is emerging—a UN Security Council member is attacking a UN member state. The "soft" security envisaged in the 21st century is becoming "harder".

- The West and Russia suffer from conflicting frames of mind: for Russia, geopolitics trumps geo-economics; for the West, economic success is a source of political legitimacy. Yet both the West and Russia need each other to ensure mutual security.

- The role of the EU is that of a fragile cohesion, led by Germany's three-dimensional approach to holding the EU together. This includes, firstly, pressuring Russia; secondly, supporting Ukraine, the Eastern Partnership, and the Baltic States; and thirdly, maintaining diplomatic channels with Russia.

- There is a need to establish better collaboration between the instruments and mechanisms of the Eastern Partnership and the US. US resources are not strategically coordinated and lack political clout, despite its re-engagement in Europe.

- The UN Charter and universal codes of international conduct should be followed thoroughly. All breaches, including ones committed by the US, should be condemned.

Views on Neighborhood engagement and the Minsk process

- The EU was unable to offer protection through the Eastern partnership, unable to solidify the "ring of friends", creating instead a ring of uncertainty. Creating a range of instruments, the Eastern Partnership and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) among them, will improve resilience.

- There's a need to consolidate views within the EU on reforms in neighboring countries.

- To ensure security for Europe and the Neighborhood, we can, firstly, follow the UN Charter; secondly, draw red lines, such as NATO membership, as an effective way to deter and avoid confrontation; or thirdly, create favorable conditions for a détente, following the Finnish example.

- The Minsk agreements, despite skepticism, are the best chance of solving the crisis.

- Participation in the Minsk process has to broaden to include Central European states.

- There needs to be an on-site contact group in Kiev, exposing impediments to the implementation of the Minsk process.

- The Minsk process will only succeed if it is complemented by socio-economic growth, which could be achieved by concluding a Free Trade Agreement between Ukraine and the EU as a first step.

The future model of Western relationships with Russia

- We should expect the long-term relationship between Russia and the West to decline—however, we need to prepare a framework for arms control and building defense capabilities before we can get back to dialogue and de-escalate tensions.

- The point of view of the Ukrainian government must be taken into account and included in all further discussions.

- Russia is going to come out of the crisis weaker than before. The West has to be ready to be a deal-maker, while Russia will be in the position of deal-taker.

- The immediate goals in the context of the Ukraine crisis are:

    1. a de-escalation to decrease military threats in Europe;

    2. stabilization—even if the relationship is a negative one, it can prove sustainable due to established procedures and institutions;

    3. insulation—a need to find areas of common ground between Russia and the West that can be insulated: for example, tackling terrorism in the Middle East;

    4. strategizing—strategists and academics both in Russia and Europe should try to define the new security architecture in Europe.

- Russia's perception of security is interlinked with the Missile Defense Shield in Romania. There was never unanimity on stationing US weapons in Europe, and it is seen as a direct provocation both by European countries and Russia itself.

- The chances of a military escalation have to be minimized by renewing arms control.

- The EU and Russia need to combat the repercussions of the crisis by rebuilding infrastructure, re-establishing the banking system and ensuring investment in Eastern Ukraine. The EU must consider a *rapprochement* with China: the New Silk Road ends in Crimea and could strengthen trade.

- A mechanism of cooperation between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union is needed, alongside increasing bilateral ties between its members.

- In the course of implementing the Minsk-II agreement, we have to negotiate an end to the information war and "flexing muscles" via military exercises. This can be done through already-existing communication mechanisms on a political, military and economic level.

- It is important to strengthen Russia's position on the NATO-Russia Council, where all countries speak independently. Both the EU and NATO should draft a vision of a pan-European security order that includes Russia, and enables a re-calculation of interests.

- To rebuild Ukraine's economy, it is important to bring business elites from the EU, Ukraine and Russia together, putting aside their differences and rivalries.

- However, the West must be at all times ready to cut ties with Russia, in case the situation escalates, and the SWIFT sanctions must be kept ready for implemention with caution.

The role of the OSCE in Ukraine and a broader spectrum of issues

- Ukraine has exposed the incapacity of the OSCE to fulfill its purpose.

- The OSCE faces many challenges, such as low investment, institutional jealousy, an insufficient number of personnel and well-trained staff, an inability to access surveillance equipment, and neglect at national levels.

- Germany must use its OSCE presidency to establish a permanent procedure for resolving the Ukraine crisis, alongside guidelines on how to solve the crisis, including the establishment of a regular and recurring Minsk process meeting.

- The OSCE should be more than an organization that works in crises and war situations. It is a body for intergovernmental interaction where all parties work on the same level. We need to push for permanent OSCE engagement in a broader spectrum of activities in different countries.

- The OSCE can be considered the most relevant forum for addressing the situation in Ukraine: it includes Turkey, Russia and the Western countries as equals. It needs to be utilized by its member states, and has to be included in new security structures and forms of dialogue.

The security repercussions of the crisis in Ukraine

- No major crises in “frozen conflict” locations, such as Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh are currently emerging, although the possibility of future destabilization is not excluded.

- In Central Asia, the impact of the Ukraine crisis might be aggravated by the expected political transitions in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

- The perception of a new arms race is Europe taking place is not unequivocal. Despite Moscow's modernization program, increases in budgetary spending on defense in Europe have been insignificant. Eastern member states of NATO are skeptical about Western reassurance initiatives that, from their point of view, are insufficient.

- The Baltic States are worried about military asymmetry and the frequent Russian military technology presence in their territorial air space and waters. The countries require only a certain capability to defend against threats, and an adequate state of mind about their security situation.

- The "frontline" countries have to consider making an individual commitment to their security and increasing their defense spending as far as 3% to 4%.

- The Ukrainian crisis has exposed potential cooperation problems in the Arctic, which had otherwise seemed to be immune to inter-state conflicts.

- Some of the other repercussions of the crisis include a detrimental impact on our ability to cooperate on global issues, as exemplified by Syria and, potentially, Iran and North Korea, by the rise of nationalism both in Europe and Russia, and by the non-cooperative and suspicious mindset of younger generations.

- The crisis in Ukraine will have a large impact on the future of arms control. Actors both regionally and globally have to be involved, including China.

The past and the future of Western security structures in the face of Euro-Atlantic Security threats

- Coordinated cooperation between the EU and NATO is currently impossible. A platform where both organizations could discuss all aspects of security hurdles should be established, as both NATO and the EU have concerns that need to be addressed.

- There is a need to facilitate the policy formation process in order to propose necessary actions, and to increase the efficiency of NATO by creating a European sub-set of NATO countries that could work independently as the US becomes less interested in Europe.

- The most effective intergovernmental forum is the European Council, a task-setting force on an intergovernmental level. *Ad hoc* groups have proved their effectiveness and can be put in charge of mapping out solutions to security concerns, while it is the EU who has to implement them.

- The EU's External Action Service needs to address the question of trust and willingness when formulating strategies to resolve conflicts between European capitals.

- The problem with NATO and the EU is that they only encompass part of Europe—Russia and Turkey are a part of Europe as well. Cyprus is one of the most important regions—solving the frozen conflict there could unlock many problems between the EU and NATO. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that Turkey has no prospect of joining the EU.

- The West can be partially blamed for what happened in Ukraine, both because of the fact that the West was pressuring Russia before the onset of the annexation of Crimea and because it did not fulfill its guarantees under the Budapest memorandum, as Russia did.

- Institutional barriers in the EU should be broken down. However, the question arises about NATO's ability to work in separate sub-sets, as exemplified by Germany's stance on Libya.

Future perspectives: the role of Track-II dialogue groups

- Issues identified by new initiatives and strategizing include:

    1. the lack of mutual trust and the willingness to decrease arms stockpiles in the Euro-Atlantic region, and for creating a constructive program of security across the region;

    2. the establishment of clear guidelines for the relationship between the EU, Turkey and Russia, as well as the relationship between the EU, NATO and those waiting to join the blocs;

    3. nuclear arsenals, missile defense, conventional forces in Europe, prop-strike forces, cyber security and space policy;

    4. the need to go beyond traditional military matters and engage with each other on economic, energy-related and other vital issues;

    5. and providing templates for cooperation in economics, energy and other areas, supporting specific steps that could be taken in phases—nations would be able to address each other's concerns over time and eliminate "my issue first" attitudes.

- Practical work addressed by new security-related initiatives includes the drafting of new security strategies and processes for dialogue that involve political leaders and heads of government in providing mechanisms where civilian, military and political leaders can take part, and cooperation on an inter-societal level.

- New initiatives must focus on concrete steps for existing global security architecture organizations to pursue becoming effective, and must find ways to consolidate strategic thinking. Particular attention must be paid to the OSCE, as it is the only security organization that includes Russia as an equal partner.

- Meanwhile, Track-II dialogues must provide models for civil society interaction, which is important in the context of the regional conflict in Ukraine and what needs to be done to create sustainable peace in Ukraine. Civil society dialogue groups can facilitate dialogue at times when the relationship with Russia is deteriorating, and can help to build mutual trust.

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