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The Current State of European Security

Introduction

The purpose of this contribution is to map the current security configuration in Europe, trace changes, predict likely scenarios, and discuss what the OSCE can do to affect which scenario will be realized. To this end, we loosely draw on regional security complex theory (RSCT). Our principal argument is that the basic structure of the European security order is gradually being transformed into a bipolar, conflictual order. This process is reversible, and the OSCE may play a small part in bringing about such a change.

A regional security complex (RSC) comprises a set of actors whose security problems are so interconnected that they cannot be considered or resolved apart from one another.[1] RSCT rests on three basic ideas. One is borrowed from geopolitics, the second from the new security agenda, and the third from the linguistic turn in the social sciences. To begin with geopolitics, the argument is that security interdependencies often exist in regional clusters. This is so "because many threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones".[2] Global powers often penetrate RSCs, either reinforcing or dampening regional security dynamics. Second, RSCT reflects the new security agenda that emerged at the end of the 1980s. Diplomats and academics stretched the concept of security to include non-military issues (environmental, economic, etc.) and non-state referent objects (e.g. human beings, collective identity). The CSCE/OSCE was a key policy entrepreneur in these efforts to deepen and widen the traditional state-centric and military security agenda. Finally, RSCT is informed by the linguistic turn in security studies. Unlike the two previous borrowings, this is not about the substance of international security but about epistemology. Policy analysts cannot treat threats as objective conditions. Threats are intersubjective social facts rather than brute material facts. Unlike brute facts (such as mountains), social facts (such as money) are facts by (discursive) agreement only.[3] Through discourses of danger or securitizations, an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as a security problem.[4]

RSCT argues that security dynamics are primarily shaped by domestic vulnerabilities (economic, political, societal, etc.) and the material and social

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1   Cf. Barry Buzan/Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge 2003, p. 44.
2   Ibid., p. 45.
3   Cf. John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York 1995.
4   Cf. Buzan/Waever, cited above (Note 1) p. 491.

structure of the RSC. Material structure refers to the distribution of power among the regional actors and social structure to the roles – enemy, rival, friend – that prevail in the complex. Depending on the relative strength of each of these roles and the patterns of amity-enmity they form, three basic security orders can be identified: conflict formations (competitive security orders), security regimes (co-operative security orders) and security communities (post-security orders).[5]

RSCT is a useful tool for assessing the structural patterns of RSCs. It can also be used for generating predictive scenarios and for clarifying which policy options are "realistic" in a given RSC. We will make use of both functions of the theory.

The Gradual Emergence of a Bipolar, Conflictual RSC

With the end of the Cold War, regional security dynamics reasserted themselves in Europe. Global security concerns, which had dominated the continent, receded into the background. The 1990s saw the revival in post-Soviet space and the Balkans of hitherto frozen intra- and interstate tensions and conflicts. Security dynamics at the time were primarily unfolding in two distinct RSCs, one centred on the EU, the other centred on Russia. Compared with the limited security interdependence between the two complexes, the security dynamics *within* them, say, between the EU and the Western Balkans or between Russia and post-Soviet space, were intense.[6] The decade also witnessed the emergence of a weak pan-European security regime, whose foundations had been laid by the Cold War Helsinki process. Its central pillars were the OSCE, the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement between the EU and Russia (in force since 1997) and the NATO-Russia Founding Act (signed in 1997). All three arrangements include a dense network of institutionalized and informal contacts that, it was initially hoped in the West, would gradually lead to the de facto integration of Russia into the Euro-Atlantic community of values and interests.

With hindsight, the last decade of the 20th century appears as an interregnum. In the new millennium, changes in the absolute and relative power of the EU and Russia and in the pattern of their securitizations have led to the gradual fusion of the two European RSCs. The emerging super-complex hollows out the pan-European security regime and strengthens competitive security dynamics. The brief war between Russia and Georgia in the summer of 2008 and the subsequent chill in East-West relations is a stark reminder of the risks engendered by this development.

The USA penetrates the RSC, bilaterally and via NATO and the OSCE. After 9/11, its policies in Europe have become more strongly influenced by

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5   Cf. ibid., pp. 50 and 54.
6   Cf. ibid., p. 343.

global security concerns, notably by the global war on terror and the search for secure alternatives to the Middle East oil spigot. In the section that follows, we describe the recent (uneven) improvements in the diplomatic, economic, and military assets of the EU and Russia. Among all the regional actors, only these two have been evolving the power-projection capabilities, strategies, and political will to shape the RSC.

Towards a Bipolar Europe

The current restructuring of the RSC into a bipolar order is, among other things, fuelled by the growth of power of the EU and Russia as well as by geopolitical and geoeconomic developments. With EU security concerns in the Western Balkans and Russian security concerns in Chechnya receding, it is the neighbourhood shared by these two major players that has emerged as the new geopolitical hot spot in Europe in the last few years – notably the Southern Caucasus, Ukraine, and Moldova.

Four closely related factors account for the EU's increasing readiness and capacity to project its vision of order into post-Soviet space.[7] First, its eastward enlargement brought the EU into closer proximity to Russia. The new geopolitical borders create both opportunities and vulnerabilities. The EU expects that by shaping its new neighbourhood – Europeanizing it – it can limit the soft security threats emanating from it.[8] Second, while the EU never formally accepted Moscow's predominance in post-Soviet space, it did little to contest it belonging de facto to Russia's sphere of influence. The new Eastern European member states, notably Poland and Lithuania, have done much to modify the EU position. Their geographical closeness to Russian power, coupled with historical memories of Soviet repression, translates into an acute sense of vulnerability (political, military, and economic) *vis-à-vis* Moscow. For both geopolitical and ideological reasons they are thus outspoken proponents of anchoring the borderland between themselves and Russia to the EU and NATO. Their advocacy is strengthened by their extensive contacts with local political forces, language skills (Russian still travels far in post-Soviet space) and expertise in post-communist transition.

Third, the voices of those in the EU who want to see a firmer common policy on Russian actions in the shared neighbourhood have been strengthened by the re-emergence of energy security as a top concern among European governments. Against the background of the Union's dependence on Russian oil and gas, recent supply disruptions to Belarus and Ukraine were interpreted by proponents of the get-tough-on-Russia line as proof of Mos-

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7   In addition to the factors rooted in EU choices, the pro-Western "colour revolutions" in Georgia and Ukraine played an important role in prompting Brussels to upgrade its involvement in the region.

8   Cf. Roberto Aliboni, The Geopolitical Implications of the European Neighbourhood Policy, in: *European Foreign Affairs Review* 1/2005, pp. 1-16.

cow's willingness to use energy as "a currency of power in the international system".[9] These concerns, in turn, have increased the geoeconomic salience of the Southern Caucasus, Moldova, and Ukraine as energy corridors linking the EU to Caspian oil and gas.[10]

Fourth, in the new millennium, the EU has added new policy instruments to its foreign policy arsenal and given itself a security strategy to guide their employment. This foreign and security policy upgrade has ensured that Brussels' growing contestation of Russian influence in post-Soviet space goes beyond rhetoric. The strategic objective of the widening and deepening of the EU's engagement in the Eastern neighbourhood is the promotion of "a ring of well governed countries".[11] It is based on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and the associated Eastern Partnership currently under consideration, as well as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which includes the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The ENP, which is modelled on the successful enlargement policy, represents a significantly expanded EU engagement in its Eastern neighbourhood. The policy is funded by some twelve billion euros and ranges from the promotion of elements of the *acquis communitaire* in the context of ENP Action Plans to new diplomatic initiatives and activities aimed at addressing the territorial conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, and Moldova.[12] In what amounts to a spillover from the first to the second pillar of EU foreign policy, the use of the ENP instrument in the Eastern neighbourhood resulted in the parallel deployment of CFSP and ESDP instruments. The Union appointed EU Special Representatives for Moldova (from 2005), the Southern Caucasus (from 2003), and the crisis in Georgia (from September 2008); sent the ESDP Rule of Law Mission EUJUST THEMIS to Georgia (2004-2005); put in place the follow-up EU Border Support Team (from 2005); deployed the EU Border Assistance Mission EU BAM at the Moldovan-Ukrainian border (from 2005); implemented confidence building measures in Georgia (from 2007); and deployed the Monitoring Mission EUMM (from October 2008) to the country to observe the pull-back of Russian troops from occupied Georgian territory to their positions prior to the conflict in line with the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreement of 12 August.[13]

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9   Enno Harks, cited in Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, Energy Security and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): The Wider Black Sea Area Context, in: *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 2/2007, p. 290.

10   Cf. Uwe Halbach, Oil and the Great Game in the Caucasus, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2004*, Baden-Baden 2005, pp. 275-285.

11   *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 2003, p. 8.

12   At the time of going to press, the European Commission is talking with the authorities of Georgia and the two breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to re-launch its conflict-related assistance to the secessionist territories, which was disrupted after the events in the summer of 2008.

13   By 10 October, Russian forces had withdrawn from the areas adjacent to the breakaway republics, which they had occupied in the aftermath of Georgia's attempt to retake South Ossetia by force. At the time of writing, remaining flashpoints are Akhalgori, Khodori,

This said, while the EU engagement in the region has been growing significantly in recent years, it has a number of important limitations. Brussels has shied away from using its new operational capacity for peacemaking and peacebuilding, which has been developed under the ESDP, to address the frozen conflicts. While the speedy deployment of the EUMM to Georgia was an impressive display of the new EU capabilities, the civilian mission has no executive powers to enforce the EU-Russian peace plan. As to the ENP, when compared to the previous ex-communist accession countries, the EU neighbours in the East start out at a much lower level of development (democracy, economy, rule of law, etc.). Hence, the challenges for the Union in Europeanizing these countries are much greater.[14] What is more, the tools to accomplish the job (ENP Action Plans and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument – ENPI) are significantly less powerful than those available for shaping relations with countries that have been granted a prospect of EU membership. Furthermore, legitimate political competition within countries, a key factor in explaining the success of the big-bang enlargement,[15] is only weakly present in the ENP countries, and only among a few of them. Finally, though the EU is playing the leading role in the Geneva peace talks convened to address the fallout over the war between Russia and Georgia, it is only an observer of the five-plus-two talks in Transdniestria and has no formal role in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[16]

Turning to Russia, its institutional trajectory since the beginning of the 1990s has been very different from that of the EU. Whereas the end of the Cold War opened a window of opportunity for the EU to gradually develop its own autonomous security and defence capabilities, for Russia the collapse of the Soviet Union meant a dramatic loss of power from which it has only recently been recovering. Throughout most of the 1990s, the country experienced a steep economic decline and loss of global influence. The governance capacity of the state weakened precipitously as political power seeped away from the central state.[17] Economic policy became largely captured by oligarchs and Western advisors. The state's internal sovereignty was under-

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and Perevi, where, EU protests notwithstanding, militias of the breakaway republic and/or Russian troops remain. Also, the reinforcement of Russian forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia remains controversial, with the EU insisting that it contravenes the Sarkozy-Medvedev peace plan.

14   Cf. Judith Kelley, New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms Through the New European Neighbourhood Policy', in: *Journal of Common Market Studies* 1/2006, pp. 29-55.

15   Cf. Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism*, Oxford 2005.

16   The Geneva talks are co-chaired by the EU, the OSCE, and the United Nations. Relations among them are not frictionless, as each has an important mission on the ground in Georgia and does not want to see the others step on its turf. In particular, the OSCE feels threatened by the newcomer EUMM, whose mandate in the no-man's land between Georgia and South Ossetia overlaps with its own. This has led to the absurd situation in which Georgian and South Ossetian checkpoints in the concerned areas are monitored by both organizations.

17   Cf. Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's Choice*, London 2004.

mined by the power grab of regional bosses, which led to the creation of a de facto federation of mini-states making sovereign claims.

Even as the material foundations of its international influence deteriorated in the 1990s, Russia insisted that it remained a great power that had a right to "occupy a worthy place [...] in the community of civilized peoples in Eurasia and America".[18] And indeed, it retained sufficient power-projection capabilities to establish its hegemony over post-Soviet space, excluding the Baltic states. Moscow claimed what then president Boris Yeltsin called a "special responsibility" in this territory. In the same speech in 1993, he called on the United Nations (UN) and other international actors "to grant Russia special powers as guarantor of peace and stability in this region".[19] This was Russia's version of the Monroe Doctrine, which declared the "near abroad" to be Moscow's exclusive sphere of interest in which it had a *droit de regard* over local developments that might affect its national interest. Moscow's robust military response in August 2008 to Tbilisi's effort to re-integrate South Ossetia by force can be seen as a manifestation of the doctrine. The institutional vehicle through which Russia sought to pursue its doctrine was the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[20] However, both Russia's weakness and the divergent interests of the member states limited Moscow's ability to make the organization a powerful institutional platform through which it could exercise legitimate regional leadership. In particular, the creation of the Collective Security Treaty (CST) in 1992 failed to evolve into an Eastern alternative to the North Atlantic Alliance. Also, in 1997, the CIS members Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova formed the minilateral GUAM to co-ordinate their positions and policies and balance Russian influence in post-Soviet space.[21] This said, the CIS has been facilitating and licensing the projection of Russian power abroad by providing an umbrella for the military presence of Russian troops in post-Soviet space. Even at the height of its economic crisis in 1996, Moscow had about 30,000 troops deployed in the region.

There remains a huge gap between the global influence once exercised by the Soviet Union and Russia's ability to shape international events. Russia

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18 Statement by the then foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev, cited in: Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, London 2002, p. 350.

19 Boris Yeltsin, quoted in Suzanne Crow, Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping, in: *RFL/RL Research Report* 15/1993, p. 28.

20 After the first step to set up the CIS was taken by Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus in early December 1991, the organization was formed by 11 of the 15 successor states of the Soviet Union later in the same month, with Georgia joining as the twelfth member in 1993. The three Baltic states did not join. Turkmenistan downgraded its membership to associate member in 2005. Following its war with Russia, Georgia decided to withdraw from the organization.

21 In 1999, Uzbekistan joined the grouping, which was subsequently known under the acronym GUUAM. When Tashkent withdrew from it in 2005, it went back to GUAM. One year later, the grouping was re-launched as the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development – GUAM. Since its inception in the 1990s, GUAM has been supported by the EU and the USA.

remains too weak to act as an alternate pole of attraction for most countries in its near abroad. It possesses no significant "soft power", which leaves the magnetism of the rich and democratic Western clubs – the EU and NATO – unrivalled. This said, there has undoubtedly been a resurgence of Russia on the international scene, notably in its backyard, not only in the Southern Caucasus but also in Central Asia.[22] Its onset can roughly be dated to the beginning of the second Putin administration. Russia's new assertiveness cannot be reduced to psychological factors. Its foreign policy has regained confidence, but this is underpinned by an increase in real power. There are two key background conditions that contributed to this development: Until the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008, the petro-economy boomed, fuelled by record high prices for hydrocarbons, and improvements in the capacity of the state to govern. Under President Vladimir Putin, the political power of the oligarchs was curbed. A similarly robust policy rebalanced federal-regional relations. The prerogatives of the central state were restored by curbing the fiscal and legal competencies of the regions.

Beyond these factors, a number of specific policies account for Russia's resurgent capacity to defend its interests abroad. First, Moscow began the difficult process of reversing the decline of its military might.[23] Besides increasing the defence budget, President Putin moved forward on the issue of gradually transforming the Russian military into a professional force. Steps were also taken to rebuild and consolidate the military-industrial complex and emphasis was put on increasing military exports to finance the process. Much remains to be done to streamline and modernize the armed forces. But energy prices are predicted to soar again once the world economy recovers and the ensuing windfall profits will go a long way towards ensuring that the reforms continue. Second, Moscow reinvigorated and launched new integration schemes (military and economic) that bind it closer to its near abroad.[24] For instance, the Kremlin took the leadership in upgrading the CST into the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). At the heart of the new institution, whose foundation was agreed in 2002, is a rapid reaction force of 4,000 troops designed to combat shared security threats such as terrorism.[25] Third and most importantly, Moscow has developed its energy weapon, thus giving

22   On the return of Russia's influence in Central Asia, see Tim Epkenhans, The OSCE's Dilemma in Central Asia, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2006*, Baden-Baden 2007, pp. 211-222.

23   "Fifteen years after the end of the Cold War [...] Russia's armed forces are becoming more capable in a number of key areas." Russia, in: IISS, *The Military Balance 2008*, London 2008, pp. 205-224, here: p. 205.

24   Cf. Katlijn Malfliet/Lien Verpoest/Evgeny Vinokurov (eds), *The CIS, the EU and Russia: The Challenges of Integration*, Houndmills 2007.

25   The founding members of the organization are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. In March 2008, Uzbekistan formally joined the organization. In 2007, agreement was reached to set up a 5,000-strong peacekeeping force. For an analysis of the CSTO, see Alyson J.K. Bailes/Vladimir Baranovsky/Pál Dunay, Regional Security Co-operation in the Former Soviet Area, in: *SIPRI Yearbook 2007*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford, 2007, pp. 174-178.

itself a powerful tool to engage in economic statecraft *vis-à-vis* both its near abroad and the EU. It has reasserted domestic political control over the strategically important oil and gas industry and entered into a gas alliance with Central Asia, which, for the time being, gives the state-controlled Russian gas monopolist *Gazprom* exclusive control over Central Asian gas exports to Europe. Russian oil and gas companies have expanded into the EU energy market by buying up assets such as refineries and ports, and they have acquired part-ownership of distribution networks in the EU by forming strategic alliances with local partners. Finally, Russian energy companies have struck deals with importers to build new pipelines through which Russian-owned oil and gas will be pumped to EU countries.[26]

Taken together, these measures have increased Moscow's international power to disrupt and blackmail, not least in its near abroad. In recent years, Russia has raised the price it charges for energy deliveries to pro-Western Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia while at the same time providing free energy to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[27] More ominously, in the last few years it repeatedly cut oil and gas deliveries to "difficult" Belarus and pro-Western Ukraine. The knock-on effects were also felt in the EU, reminding countries such as Germany and Poland of their vulnerability to Russian supply disruptions. Moscow has also not shied away from using more traditional means of disruption and punishment, notably in Georgia, to defend its interests.[28] Whether the rate at which Russia grows its international power will be sufficient to achieve its aim of containing or even reversing the growing penetration of post-Soviet space by the EU and other Western actors remains to be seen.

The polarization of the RSC just described tells us something about its form. Its content, however, can only be deduced from the security narratives of the main players and the patterns of amity-enmity to which they give rise. It is to them that we turn now.

Changing Patterns of Amity and Enmity

When Russia, Ukraine and Belarus announced the creation of the CIS in early December 1991, not only did they ring the death knell for the Soviet Union

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26 On the limitations of the energy weapon, see Andrew Monaghan, Russia's Energy Diplomacy: A Political Idea Lacking a Strategy? in: *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 2/2007, pp. 275-288.

27 Filippos Proedrou, The EU-Russia Energy Approach Under the Prism of Interdependence, in: *European Security* 3-4/2007, pp. 329-355.

28 This was true even prior to the events in the summer of 2008. According to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), Russia shot down at least one Georgian unmanned reconnaissance drone over the breakaway territory of Abkhazia in the first half of 2008. Moscow previously exercised its power of disruption by, among other things, imposing a ban on the import of Georgian wine, cutting postal communications between the two countries, and expelling Georgians from Russia.

but also for traditional Western securitizations of the "Russian bear". As Russia's economy contracted throughout most of the decade and its international influence declined, characterizations of the official successor state to the Soviet Union as a politico-military enemy fell out of favour in Western European academia and diplomacy. In pre-2004 Europe, governments who played the Russian card to expedite their transition from accession country to EU member were politely but firmly told that such Cold War rhetoric was unhelpful. The declining importance of traditional images of Russia as enemy and a source of security concerns went hand in hand with the emergence of new issues and actor categorizations. Western discourse construed Russia as a friendly junior partner struggling with the challenges of democratic transition. There remained risks. The transition process might stall or, even worse, the country might disintegrate into chaos. Both scenarios, it was feared, would lead to a number of negative externalities such as uncontrolled migration towards Western Europe, flourishing organized crime, or ethnic warfare. Of particular concern to the EU and the USA was declining nuclear safety in Russia and the correlative risk of trafficking of radioactive materials and expertise.

While the West was clearly concerned about these soft security threats, it considered them to be "better problems",[29] i.e., problems that were in principle easier to tackle than those associated with the traditional security agenda that obtained between enemies. They could be solved by, on the one hand, increased trade with Russia and the provision of technical assistance and aid and, on the other, the reinforcement of co-operative security structures binding East and West together. The EU put in place a new programme – Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States, TACIS – to assist Russia's transition to democracy and a market economy and to finance, together with other EU and bilateral facilities, nuclear safety and clean-up projects. In 1994, Brussels signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Moscow.[30] It provided, among other things, an institutional framework for political dialogue and closer economic relations. In 2003, agreement was reached to upgrade the PCA by creating the Four Common Spaces. The EU hoped that the Road Maps connected with these would provide a means through which it could Europeanize Russia. NATO, too, offered Russia a special contractual relationship. In 1997, the NATO-Russia founding act was agreed. The allies saw it as a means to associate Moscow with the organization and to avoid the creation of new dividing lines as the alliance

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29   Beverly Crawford, Toward a Theory of Progress in International Relations, in: Emanuel Adler/Beverly Crawford (eds), *Progress in Post-war International Relations*, New York 1991 pp. 438-468.

30   The entry into force of the agreement was postponed until 1997 because of EU concerns over Russia's conduct in its war in Chechnya. After many delays, negotiations on a follow-up EU-Russia agreement started in June 2008. They were frozen in September in the wake of Russia's "unacceptable" recognition of South Ossetian and Abkhazian independence and resumed in November in light of progress towards the implementation of the Sarkozy-Medvedev peace plan.

expanded eastwards. Finally, arguably the most ambitious co-operative security project in the 1990s was the transformation of the CSCE into the OSCE. This process involved an impressive build-up of institutional capacities and a significant expansion of tasks. The OSCE was widely considered to be the institutional linchpin of pan-European security through which Russia (and the other post-Soviet states) were anchored to the West.

The 1990s and the early years of the new millennium was the heyday of Francis Fukuyama's Last Man, not only in the USA but also on this side of the Atlantic.[31] In Western Europe, the conviction was widespread that the continent was in the process of emerging from history. The armed conflicts in the Balkans, though a rude reminder of the challenges facing the EU's foreign-policy aspirations as laid down by the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, were widely considered an anachronism that had its roots in the general backwardness of the region. While, in the short-term, old-fashioned force was needed to quell the violence, the long-term solution consisted of the modernization of the countries concerned. The same recipe, it was argued, was applicable to the intra- and interstate conflicts Eastern Europe and Russia experienced. There was a sense that history had run its course. There was no viable alternative to liberal democracy and the market economy and the principles of good governance that applied to both domains. Polities complying with these precepts, in turn, would form a zone of peace and law. The future of European security was bright.

By Putin's second term as President, both the concern with Russia's weakness and the conviction that technical and institutional fixes could make Europe safe for democracy and prosperity were being widely reassessed by EU governments. This has led to a growing chorus of voices that securitizes Russia's insistence on a *sui generis* model of sovereign democracy, which is perceived to be a cover for a new authoritarianism, and its assertive foreign policy that does not shy away from challenging Western visions of order and justice in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.[32]

Russia's security discourse has also gone through some dramatic twists and turns in the last decade and a half. Initially the idea of the end of history was a powerful influence on its foreign policy. However, disillusion set in earlier than in the West.

When Russia became a sovereign state again, it had to formulate a new foreign and security policy. This was based on two basic assumptions. First, the country was and would remain a great power due to its history, size, military might, notably nuclear capabilities, permanent seat on the Security Council, and so forth. Second, its transformation into a "normal" country would make Russia an equal partner of the EU and the USA in the joint management of international affairs. Both of these assumptions were partly re-

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31   Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London 1993.
32   Cf. Derek Averre, "Sovereign Democracy" and Russia's Relations with the European Union, in: *Demokratizatsiya* 2/2007, pp. 173-190.

lated to Russia's securitization of its own communist past: the repressive domestic order and the "internationalist" foreign policy that prioritized ideology over pragmatism.

The assumption that Russia is a great power has never been questioned. This self-ascribed identity survived the steep economic decline of the 1990s. The second assumption soon fell into disrepute as the perception grew that the country was not getting much from the West in return for "bandwagoning" with it. Critics complained that Russia was neither recognized by the West as an equal partner in international leadership nor received the quantity of aid it had hoped for. The influence that was granted to Western advisors and international financial institutions seemed only to lead to a worsening of Russia's domestic and international situation. In addition, supported by the West, the former members of the Warsaw Pact and some newly independent former Soviet republics began to align themselves with Western policies and institutions. Last but not least, NATO, perceived in Russia as a Cold War institution, decided to expand into the East. These developments did not chime with Russia's view of its own foreign policy role. One reaction, which expressed the country's desire for international recognition as a great power, was the popularity of Eurasionist discourses in the 1990s. They emphasized the uniqueness of Russia's civilization and its historical mission as a bridge between Western and Asian cultures. In the new millennium, and in particular since the second Putin administration, a more mundane security discourse has been growing in strength. It presents certain Western policies as an effort to contain Russian influence in the RSC and to marginalize it politically and militarily. This is framed as a threat to Russia's ontological security, i.e., its identity as a great European power and the interests that go with it.

To conclude, since the beginning of the 1990s, the patterns of amity-enmity in the RSC have changed twice. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the social structure of the complex was radically transformed as former enemies began to regard each other as friends engaged in constructing a pan-European peace order. The honeymoon did not last long. In the new millennium, the newly built co-operative security relations have become strained and (unfriendly) rivalry has gained at the expense of joint problem solving in a growing number of areas. In the sections that follow, we map this shift in the social structure of the RSC towards a conflict formation by analysing the key discourses of danger through which the EU and Russia securitize their relationship.

Clashing Securitizations: Frozen Conflicts and De Factos

In the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union, a number of ethnic conflicts flared up in the newly independent states and the former Yugoslavia.[33] With the termination of the bloody war in Bosnia in 1995 and the end of hostilities in Chechnya in 1996, the topic of ethnic warfare receded into the background.[34] The secessionist conflicts in the wider Black Sea region – between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, between Georgia and its breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and between Moldova and the secessionist territory of Transdniestria – became "frozen". Prior to the summer of 2008, small-scale incidents and skirmishes flared up periodically, but overall a precarious peace prevailed, maintained in all but one case (Nagorno-Karabakh) by Russian peacekeeping forces operating alongside local troops (Transdniestria, South Ossetia) or alone under a CIS mandate (Abkhazia). Russia remains the main backer of the breakaway regions in Georgia and Moldova. It supports them militarily, diplomatically (say, by seconding the political demands of secessionist leaders), economically (say, by providing free energy) and politically (say, by granting Russian citizenship to the concerned populations).

In recent years, the rivalry between the EU and Russia in the wider Black Sea region has deepened. A growing number of voices in the EU (and the USA) have begun to frame Russian support for the separatist regimes in the region as a major security problem. The new Central and Eastern European member states of the European club have successfully acted as policy entrepreneurs, pushing the EU towards a more assertive stance on Russian actions in the region. Differences notwithstanding, there is firm agreement among the members that Moscow has instrumentalized the frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova to maintain its strategic influence in the region, which, in turn, holds back its Europeanization. The hot war between Russia and Georgia over Abkhazia and South Ossetia is taken by the EU to confirm its worst fears. More concretely, EU securitization centres on a number of arguments. To begin with, the unresolved conflicts serve as a pretext for the forward deployment of Russian troops. Russia's forces in Georgia and its peacekeepers in Moldova are a means of military statecraft through which Moscow seeks to keep Tbilisi and Chişinău in its sphere of influence. Moreover, they are used by Moscow as a bargaining chip in its relations with the West. Finally, EU discourse emphasizes that by standing in the way of a peaceful resolution of the secessionist conflicts, and by recognizing, in violation of internal law, the self-proclaimed sovereignty of South Ossetia and Abkhazia

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33 There were five major military conflicts in the former Soviet Union: Nagorno-Karabakh, Tajikistan, South Ossetia, Transdniestria, and Chechnya. In addition, there were around 20 smaller military clashes. See Sakwa, cited above (Note 18), pp. 387-388.

34 In the late 1990s, with the irruption of the second Chechen war and ferocious clashes between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in the then Serbian province, the issue moved to the top of the security agendas of the main actors in the RSC again, albeit temporarily.

– "the de factos" in EU jargon – Russia limits the spread of democracy, human rights, and prosperity.

The governments of Transdniestria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, all of which rely on Russian armed forces to stay in power, are described in EU, and, more broadly, in Western discourse as criminalized and corrupt political elites at the helm of quasi-state structures. They oversee widespread poverty and human rights abuses while being organically linked to organized crime networks that engage in trafficking in human beings, drugs, and weapons and other illegal activities. The frozen conflicts are thus regarded as constituting a twofold danger to the Union. First, they generate negative externalities for it as either sources of or transit territories for the illicit movement of people, including terrorists, and the smuggling of goods into the EU. And, in a way that is closely related to this, they negatively affect European energy security by introducing an additional and significant element of instability into a region that is an important, and provided conditions are right, could become an even more important energy corridor linking Caspian oil and gas to the EU. Second, the mere existence of "civilizational black holes" in its proximity is a threat to Brussels' self-image. The EU has successfully branded itself as a new kind of international actor – a normative power that eschews interest-based power politics in favour of cross-border solidarity with less fortunate people and the promotion of universal values. Hence, the EU fears that failure to translate its vision into reality in its immediate neighbourhood may lead to a loss of credibility on the international stage – if not here, where else can it be expected to succeed?

Russia's security perceptions of the territorial disputes in the wider Black Sea region, which have in essence stayed the same since the early 1990s, are very different. First, Moscow argues that it has played a constructive role in containing the conflicts. Second, it sees its role in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transdniestria as that of a protector of those Russians who, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, found themselves living abroad. Its involvement in these and other hot conflicts in its near abroad in the early 1990s was, among other things, justified by the fear that inaction would result in "millions of refugees and chaos along the perimeter of the southern borders".[35] Moscow's heavy-handed military intervention in Georgia in the summer of 2008 was framed in very similar terms. Third, in line with its self-image as a great power, Moscow believes that it has a historical right to intervene in its near abroad to prevent it from "losing geopolitical positions that took centuries to achieve".[36] Fourth and closely related, Russia argues that it is pursuing a fully legitimate strategy in the region when it seeks to limit the further expansion of Western influence, notably that of NATO, into a sphere in which it has important political and security interests. Moscow has so far

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35 Statement by the then Russian foreign minister Kozyrev, cited in Sakwa, cited above (Note 18), p. 388.
36 Kozyrev, cited ibid. p. 354.

not opposed the further eastward enlargement of the EU, not least because none of the potential candidates in post-Soviet space has (yet) been granted candidate status. However, there is growing suspicion in the Kremlin that the EU is increasingly acting in support of an American neo-containment policy.[37] In support of this view, Russians point, among other things, to the pressure both the EU and the US have exerted on the government in Moldova to reject the Russian-sponsored Kozak memorandum, which would have solved the frozen conflict in return for what would have amounted to the Finlandization of the country.[38] They also highlight the recent intensification of EU involvement in strongly pro-NATO Georgia, an involvement which no longer shies away from confronting Russia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The EU's support of the "aggressor" and its condemnation of Russia in the wake of the events of the summer of 2008 have reinforced Moscow's perception of a Western roll-back strategy aimed at containing its influence in its own backyard.

Fifth, Russians have begun to securitize EU policy on the frozen conflict in Moldova and the de factos not only because it is seen as undermining the country's international influence and status but also because of its potential to endanger domestic sovereignty. Since the velvet revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, Moscow has taken "anti-colour" preparations in order to reduce its vulnerability to transnational civil-society actors. It restricted the role of foreign-backed NGOs in the country and created state-sponsored quasi-NGOs to counteract pro-Western societal actors in case of a legitimacy crisis such as the one in Ukraine in 2004/2005. The Kremlin sees its engagement in Transdniestria and the Georgian breakaway territories as an external supplement to this domestic defensive posture; it guards against the further entrenchment of the influence of Western society on Russia's borders. Finally, in Moscow's view, the territorial conflicts in the wider Black Sea region do not constitute a serious security challenge to the EU, in particular when compared to the security risks posed by the Middle East and Northern Africa.[39] Brussels' intensifying engagement in the region is thus interpreted as a political strategy aimed at undermining Russia's historical status as a major European power that has legitimate "possessions" in its immediate backyard and a right to shape its milieu.

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37 Cf. Averre, cited above (Note 32), p. 182.
38 Cf. Dov Lynch, Misperceptions and Divergences, in: Dov Lynch (ed.), *What Russia Sees*, Chaillot Paper, no. 74, Paris: EUISS, p. 15. The 2003 memorandum would have federalized Moldova by placing the two state entities – Moldova and Transdniestria – on an equal constitutional footing. The federation would have remained neutral and demilitarized. Transdniestria would have had the right, under certain conditions, to leave the federation.
39 Cf. Dmitry Polikanov, Russia-EU Relations: Opportunities for a Security Dialogue, in: David Brown/Alistair J.K. Shepherd (eds), *The Security Dimensions of EU Enlargement: Wider Europe, Weaker Europe?* Manchester 2007, pp. 115-128.

Clashing Securitizations: Energy Security

Since 2000, the EU and Russia have conducted an Energy Dialogue in recognition of the importance of their trade in oil and gas. Yet the institutionalization of co-operation at the level of experts and senior political officials proved unable to prevent the securitization of energy relations. In recent years, energy security has significantly aggravated the tensions between the EU and Russia. The stakes are economic as well as political in nature. The former have to do with supply and demand. There has been a marked increase in global demand for hydrocarbons, driven in part by rapid economic growth in emerging economies such as China. At the same time, supply has been tightening due to a number of factors including geopolitical constraints and accelerated depletion of oil and gas reserves in the North Sea and elsewhere. The result has been a steady increase in oil and gas prices. While the global economic crisis triggered by the melt-down of the American sub-prime mortgage market led to a sharp fall in energy prices in 2008, they are expected to rise again significantly once the world economy recovers. In Russia, high oil and gas prices are welcomed. They mean windfall profits for producers and a budget bonanza for the federal government. The country is the largest gas producer and exporter in the world and the second-largest oil producer after Saudi Arabia; since 2000, its oil exports have surged.

In the EU, the hike in energy prices has been viewed as a threat to economic well-being. Member states are highly dependent on oil and gas imports and will become even more so in the foreseeable future. On current trends, "in the next 20 to 30 years around 70 per cent of the Union's energy requirements, compared to 50 per cent today, will be met by imported products".[40] At the same time, global competition for access to energy is set to increase further. Against this background, the new EU energy-security narrative raises serious concerns about supply security and the impact of high prices on economic growth, inflation, competitiveness, and so forth. In addition, EU discourse highlights a number of political threats posed by the Union's import dependency.

Russia accounts for about 50 per cent of the total gas imports of the EU and for over 30 per cent of its oil imports.[41] This asymmetric interdependence has recently been reframed in EU discourse as a threat because it makes the Union vulnerable to supply disruptions and political blackmail. In the wake of the cuts to energy supplies to Belarus and Ukraine, Moscow stands accused of the reckless use of oil and gas as a weapon to achieve commercial and political ends without regard for contractual obligations. Its refusal to sign the 1994 Energy Charter Treaty and its Transit Protocol, which commit

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40 European Commission, *Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy*, COM(2006) 105 final, Brussels, 2006, p. 3.
41 On current trends, the numbers will rise to 70 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively, by 2020. Cf. Proedrou, cited above (Note 27), p. 334.

signatories to comply with, among other things, transparent investment, competition, and transit rules, is taken by Brussels to be further proof of Russia's dangerous politicization of its energy industry.[42] This cavalier attitude towards best practices and free markets is seen as entailing a risk. One day, the argument goes, the EU may well find itself the target of the Kremlin's economic statecraft when it tries to challenge it over, say, democracy or human rights. The previously mentioned penetration of the EU energy market by Russian companies and Moscow's perceived obstructionism concerning the resolution of the frozen conflict in Moldova and its support for the de factos in Georgia, which injects instability into an important energy corridor, figure prominently in this threat scenario.

Last but not least, Brussels frames Russian conduct as a threat to its collective identity. Moscow's policy of playing EU members off against each other by exploiting their varying dependence on its energy to cut separate supply and pipeline construction deals threatens the international reputation of the CFSP, which has in recent years become one of Brussels' most trumpeted integration success stories. The inability to develop a common external energy policy casts doubt on the Union's "actorness" in a key international field. Another ontological danger articulated by the EU is connected to the fact that the Kremlin sees energy as a strategic commodity. The major energy firms *Gazprom* and *Rosneft* are partly state-owned, Moscow controls foreign investment in its energy industry and opposes the ownership unbundling of production and transport assets both at home and in the EU. As seen from Brussels, Russia's energy policy is opposed to the normative principles that are at the heart of both the European integration project and EU foreign policy: the promotion of free markets and competition.

Moscow vehemently denies any political motives behind the rows with Belarus and Ukraine.[43] More importantly, turning the EU argument about competitive and secure energy on its head, the Russian security narrative intimates that Brussels seeks to undermine the country's new status as an energy superpower by imposing its anti-statist vision of economic order on it. Similarly, EU efforts to force Russia to further open up its energy riches to European investment by threatening to limit Russia's investment in its own energy market are regarded as a danger to the country's resurgent economic strength.[44] Finally, the Russians frame EU energy-diversification policy as an unfriendly move that poses a potential risk to the country's need for security of demand and as an unjustified attempt to recalibrate the balanced overall

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42   Also, the EU believes that the politicization of the Russian energy industry is partly responsible for insufficient investments in new large-scale exploration projects. This shortfall, in turn, is expected to further undermine supply security in the future.

43   Cf. Alexander Medvedev, Is Gazprom's Strategy Political?, in: *Europe's World* 9/2008, pp. 63-67.

44   As Alexander Medvedev points out, Europe's threat risks shifting the balance of economic power further in favour of the EU: "European investment in Russia is [already] 7-8 times higher than Russian investment in EU", ibid., p. 67.

economic relationship between the two sides in favour of Brussels.[45] It regards the backing given by the EU to deals that aim to circumvent Russian pipelines by expanding existing energy corridors and creating new ones connecting Europe to Caspian oil and gas as a risk to the security of its energy revenues and its political power. Pursuing its own diversification strategy in response to EU moves, Moscow signed an agreement with Beijing at the end of October 2008 to build an oil pipeline to connect the two countries.

Clashing Securitizations: NATO Enlargement

NATO plays a twofold role in the RSC. On the one hand, it is a conduit through which extra-regional security considerations enter the complex. The Atlantic Alliance is a vehicle through which the USA projects limited power into Europe to underpin its grand strategy of offshore balancing that consists of ensuring that no single European or Eurasian actor achieves regional hegemony on the continent.[46] On the other hand, NATO is an arena in which intra-regional security dynamics are played out. For instance, at the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit, EU members were split on the question of whether to admit Georgia and Ukraine to the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in preparation of full alliance membership. While a number of the more established EU members saw the proposal as premature because it would aggravate tensions between Russia and the West, opposing it for this and other reasons, the newer members, together with some of the older ones, regarded it as strengthening the pan-European security regime, and thus supported it. The "postponers" won the day in Bucharest, but the further extension of NATO into post-Soviet space is surely only a question of time, not least because the new American president, Barack Obama, supports it. Once a positive decision has been taken, it will not be possible to isolate EU-Russian relations from the negative consequences this will have for East-West relations.

Ever since NATO took the decision in 1996 to expand eastwards, official security discourse has justified the policy as a means to incorporate new states into the zone of democratic peace. Enlargement is described as a security policy that helps to prevent regional instability and conflict and to promote democratic civilian control of the armed forces of new democracies. It also reduces the likelihood of a re-nationalization of defence policies, which would have negative implications for European security. In principle, all EU governments subscribe to this view.

Russia frames NATO enlargement in very different terms. It has pursued a consistent policy of opposing the expansion of the alliance ever since

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45   Russia currently exports 60 per cent of its oil and gas to the EU. The EU represents about 54 per cent of overall Russian trade, while Russia accounts for only 6.2 per cent of EU exports and 10.4 per cent of EU imports. Cf. Tatiana Mitrova, Russia, Europe and Energy: A Vicious Circle, in: *International Herald Tribune*, 3 October 2008.

46   Cf. John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York 2001.

the issue was first placed on NATO's agenda. What has frequently changed, however, is the virulence with which Moscow makes its views known. In the early 1990s, the belief was widespread in Russia that NATO would either wither away or be turned into a new pan-European security organization in which Russia would have its rightful place.[47] Neither scenario unfolded. Instead, the alliance expanded geographically and functionally, for instance adding peacemaking and peacebuilding to its task portfolio. The majority of Russia's political elite, irrespective of party affiliations and ideologies, felt a sense of betrayal. The resulting tensions notwithstanding, in 1997 Russia and NATO signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act. It established a Permanent Joint Council.[48] Moscow hoped that the agreement would give it a measure of influence over alliance policy. Yet this did not happen. Quite the contrary, in 1999, without a UN resolution or consultations with Russia, NATO began an air campaign against Serbian targets in Kosovo and Serbia proper to stop the ethnic warfare in the province. Relations hit a low. The military intervention came only a few weeks after Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic had joined the alliance.

While as opposed to NATO's eastward enlargement as his predecessor, Vladimir Putin tried to develop a more pragmatic relationship with the organization. When, in the wake of 9/11, he aligned Russian foreign policy with that of the USA in the war on terrorism, the diplomatic quarrel surrounding NATO enlargement receded into the background. In April 2004, seven new post-communist states, including the Baltic republics, joined the alliance without any serious repercussions for East-West relations. But four years later, NATO's eastern enlargement again tops Russia's security agenda. Moscow vehemently opposes the efforts by Georgia and Ukraine to join the alliance. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov stated that Russia would consider it "a substantial negative geopolitical shift" if these countries were to become members of NATO.[49]

Two threats are emphasized in this context: First, the Kremlin characterises NATO policy as being aimed at its strategic encirclement. The incorporation of Georgia and Ukraine into NATO is seen as an attempt to extend Western military influence, and potentially American bases and installations, right up to Russia's border and, in doing so, to wrest territories from its sphere of influence that have been regarded as Russia's geopolitical *domaine reservée* since Czarist times.[50] This would not only harm the country's security but also its political and economic interests. As argued earlier, Russian

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47   Cf. Vladimir Baranovsky, Russian Views on NATO and the EU, in: Anatol Lieven/Dmitri Trenin, (eds), *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO and the Price of Membership*, Washington, DC, 2003, pp. 269-294.
48   In 2002, it was replaced by the NATO-Russia Council.
49   Sergei Lavrov: "We are Trying De-ideologize our Politics", in: *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, 7 April 2008, at: http://rbth.ru/articles/2008/04/07/2008_04_DT_01_lavrov.html.
50   The USA, in addition to being one of the outspoken supporters of the further enlargement of NATO into post-Soviet space, has signed bilateral military accords with a number of Eastern and South-Eastern European alliance members.

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security discourse has started to construe EU policy in the shared neighbour-hood as supplementing NATO efforts to roll-back Russian regional influence. Hence, once the alliance agrees to admit Ukraine and Georgia, this is likely to have a major adverse effect on EU-Russian relations. Second, Moscow does not want NATO to be Europe's prime security provider as it has little influence over its policies. As enlargement strengthens the North Atlantic Alliance's influence at the expense of alternative arrangements, Moscow considers the process to pose a threat to its conception of its own role as a principal regional player that has a legitimate right to shape the governance of European security. Here it is worth noting that Russia warmly welcomed the creation of the ESDP, expecting it would act as a counterweight to NATO. It put great hope in the development of a bilateral strategic dialogue and co-operative crisis management with the EU, to which both sides committed themselves in October 2000. Yet Moscow's expectation of closer military and intelligence co-operation with Brussels, including shared responsibility for the operational planning of joint security operations in Europe and beyond, has remained largely unfulfilled. This prompted then foreign minister Igor Ivanov to declare in 2003 that "some of our European partners are not yet psychologically ready for equal collaboration with Russia".[51] Incidentally, one of the reasons why the EU refuses to affiliate Russia more closely with the ESDP is the fear that Washington might interpret it as an attempt to marginalize the US role in European security.

Recently, Russia has launched a new attempt to break what it considers NATO's pre-eminence in matters of "hard" security in Europe. At a Franco-Russian conference at Evian in October 2008, President Dmitry Medvedev specified proposals he had made a few months earlier in Berlin regarding the construction of a new pan-European security architecture. The new treaty-based order should be based on the principle that "no state or international organization has exclusive rights to guarantee peace and stability in Europe".[52] Incidentally, the Russian *démarche* may turn out to be a fillip for the OSCE, because the EU insists on convening talks about the proposal under the aegis of the Vienna-based organization.

Clashing Securitizations: Missile Defence

The proliferation of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons is one of the security topics on which the USA, EU, and Russia have had similar views for some time. However, the intention of the USA to site components of its mis-

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51 *Remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov Before Representatives of the Sociopolitical and Business Circles of Germany on the Theme "Russia-European Union: The State of, and Prospects for Partnership"*, Munich, 10 December 2003.

52 Daniel Brössler/Stefan Kornelius, Russland macht der EU Avancen [Russia Makes Advances to the EU], in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 October 2008 (author's translation).

sile defence system in Eastern Europe has recently led to a clash of security perceptions between Moscow and Washington. Russia sees American policy as a significant threat to its own security rather than as a solution to the problem of proliferation. While the EU was at first split on the issue, it has recently aligned itself with the USA. As a result, missile defence has become another issue which contributes to the securitization of the relationship between the EU and Russia.

Ever since President Reagan's controversial Star Wars project, which foresaw the replacement of mutual assured destruction between the two superpowers by strategic defence, an important strand in American strategic thinking has emphasized the importance of active defences. After the end of the Cold War, a (limited) bipartisan security discourse took shape that centres on limited missile defence as a supplement to deterrence. It suggests that nuclear deterrence cannot be expected to work either with rogue states such as Iran or with terrorists who "seek the ability to deliver death and destruction to our doorstep via missiles".[53] A subtext of the discourse is the argument that without a limited missile defence the American projection of power in crucial regions of the world such as the Middle East will increasingly become hostage to opponents armed with nuclear weapons. Reversing President Bill Clinton's decision to delay the construction schedule, George W. Bush gave the go-ahead, in 2002, for building a ground-based midcourse missile defence system designed to address these security concerns.[54] To ensure its effectiveness, Washington entered into bilateral negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic to allow parts of the infrastructure to be based in Eastern Europe.[55]

The American *démarche* was initially received with mixed feelings in the EU. Eastern European members and several Western European countries such as Britain welcomed it as an important contribution to European security, often in spite of popular opposition and sometimes with qualifications.[56] Government officials and experts in other EU members, including in Germany, France, and Austria, expressed reservations about the feasibility of the system and, more importantly, its political-military effects on European security. The sceptics pointed out that unless the introduction of the system was agreed with Moscow, it was likely to further damage relations between Russia and the West. Some painted a worst-case scenario, according to which the

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53 President George W. Bush, *Statement to the Press*, Washington, DC, 13 December 2001.
54 Barack Obama, like President Clinton before him, supports the idea of missile defence but insists that the technology must first be proved to be workable. At the time of writing, no decision had yet been taken by the President-elect on whether to proceed with the deployment.
55 In 2002, the Bush administration began informal talks with the two countries. In 2007, formal negotiations started on establishing missile defence sites on their territory. Congressional Research Service, *Long-Range Ballistic Missile Defense in Europe*, Washington, DC, 13 June 2008.
56 For instance, Slovenia and Romania argued that the system should protect all NATO members.

démarche might lead to a new strategic arms race. This in turn could prompt Russia to suspend the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, thus threatening military stability in Europe.[57] Reflecting concerns of this kind, the High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, warned that an anti-missile shield could negatively "affect our relations with third countries, namely Russia".[58] The gap between these divergent European securitizations was significantly narrowed at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest. All European members signed up to the American narrative which stresses "the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European based United States missile defence assets".[59]

The convergence of the American and European positions is set to increase EU-Russian tensions, since Moscow unambiguously identifies current American plans as negatively impacting its security interests. Most importantly, the government fears that the missile defence system is an attempt to shift the strategic balance between Russia and the USA in favour of the latter. This suspicion is underpinned by a number of arguments. Moscow points out that if the USA and the EU were really concerned about an Iranian missile attack, the infrastructure should be sited in Turkey or Iraq. In its current configuration, the system is regarded by Russian experts as having the capability to intercept Russian missiles. Putin drew an analogy with the 1962 Cuban missile crisis: "The situation is quite similar technologically for us", he said, "we have withdrawn the remains of bases from Vietnam and Cuba, but such threats are being created near our borders."[60] Moscow also argues that once the system is in place, Washington could easily expand it beyond the initially planned ten interceptors to be fielded in Poland. A more capable defence, in turn, would go a long way towards enabling Washington to establish meaningful strategic nuclear superiority. Yet for Russia what is at stake is not only global strategic parity but also the European balance of power. By connecting missile defence to NATO enlargement, European and American policy in post-Soviet space and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), the Kremlin frames the issue in terms of the advance of Western political and military power at the expense of its own influence in the RSC.

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57 Cf. US missile shield must not split Europe, Steinmeier warns, 17 March 2007, at: http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1278847.php.

58 EU's Solana: Participation in U.S. Missile Defense Shield Must Not Harm EU Security, in: *International Herald Tribune*, 29 March 2007.

59 Moreover, the Summit Declaration states that the allies "are exploring ways to link" US capabilities in Poland and the Czech Republic "with current NATO [theatre] missile defence efforts as a way to ensure that it would be an integral part of any future NATO wide missile defence architecture". With regard to Russia, the Declaration expresses NATO's commitment "to maximum transparency and reciprocal confidence building measures to allay any concerns".

60 The 2007 quote can be found in Philip Coyle/Victoria Samson, Missile Defense Malfunction: Why the Proposed U.S. Missile Defenses in Europe Will Not Work, in: *Ethics & International Affairs* 1/2008, p. 8.

Finally, ontological security concerns are also present in the Russian discourse on missile defence. It is construed as yet another unwelcome reminder of American global hegemony: "The deployment of American missile defence in Europe has not only a military but also a symbolic significance. Fifteen years after the end of the cold war a situation is obviously being created in which the continent again can only manage with American protection and with reinforced American military presence."[61] Russia regards this state of affairs as a challenge to the status it claims as a great power and its desire to play an essential role in European security. Following up on official statements made as early as June 2007, President Medvedev announced that should the Obama administration go ahead with the construction of the missile defence sites in Eastern Europe, Russia would deploy Iskander tactical surface-to-surface missiles in Kaliningrad. They would be able to hit targets in both Poland and the Czech Republic.

Clashing Securitizations: The CFE Treaty

The key pillar of conventional arms control in Europe has in recent years given rise to a growing conflict between Russia and the West.[62] The CFE Treaty started out in 1990 as an arms-control agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. At the Istanbul OSCE Summit in 1999, agreement was reached to adapt the treaty by substituting a system of national and territorial ceilings for treaty-limited equipment for the previous bloc ceilings. The principal aim of the treaty, however, stayed the same, namely the elimination of the capacity for launching surprise attacks. In December 2007, Russia suspended the adapted treaty, which has not yet been ratified by any Western state.

The sticking point in the ratification of the adapted treaty has been the refusal by Russia to withdraw its forces from Georgia and Moldova. Initially, EU members and the then accession countries attached different weight to the security implications of these two issues. Some saw, and see, Russia's involvement in the territorial disputes in the wider Black Sea region as a significantly greater danger to European security and stability than the balance of conventional weapons. Moreover, they regard Russia's refusal to abandon all its military bases in Georgia and Moldova not only as a violation of its 1999 Istanbul commitments but, more ominously, as proof of its continuing "imperialist" mindset. If Europe is to be made safe for peace and democracy, then this attitude and the policies flowing from it have to be opposed. Other

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61 Statement by the then defence minister Sergei Ivanov, cited in: *The Guardian*, Big rise in Russian military spending raises fears of new challenge to west, 9 February 2007.

62 Cf. Wolfgang Zellner, Will the "Cornerstone of European Security" Come Crashing Down? On the Current Crisis of the (Adapted) CFE Treaty, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2007*, Baden-Baden 2008, pp. 25-35.

EU states at first rejected this policy of strength and highlighted the negative consequences for European security and stability of the West's failure to ratify what the OSCE Charter for European Security calls "a cornerstone of European security". Some countries, such as Germany, went further. Identifying with a co-operative security philosophy that seeks to achieve peace by engaging with "the other" rather than placing pressure on it, they invested the CFE Treaty with additional symbolic value. Its importance, the argument went, could not be reduced to its military stipulations. In addition, it derived from the fact that it was a major *acquis politique* of pan-European security co-operation.[63] These different threat assessments notwithstanding, at the Prague NATO summit in 2002, the Europeans joined the USA and Canada in making the ratification of the new treaty conditional on Russia's pullout from Moldova and Georgia. This has remained official policy ever since.

As to Russia, it argues that it has complied with its Istanbul commitments and subsequent bilateral accords with Georgia, most recently by closing down its bases at Akhalkalaki (June 2007) and Batumi (November 2007). In its view, neither its peacekeepers in Moldova nor its troops in the two de factos – South Ossetia and Abkhazia – violate any agreements. Regarding itself as complying with its obligations, Moscow attributes more sinister motives to Western policy. Two threats are highlighted in its security discourse. First, the linkage between the CFE Treaty and Russian (peacekeeping) forces is seen as a confrontational policy that seeks to further marginalize Russia's role in the RSC and to de-legitimize its special interest in post-Soviet space. In this view, the policy is part and parcel of a neo-containment policy that aims at building European security at the expense of Russia through measures such as NATO enlargement and missile defence. Second, the policy of a number of alliance members (the Baltic states and Slovenia) not to sign up to the treaty before it comes into force, as well as NATO's refusal to renegotiate certain technical stipulations, are characterized by Moscow as unfair. They are regarded as further tipping the scales of the European balance of power and influence in favour of the EU, NATO, and the USA.

To summarize our survey of the evolving pattern of amity-enmity between the EU and Russia, the number of issue-areas in which at least one side constructs the mutual relationship in terms of a security dilemma – where measures that enhance one actor's security diminish that of the other – has been increasing. So far these security dilemmas are not seen by either side as engendering existential threats. Rather, the threat constructions, which display different levels of intensity, centre on questions of identity and second-order security, political and economic goals.[64] The injection of American security interests into the RSC as well as the global considerations of the region-based actors – the foreign policy ambition of the EU to be a global force

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63   Cf. ibid, p. 30.
64   In the foreseeable future, only missile defence has the potential to become securitized as an existential threat.

for good and Russia's ambition to replace American political-military uni-polarity by a multipolar international system – play a role in this process. However, regional dynamics are a crucial factor in fuelling the intensifying securitizations.

Trends and Scenarios

Our analysis suggests that the basic structure of the RSC is currently under-going a major transformation. The changes in material capabilities are real and likely to continue in the future. The EU remains as determined as ever to harden its foreign and security policy by developing its military and civilian capacity to carry out out-of-area peacemaking and peacebuilding tasks. As to Russia, it can bank on forecasts that predict a return to high energy prices once the world economy has recovered from the doldrums into which it was plunged by the American sub-prime crisis. A booming petro-economy will enable it to rebuild the material foundations of its great-power identity. The changes in the pattern of amity-enmity are equally real. The well publicized disagreements between European and Russian leaders in recent years are not reducible to misperceptions. They are deeply rooted in the dominant discur-sive structures of the respective polities – their clashing securitizations and the divergent collective identities and security philosophies underpinning them.

The EU and Russia are projecting self-definitions that are at odds with one another. Notions such "common European house" or "strategic partner-ship" have failed to create an overarching collective identity that could limit negative security dynamics. The EU defines itself as a post-modern norma-tive or ethical power that is committed to the promotion of universal values such as democracy and human rights. From Brussels' perspective, Russia is stuck in the past, holding fast to the anachronistic principles of *realpolitik* – balance of power, spheres of influence, non-interference in domestic affairs, and so forth. Hence, the EU conceives of its relationship with Moscow in de-velopmental terms. Understanding itself as the acknowledged repository and arbitrator of what counts as proper governance (domestic and international),[65] Brussels has been seeking to Europeanize Russia through means such as the Four Common Spaces.

Conversely, Russia sees its relationship with the EU in spatial terms. Its self-understanding is that of a traditional great power. More recently, the idea of sovereign democracy, which implies resistance to interference by outsiders in domestic governance affairs, has been crafted on to this historical Russian self-image. Under Putin, foreign policy has come to embody an anti-universalistic agenda that posits the territorial confinement of the seemingly

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65   Cf. William Walters, The Frontiers of the European Union: A Geostrategic Perspective, in: *Geopolitics* 3/2004, p. 688.

self-evident political truths proclaimed by the EU. Geopolitics and the defence of national interests rather than the transformation into a post-modern actor and the induction into an EU-centred universal community of values are at the core of Russia's foreign policy credo. Peace and stability in Europe are to be secured through a strategic alliance between Russia and the EU that is based on equality, balance, moderation, restraint, and the recognition of the legitimate interests and "possessions" of the other.

While media speculations and public statements about the imminent beginning of a new Cold War, which reached a new pitch of intensity in the aftermath of the war between Russia and Georgia, are exaggerated, our analysis indicates that this is a risk. There are only two realistic scenarios for the future of the RSC. First, if current structural trends are allowed to unfold, Europe returns to a more traditional pattern of power-based rivalry. Second, the trend is stopped or reversed. This can only be achieved by intervening in the social structure of the RSC. Its polarization around the EU and Russia is likely to continue in the absence of any serious political or resource constraints that would prevent either side from further building up its regional power projection capabilities. The structural basis for an intervention into the evolving pattern of amity-enmity is the existence of security discourses in both the EU and Russia that highlight common threats and advocate co-operative responses. We mapped these countervailing narratives but space constraints do not allow us to present this analysis here. Instead, we will allude to these converging securitizations in the next and final section.

The OSCE: Back to the Future?

In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the OSCE became the leading pan-European institutional expression of the new Western security project. It emphasized threats to human security and democratic peace. In doing so, it transformed itself from an institution that guaranteed established geopolitical lines of influence, while at the same time promoting peace and justice through the restraining of political and ideological rivalries, into an institution that is actively engaged in de-legitimizing territorial boundaries according to a particular post-Westphalian vision of political truth centred on liberal claims. As Russia unexpectedly failed to fully espouse the European Union's understanding of what constitutes good political order, and, more importantly, began to actively oppose the policies flowing from it, the OSCE could not but enter into a crisis (political, budgetary, etc.).[66] Where does this leave the Organization?

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66   Additional factors such as EU and NATO expansion further aggravated the crisis. Recent moves to strengthen the first and second dimensions of the OSCE and to expand its third dimension beyond the traditional issues of human rights and democracy have been important as they show the capacity of the Organization to adapt to evolving circumstances. But

We do not wish to enter into the complex discussions that have been on-going for some time about solutions to the crisis of the OSCE. Many sensible things have been said about this issue by people better suited to do so than we.[67] Hence, we limit ourselves to identifying one conclusion that follows from our analysis. The last decade has shown that the ability of the OSCE to socialize – or bully – Russia into abandoning old-fashioned geopolitical imperialism and becoming a card-carrying member of the de-territorialized Empire of "right and peace" is rather limited.[68] As the relationship between the EU and Russia is increasingly becoming securitized by both sides, the role of the OSCE as chief promoter of the Western security project in the RSC is becoming incompatible with its role as promoter of co-operation, security, and stability. To us this incompatibility suggests, to paraphrase John Mearsheimer,[69] the need for the OSCE to partially go back to the future – to give renewed emphasis to genuine diplomacy and put strict limitations on political proselytizing (or the anti-diplomacy of the self-diffusion of the liberal West).

Its Cold War history and its continuing membership diversity put the OSCE in a better position to adopt a reflexive attitude towards its own security practices than other, more homogenous institutions such as the CIS, NATO, and the EU.[70] The divergent collective identities and security philosophies brought together under the umbrella of the OSCE do not have to be seen as a challenge to be overcome through normalization around the standards of the majority. A more constructive approach may be to consider the existing diversity as an opportunity to learn to accommodate and live with multiple truths about and understandings of European security. Such self-reflexivity is likely to require a strong dose of traditional geopolitical scepticism, which highlights the threats to peace and security of policies that privilege universalist ideological claims over compromise and restraint. As Henry Kissinger observed some time ago, "no power will submit to a settlement, however well-balanced and however 'secure', which seems totally to deny its vision of itself".[71] Of course, the travails besetting the OSCE are too complex for any simple solution to work. Yet, based on our analysis above, it

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they have not modified the core security philosophy of the OSCE, which remains as committed to a particular liberal vision of international order as ever.

67 For an overview of the debate, see Heinrich Schneider, Long on Promise – Short on Impact: The OSCE Reform Initiative 2004-2005 and Its Results, in: Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), *OSCE Yearbook 2006*, Baden-Baden 2007, pp. 35-57.

68 Cf. Michael Hardt/Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, MA, 2003, p. 15.

69 Cf. John Mearsheimer, Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War, in: *International Security* 1/1990, pp. 5-56.

70 This said, there are a number of other features of the OSCE that hold it back from adopting a more reflexive attitude towards its liberal security project. The EU, together with North America, dominates the OSCE politically and ideologically. Moreover, its pronouncedly intergovernmental nature offers very limited room for autonomous organizational leadership. Whether the structural trend towards conflict in the RSC that we identified will push the OSCE towards overcoming its own limits remains to be seen.

71 Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-22*, Boston, 1973, p. 146.

seems to us that any "realistic" proposal aimed at re-energizing the Organization needs to take seriously the idea that the best way forward may be a return to the virtues that made it a successful Cold War institution. The CSCE was an outstanding example of a diplomatic body that facilitates political dialogue in which each participant refrains from reducing the others to figures of the self. Instead of seeking to establish consensus around an extensive list of supposedly shared norms and standards, a process which inevitably delegitimizes genuine "otherness", the CSCE provided a *modus vivendi* that allowed for the peaceful mediation of the differences flowing from the divergent political identities and interests of its members.[72]

But a reformed OSCE can be more than yesterday's CSCE. The Organization has established its credentials as an innovative, albeit frequently controversial securitizing agent. To help stop or reverse the movement of the RSC towards a conflict formation, the OSCE has to limit the role of its operational bodies as multipliers of Western securitizations. At the same time, it has to put significantly more effort than it already does into constructing pan-European securitizations that creatively articulate mutual, rather than conflictual, security concerns of its participating States. A number of security problems lend themselves to the reinforcement of positive security dynamics. Important areas in which the securitizations of the EU and Russia (partly) converge include irregular migration (risk to social and economic values, notably cultural identity, social integration, access to medical treatment, housing, etc.); organized crime (shared concerns about trafficking in narcotics, weapons, and human beings, as well as corruption and money laundering); terrorism (in the wake of 9/11, the discourses on the nature of the threat and its sources partly converged); and environmental security (convergence of risk perceptions around issues such as nuclear safety, environmental terrorism, leaking oil pipelines).

In these and other fields, the OSCE is already active. Yet, to enhance its impact on the pattern of amity-enmity in the RSC, the Organization has to prioritize these "bridging" discourses and supportive non-discursive practices such as capacity-building projects. Conversely, as far as conflictual security problems are concerned – say, the frozen conflict in Moldova and the de factos South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which are at the centre of a thick web of controversial securitizations that include national security, great power status, conventional arms control, human rights, and democracy – the OSCE's function as an arena for diplomatic dialogue and compromise has to take precedence over its role as securitizer. Failure to do so is only likely to speed up Europe's return to a competitive security order.

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72 Our recommendation is a radicalized version of the proposal made by the Panel of Eminent Persons to strengthen the political dialogue among OSCE members. The Panel, however, was unwilling to concede that the success of such a dialogue depends on the readiness of the Organization to limit its aspirations to normative power, which consists in the desire to set standards of appropriate behaviour across OSCE space in line with Western ideology and to contribute to their implementation.