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Do We Need a New European Security Culture? Why the Best of Détente Is Yet to Come

It is almost two decades since the division of Europe into two antagonistic power blocs was consigned to history. However, the debate over a new European security order – one that builds on the experiences of the past and masters the challenges of the future – is ongoing. How has the West conceived of relations between itself and its former Cold War opponent in the post-confrontational era? The signals that Russia received were often unclear, ambiguous, and contradictory. Let us take an example. No longer "us against you", no longer "you against us" but "all of us together on the same side" – that was said to be the new philosophy of the new NATO. This was the catchy message that then US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright brought to Russia's President Boris Yeltsin on her first visit in February 1997.[1] The language is reminiscent of the soaring rhetoric from the earliest days of the post-Cold War era, when talk was of an end to enmity, the end of the division of Europe, and equal security in a new age of peace.

All together on the same side? This would eliminate the justification for the continuing existence of a military alliance, one of whose characteristic features is to ascribe members and non-members alike their places on one side or the other. It certainly would not require the expansion of the alliance, the shifting of boundary posts and checkpoints to the east, and the drawing of a new dividing line – thus confirming that one already exists – between insiders and outsiders. Even the first round of NATO enlargement would have been superfluous. Yet it was this newly adopted Western plan that Washington's emissary sought to make palatable to her hosts in Moscow by means of this formula of a new togetherness.

Under all three Russian presidents – Yeltsin, Putin, and Medvedev – the discomfort at the way Russian concerns were ignored in the reshaping of the European security order has pervaded official statements. Until Vladimir Putin's sharp change of tone at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007, the general public in the West was almost entirely unaware of this complaint. In the meantime, it has managed to struggle onto the diplomatic agenda. On the table is Dmitri Medvedev's proposal of a legally binding security treaty, which is intended to lay the foundations of a reformed European security architecture. At their meeting of 28 June 2009, the OSCE foreign ministers agreed to launch a "structured dialogue" among the participating

1 Cf. Steven Erlanger, Moscow Still Negative to NATO, in: *International Herald Tribune*, 22 February 1997, p. 1.

States to determine the content and modalities of this discussion, formalized as the "Corfu Process".[2]

What is the substance of the Russian complaints? Are they justified? How can they be addressed? This contribution considers these questions in four stages. An overview of the development of the Russian position in the contemporary security environment in Europe is followed by a look at the two groups of problems that need to be solved most urgently from the Russian point of view: how to deal with new applications for NATO membership, and American plans for the deployment of components of a global missile defence system on the territory of its European allies. The fourth section contains our conclusions. They are based not on their convenience for Western interests or Russia's political goals, but rather on the need for stability in the field of security in Europe.

Partnership as Domination?

The briefest answer to the question of what changed in Europe in 1989 would be: the Soviet Union. Yet this would be unfair to the democratic nature of the upheavals that took place in Central and South-eastern Europe. Those events, first in Warsaw and Budapest, and then in Berlin, Sofia, Prague, and Bucharest, were initiated not by governments but by the people. That is how they differed from Gorbachev's perestroika. The end result was the total internal revolutionizing of the belt of former Soviet satellite states. In the history of Europe, not even wars have brought about such dramatic transformations with as much rapidity as the peaceful auto-emancipation of the six countries that fell under Moscow's control at the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, it was the change in the attitude of the Soviet Union that determined the moment when a new chapter in international politics was opened. Poland and Hungary's gradual liberalization represented the first time in the postwar period that such developments had not been met by Soviet countermeasures. Only this made the Hungarian reformers' decision to reject the role of stooge for those of its allies that were unwilling to embrace reform and grant the refugees from East Germany the right to outward travel a calculable risk. This opened the floodgates, triggering a chain reaction of upheavals in the four remaining Warsaw Pact countries.

The new thinking in Moscow thus acted as a midwife to the birth of the new Europe. By tolerating the regime changes and consequentially accepting the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), the powers that be in the Kremlin gave up their monopoly on governance over a hundred million *de facto* subjects and a million square kilometres of strategic territory that they had tenaciously held on to for decades. No sooner was this com-

2 *Corfu Informal Meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the Future of European Security*, Chair's Concluding Statement to the Press, 28 June 2009, points 7 and 8.

plete, there followed the next phase in the decline of Soviet power. The Soviet Union itself split into its fifteen constituent republics. The population of the state governed by Moscow thus shrank from 270 to 150 million. It ceased to be the militant colossus that backward-looking commentators continue to like to paint it as. At the founding of the Russian Federation, a sixth of Russians – nearly 25 million people – were living outside the borders of the new state. The number of non-ethnic Russians who became Russian citizens was nearly as high. Wherever armed conflicts have broken out in Europe since the end of the Cold War, nationalism, separatism, and territorial revisionism have been among the primary causes. The collapse of Yugoslavia alone cost 150,000 lives. Compared to that, the Moscow centre of gravity mastered its disintegration process with remarkable prudence.

There was no good reason to retain the image of Moscow as the enemy superpower. The agenda should have been to establish a security order that would give every state the same duties, while excluding none from equal participation. The discrepancy between the grand rhetoric of transformation and the small change it actually produced in reality had blocked the way. A good while after the dawn of the new era, the Eastern European states were all equally willing to enter into new commitments in the name of partnership and co-operation. The offer the West made to them and labelled with these words was at heart an attempt to set in stone the asymmetrical distribution of power of the current historical moment. For all the assurances that a peaceful European future must not exclude Russia, the largest country on the continent in terms of population and territory could not secure an equal place in the system of European security. Moscow failed in its attempts to oppose this development, whether, depending on one's perspective, one labels this the "opening", "enlargement", or "expansion" of NATO. It even failed to gain assurances that NATO would not encroach beyond the former western border of the Soviet Union. Ten years ago, NATO had 16 members. Following the enlargement waves of 1999, 2004, and 2008, it now has 28. Six of them are former Soviet allies, and three used to be constituent republics of the USSR. When asked why the new members were rushing to join a military alliance, their representatives answer that it was for the same reason that the old members remained part of the alliance: concern for their security. Other countries, whose economic power would make them highly welcome in Brussels – Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Austria, and Switzerland – clearly do not share this concern. They have chosen neutrality without fearing for their security.

As a consolation for its acceptance of NATO enlargement, Moscow received a document that was sealed with much ceremony – the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 27 May 1997. This marginally raised Russia's official status above those of other participants in the alliance's partnership programmes. However, the desire to effectively head off potential side effects of NATO enlargement that Russia saw as particularly damaging to its security interests, remained unfulfilled. For instance, while the four-plus-two treaty of Septem-

ber 1990, which affirmed the reunification of Germany in international law, prohibited the permanent stationing of foreign troops and the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Eastern part of Germany, i.e. on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic, further eastwards, NATO forces armed with conventional or nuclear weapons could be stationed on Polish territory with Warsaw's agreement, as Poland is not subject to any restrictions of its military sovereignty. NATO has merely made assurances that it will not make use of its deployment options in the future. This political declaration of intention has no legally binding force and can be revised if NATO's assessment of the situation changes. It establishes neither a Western obligation to adhere to its assurance, nor a Russian right to insist upon its being adhered to.

The distinction in the rules applying to eastern Germany and Poland (together with all the other new members of NATO) symbolizes two things: The decay of Russian power under Yeltsin, and the Western determination to use this to its own advantage. The Western understanding of Russia's role in European security policy can be summed up as: "co-operation yes – codetermination no". With these words, NATO defence ministers explained the intention that had already guided them at the meeting they called in Williamsburg, Virginia, in the autumn of 1995, where they determined the modalities for the military monitoring of the peace agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina that was to be signed at Dayton a month later.[3] After putting up a tenacious struggle, the Russian leadership made do with a contingent of troops in NATO's multinational implementation force. They did not succeed in securing their involvement at the command and control level. Russian soldiers thus operated under NATO command on a peacekeeping mission over the organization of which the Russian government had no influence. Only three years later, during the preparations for the war against Serbia over Kosovo, NATO's need to pursue political co-ordination with Russia had entirely evaporated.

Among the factors conditioning Moscow's foreign policy are the political and social transformation of post-Soviet Russia and the contrasting records of the first two presidents. The restructuring of the economy during the turbulent 1990s, which even Western economists now consider as predatory privatization, proceeded in a fashion that was anything but controlled – not least as a result of the plundering of the state coffers. During Yeltsin's second term of office, the country was heavily indebted and sometimes unable to make repayments. It was no longer possible to service foreign loans and repayment moratoriums were necessary to bridge the gaps. In the eyes of most Russians, Putin put the crumbling house in order again. In Yeltsin's last year in office (1999), inflation was running at 85 per cent, while by Putin's last

3 Cf. Moskau soll an der militärischen Sicherung des Friedens in Bosnien beteiligt werden – jedoch nicht mitentscheiden [Moscow to take part in the military operation to secure the peace in Bosnia – but not to have a say in decision making], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7 October 1995, p. 2.

year as president (2007), it had fallen to eight per cent. The proportion of Russians living below the poverty line fell from 33 to 14 per cent. Average income increased fivefold. The market value of Russian stocks rose by a factor of twenty. The robust methods used, for instance in the political disempowerment of the oligarchs, failed to impair Putin's popularity at home. Foreign criticism of authoritarianism in his "guided democracy" was countered with references to his consistently high approval ratings among the population, something that the political leadership of no Western democracy enjoyed. When he left office, Russia was free of debt. It has more than half a trillion dollars in foreign currency reserves. It is again attracting an ever increasing number of foreign investors. And it possesses energy reserves that the world is keen to get its hands on.

Should it come as a surprise if domestic consolidation has an effect on foreign policy? It is not as if those who previously held the reins of power in Moscow were in the habit of uncomplainingly accepting Western affronts. NATO's eastward expansion, as a furious Boris Yeltsin put it in 1995, would "fan the flames of war throughout Europe".[4] No one took him seriously, especially since it would have been unfitting for one so reliant on the intravenous drip of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to act up. When you have to hold out your hand, it is hard to make a fist. It took his successor to cast off the role of the powerless supplicant. This accounts in large measure for the change of style with which Russia's representatives raise their – far from original– complaints on this matter today.

The Caucasus War: A Case Study

The place where the sinister sentence on the flames of war was to prove true was the Georgian province of South Ossetia. On 8 August 2008, after a preliminary artillery bombardment, Georgian forces entered South Ossetian territory and took the capital Tskhinvali. They were repulsed by Russian troops. For the first time since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, Moscow resorted to the use of military force beyond its own borders. How many times had Westerns states intervened militarily in conflict theatres during the same period? In the blink of an eye, a "frozen" regional conflict escalated into a major international crisis. A single interpretation became dominant in the Western media, which was largely free of nuance and shades of grey: The Kremlin was in the dock. Little or nothing was reported on the causes and goals of Russia's military presence in South Ossetia. A ceasefire had brought the war between the separatist province and the central Georgian state to an end on 24 June 1992. The agreement, signed by the presidents of

4 Jelzin: Ost-Erweiterung der Nato wird in ganz Europa die Flamme des Krieges entfachen [Yeltsin: NATO's Eastward Expansion Will Fan the Flames of War throughout Europe], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 September 1995, p. 1.

Russia and Georgia and worked out in detail in a series of memoranda, in whose framing the OSCE Mission to Georgia was involved, established not only a control commission, on which the OSCE was also represented, but also multinational ceasefire monitoring troops under Russia's overall command. Their task was to ensure that the ceasefire was observed. The mandate situation was the same in the summer of 2008. How would NATO have reacted if Serbian soldiers had attacked Kosovo to make themselves the masters of Pristina once again?

An American observer, very sympathetic to Georgian aspirations, compared the process in the run-up to the war in the Caucasus a "surrealist novel".[5] He is referring to the problematic decision on Georgia and Ukraine of the Bucharest NATO Summit of 3 April 2008. When the meeting began, the participants were still in disagreement over the Membership Action Plan (MAP) that would prepare the way for these two neighbours of Russia to join NATO, which Moscow vehemently opposed. While Washington called for MAP invitations to be issued immediately, the bulk of Western European governments considered this to be premature. A hastily improvised crisis conclave was convened to try find a way out of this dilemma, and reached a curious conclusion: "We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO," was the laconic formula used by the declaration,[6] one that "went far beyond what NATO had ever wanted to do".[7] Seconded by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Georgia's President Mikheil Saakashvili gave every impression of being convinced that he had achieved more than he could have hoped for: instead of a conditional offer, a "blank check" promise of accession. This is without precedent in the history of NATO. This irresponsible decision must have inspired the thirst for action of the hardliners in Tbilisi. Did not a quasi-ally also have a moral right to military assistance? Five days after the outbreak of war in the Caucasus, the NATO ambassadors discussed, on Georgia's request, whether to send the NATO Response Force (NRF). As only a minority was in favour, no decision was reached. How close NATO came to a military confrontation with Russia is something future historians will have to work out.

But this was not the end of things. The strongest anti-Russian tones are currently emanating from the Central and Eastern European NATO states. In mid-July 2009, 22 former heads of state and government, ministers, and diplomats announced in an open letter to the Obama administration that they were "deeply disturbed to see the Atlantic alliance stand by" during the war between Russia and Georgia, and asked whether the Western alliance was

5 Cf. Ronald Asmus, Riss zwischen Washington und Berlin [Schism between Berlin and Washington], in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 April 2008, p. 10.

6 NATO, *Bucharest Summit Declaration – Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008*, Section 23.

7 Asmus, cited above (Note 5).

still willing and able to come to their countries' support in times of crisis.[8] Seven of the signatories were former presidents, the most prominent being Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa. In their view, Russia today is "a revisionist power".[9] It "uses overt and covert means of economic warfare, ranging from energy blockades and politically motivated investments to bribery and media manipulation in order to advance its interests and to challenge the transatlantic orientation of Central and Eastern Europe".[10] The letter, which also had the support of Poland's current President, Lech Kaczyński, called upon the government in Washington to renew its commitment to Europe. Among other things, it proposed:

- to bring about a renaissance of NATO, based on the core function of Article 5, that would put in place the hitherto neglected issue of defence planning for the new members, including provisions to station troops and equipment in the region to be available in case of crisis;
- to return to the old NATO practice where alliance members co-ordinate their position before entering into discussions with Moscow in the NATO-Russia Council;
- to decide on the future of the planned missile defence programme in Poland and the Czech Republic "as allies", i.e. to reject unfounded Russian objections and not to involve Russia too deeply.

In relation to the level of agreement already reached on relations between NATO and Russia, the Open Letter represents an entirely revisionist programme. It calls for the revocation of the format that has been taken by the NATO-Russia Council since May 2002. That was when, to underline "the principle that the security of all states in the Euro-Atlantic community is indivisible" the alliance offered to "work as equal partners" in the future and to give the "qualitatively new relationship" expression by means of consultations "at twenty"[11] (instead of as 19 plus 1, or, as the Russians saw it, 19 against 1). Formal preparatory meetings involving all the alliance members were abolished.

The Open Letter also calls for the revision of NATO's declaration of intention that it would not seek a permanent military presence in the new member states.[12] Within the alliance, pressure in this regard has come

8 An Open Letter to the Obama Administration from Central and Eastern Europe, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 July 2009, at: http://wyborcza.pl/1,75477,6825987,An_Open_Letter_to_the_Obama_Administration_from_Central.html.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 *NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality. Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation*, Rome, 28 May 2002, p. 1.
12 "NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent

particularly from Poland and the Baltic states. In February 2009, the British defence secretary, John Hutton, sought to take the heat out of the debate by proposing the creation of a "solidarity force" of up to 3,000 troops. NATO needs to consider whether it wishes to transform its eastern border from a legal and political frontier into a militarily fortified front line. As during the Cold War, NATO and Russian troops would again be posted directly opposite and within eyeshot of each other. Just how this would increase security is hard to see. The seeds of a NATO advance presence already exist: On joining NATO, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were integrated into the NATO air defence system. Fighter aircraft supplied on a rotation basis by Western alliance states have since patrolled the Baltic skies, armed, loaded, and provided with orders that ultimately provide for the use of deadly force. Over Lithuania, the flight paths of these aircraft cross the air corridor that connects Russia with its Kaliningrad exclave. The risk of "technical" incidents is obvious. It can also be questioned whether, since joining NATO, the Baltic states require air defence that they apparently did not need before 2004.

Missile Defence: A Case Study

Finally, the authors of the Open Letter also take a stance on missile defence plans that contradicts prior NATO decisions. On this point, the Western voluntary commitment is formulated in very clear terms. The NATO-Russia Founding Act states that "the member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear disposition or nuclear policy – and do not foresee any future need to do so."[13] The missiles the US government under George W. Bush wanted to deploy in Poland were not tipped with nuclear warheads but carried conventional payloads. Thus they would not have affected the ban on deployment. However, they would have fundamentally altered both nuclear policy and nuclear disposition, i.e. the resources needed to implement a changed nuclear policy.

Washington has always denied that the expansion of American missile defence to Europe is a threat to Russia's security. This view is based on two arguments. One is to stress the modest scale of the planned European site. The US-Polish negotiations concerned a single silo field for up to ten interceptor missiles. The size restriction was intended to underline the plan's political intentions. The fact that the proposed system is entirely unsuited to counter a major offensive with weapons of mass destruction of the kind that could only be launched by one of the major nuclear powers seemed to sup-

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stationing of substantial combat forces." *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*, Paris, 27 May 1997, Section IV.

13 Ibid.

port the declared goal of defending against attacks involving a limited number of missiles from countries with a less developed carrier capacity, i.e. from so-called rogue states. Experts estimate that between 100 and 150 anti-ballistic missiles would be necessary to reduce Russia's retaliatory capability. To what extent may that argument dispel Russian concerns? While the programme targeted a risk that is believed to be low, it was nonetheless designed to provide blanket coverage, i.e. to protect the entire territory of the USA. The logic of this goal is to increase one's own defensive capabilities as those of one's potential opponents grow. Forecasts of the threats that suspect regimes may pose with ballistic missiles have so far proved greatly exaggerated. Yet since it already seemed advisable yesterday to American policy makers to deploy missiles that did not yet function properly to counter rockets that do not exist, it is hard to foresee what conclusions they may draw tomorrow. If an increase in the number of missiles stationed is ruled out in the immediate future, this still doesn't answer the question of what will happen after that. Arms programmes in which billions are invested tend to grow. Where there are ten missiles at first, space will be found for hundreds. And the strategic role of a technology is never given but is always subject to political decision-making.

This is where the second argument that was meant to rebut Moscow's reservations at the plans to deploy on Polish and Czech territory came in: From the planned positions, defence against Russian missiles is claimed to be physically impossible. Nor are there many experts who dispute this assumption. US critics of the project such as Theodore A. Postol from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology argue, however, that this was only true as long as the technical capabilities of the components that were to be installed were as limited in fact as in the descriptions provided by the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). If they are changed, the radius of effectiveness of the system also changes, with the consequence that several hundred missiles could be located and destroyed simultaneously.[14]Alongside combating terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missile defence also belongs to the agreed agenda of the NATO-Russia Council. The potential for co-operation in this area has so far been underexploited. Moscow has proposed using the early warning radars in Qabala in Azerbaijan and Armavir in Russia. As a consequence of the curvature of the earth, these sites would not be capable of detecting missiles fired from Russian silos. Washington has not responded to this offer.

Already in the first year of the Bush administration, the US Department of Defense defined the four overarching goals of its new missile defence

14 Cf. George N. Lewis/Theodore A. Postol, European Missile Defense: The Technological Base of Russian Concerns, in: *Arms Control Today*, October 2007, p. 14.

policy, and these were regularly reiterated by representatives of the administration.[15] Accordingly, the aim of missile defence is to:

- assure allies that missiles cannot be used to blackmail the US;
- dissuade potential enemies from investing in missile technologies;
- deter missile attacks by reducing the likelihood of success; and
- defeat missile attacks in the event that deterrence fails.

Who is the potential adversary, the aggressor who may use missiles to attack the USA? There is no reference to "rogue states". The message is kept general enough to be applicable to no particular addressee, and therefore to apply to any that has the ability to deploy missile technologies. The explosive element in this list of goals is the allusion to the options of reducing and defeating. The strategic balance of deterrence, both between the US and the Soviet Union and later between the USA and Russia, rested on mutual second-strike capability (deterrence by punishment). It was expressly not based on the mutual ability to defend against a nuclear attack (deterrence by denial). The missile defence doctrine of the Bush administration reinterpreted the classical deterrence principle in such a way that it must have been hard for Moscow not to see the creation of a missile defence shield intended to protect the entire territory of the USA as a measure aimed against Russia.

To all appearances, Moscow's brusque rejection of America's plans was no fleeting propaganda manoeuvre and cannot be assuaged by reiterations of former declarations of intent. It is up to the Russian leadership itself to decide whether it will enter into the arms race that it predicted would be unavoidable. In the US missile defence programme as conceived by the Bush administration, it could certainly find reason enough to do so. As it stands, the programme states no definite goals, but is designed for continual expansion. It need not stop with the stationing of a small number of interceptor rockets in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. If, in the long term, the USA intends to barricade itself behind a dense protective shield in order to negate the effectiveness of Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles as a strategic deterrent, passive toleration would not be Moscow's only option. Its reaction need not even be a defensive programme costing billions. The less expensive alternative would be to modernize and increase the number of existing offensive weapons with the aim of neutralizing the US missile defence system through sheer force of numbers. The main losers in this would be the Europeans. If no agreement is reached in the US-Russian missile defence dispute, we are likely to see a further erosion of regional arms-control regimes (CFE, INF, Open Skies) that have long been considered the cornerstones of security stability in Europe.

15 Here paraphrased by Peter C.W. Flory, in: *Testimony of Peter C.W. Flory, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Strategic Forces Subcommittee*, 4 April 2006.

On 17 September 2009, President Obama announced that he was reversing his predecessor's plans for the deployment of missile defence components in Poland and the Czech Republic. He explained this with reference to new insights regarding the state of Iranian missile programmes. While the Islamic Republic was making progress in the development of short-range missiles, work on medium- and long-range ballistic delivery systems was not proceeding as rapidly as had been feared. Obama explained that the current danger from short-range weapons could be met effectively and economically by means of existing sea-launched interceptor missiles. There was therefore no need to have recourse to the planned deployment sites in the two Central-Eastern European countries. Without question, Obama's decision removed a good deal of heat from the missile defence controversy. However, there can still be no talk of a political reconciliation. Russian government representatives complain that they have been left in the dark as to whether they should consider the decisions of the Bush administration to have been cancelled or merely put on ice. Nor have they been given sufficient details of the new American missile defence plans. All that seems certain is that the Obama administration is not considering a return to the comprehensive Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty regime of 1972, which forbade the deployment of ABM launchers, interceptor missiles, and radars for country-wide protection, and from which the US withdrew in 2001.

Where Now for European Security?

A new security architecture for Europe? With all due respect, the opportunity has been squandered. Certainly, of the security institutions in existence at the end of the Cold War, it was the CSCE that came closest to having a pan-European role. All the states of the region belong to it. It does not discriminate against anyone, and all the powers responsible for peace and security in Europe have signed up to its rules, standards, and policies. Although, like NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, it was also a product of the Cold War, it was the forum that brought both camps in that conflict together rather than setting them against each other. It stands for a co-operative approach to security problems and embodies the culture of security dialogue across the borders of nation states and alliances. Although the CSCE (since 1995 the OSCE) continued to perform exemplary small-scale work, it had never had anything to do with the "grand politics" of European security. It was told it was too weak for that. But this weakness is not congenital, but rather the consequence of the political decision, taken in the aftermath of the historical break of 1989/90, not to grant it the leading role in a new European security architecture nor to furnish it with the necessary powers and instruments to perform such a task. In the summer of 1991, with the outbreak of the civil war in Yugoslavia, the pan-European system capitulated in the face

of its first real test. It left crisis management to the European Community under the gentle auspices of the United Nations. The leading role was then gradually taken over by NATO. "At the CSCE Summit in Budapest in December 1994, the Western representatives left their Russian equivalents in no doubt that NATO would be the foundation of the new European security architecture and not the CSCE/OSCE, in which Russia is an equal participant."[16] This is what happened and how things have remained.

It would be unhistorical to attempt to undo this wrong turn. There is no reset button that can turn the calendar back twenty years. The static concept of a "new security architecture" implies the reconstruction of a building from the foundations. That is not realistic. NATO will neither dissolve nor will it release its recently acquired members to join a different security order. And which could they join? What is needed is more a change of political perspective, expressed in terms of shifts in objectives, criteria, and patterns of behaviour. This is only appropriate in a field as sensitive as security policy. The Western world, from Washington via Paris and London to Bonn, understood this a good deal better four decades ago. During the period of détente, they transformed a confrontational style of pursuing their conflict into a co-operative one. A policy is confrontational when one side makes use of the instruments of power it possesses unilaterally to achieve its goals against the interests of its opponent. Co-operative conflict policy seeks to achieve its goals by means of reconciling interests, compromise, and agreement. Back then, all the participants benefited from the increase in security gained as a result of threat reduction and the relief of tension. At its heart, détente was security policy or, to put it another way, a more productive form of security culture. Why should something that paid off in the age of system conflict bear no fruit today, under far better conditions?

In a system of states whose members do not (or no longer) see each other as enemies, the juxtaposition of equal security for all and privileged security with the protection of an alliance and the solidarity clause for some creates an anachronism. Alliances of collective self-defence require an environment that supports the existence of alliances, and that includes the existence of military opponent. As long as NATO continues to exist, there will be an "inside" and an "outside", even if the border between them may shift. If practically every state may join at some point in time, with just a single exception, the outsider will have the role of opponent imposed upon him whatever he does or does not do. This systemic defect cannot be removed; it can at best be mitigated. Mitigation can be achieved by stopping NATO's expansion, its ongoing advance towards Russia's borders, especially since the only states left that aspire to join have a tendency to play with fire. What is uncontroversial is this: Every country has the right to choose whether to belong to a military alliance or not. This is a principle to which Russia has also given

16 Johannes Varwick, *Die NATO*, Munich 2008, p. 107 (authors' translation).

its assent many times. It is, however, up to the members to examine whether a given applicant promotes the principles of the alliance and contributes to common security. This is demanded by Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which also states that the decision must be unanimous. If the vote on the readiness for membership of a candidate and the security value of their membership are negative, the application is to be rejected. The enlargement-sceptical NATO countries overlooked this in Bucharest and felt the negative effects immediately. The government of Georgia failed to prove that it deserved the seal of approval as a responsible ally-to-be.

In a weaker form, this verdict can also be passed upon the other candidate country, Ukraine. The gas crises in the winters of 2006 and 2009, the second of which also led to lasting power cuts in several European countries, were triggered by disagreements between Russia and Ukraine over prices and payment schedules. Just as in the Georgian war, those looking for the guilty party barely bothered to look beyond Moscow. This verdict ignores an essential fact. As everybody knows, the USSR and the Comecon common market belong to the past, their former members having left them of their own free will. Moscow no longer has a duty of care. Like internal markets, foreign trade is now also governed by free market principles. Written under Western inspiration, the screenplays of system transformation proclaim it to be so. What possible reason could Russia have to spend its own money on subsidizing the energy it exports to its neighbours? If this is made into a condition for the guarantee of a smooth transit process, it amounts to obstructive behaviour on the part of the transit country. Russia is the source of some 40 per cent of European gas imports, and 80 per cent of them pass through Ukrainian territory. All three – exporter, transporter, importer – are essentially in the same position. They depend upon their business processes taking place without complications as a matter of material self interest. At the same time, they all possess the means of exerting political pressure with which they can damage the other participants. It is the classic constellation that demonstrates the precept any rational politics must obey: It takes a co-operative attitude on the part of all concerned to enable both optimization and the fair distribution of benefits. And if the fashionable concept of energy security is taken at its word, these benefits are even matters of security policy.

The time is over in which the unipolar world view of the leading Western power could enforce tight constraints on the actions of its partners and allies. In many capitals, including some in Europe, there was a positive yearning to see the occupant of the White House change. Barack Obama has assumed office with a very different foreign policy programme. He seeks to gain trust for his country by forswearing the paternalism that his predecessor saw as his self-evident right. At his first official engagement in Moscow, Obama underlined this change in the US viewpoint: “In 2009, a great power does not show strength by dominating or demonizing other countries. The days when empires could treat sovereign states as pieces on a chess board are

over. As I said in Cairo, given our interdependence, any world order that tries to elevate one nation or one group of people over another will inevitably fail. The pursuit of power is no longer a zero-sum game – progress must be shared."[17] What does this mean for a European security culture that is conducive to peace?

The first consequence relates to the way in which security-relevant conflicts are dealt with. The codices to govern this do not need to be invented; they have existed for a long time. Unfortunately, there are no simple operating instructions that can provide contradiction-free answers to every question that arises. The famous Helsinki Decalogue on peaceful relations between states in Europe,[18] for example, indicates two – rather contradictory – means of solving an urgent problem. On the one hand, every state has the right to political independence and territorial integrity (Principle IV). On the other, the Decalogue demands observance of the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination (Principle VIII). The tension between these two foundational principles is obvious. By seceding from the state it is a part of, a population group necessarily infringes the latter's territorial integrity. Legal casuistry can mitigate the conflict of norms, but it cannot resolve it. What is to be done? It is necessary to apply a third principle: the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes (Principle V). The right to self-determination is genuine, but it is subordinate to the commitment to refrain from the use of force (Principle II). Anyone seeking to draw new borders and found new states is required to choose the path of political agreement. The reunification of Germany and the dissolution of the Soviet Union came about this way; the breakup of Yugoslavia and the cases of territorial secession in the South Caucasus did not. The most prominent secession conflicts in Europe at the moment concern Kosovo on the one hand, Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the other. In every case, both the direct participants in the conflict and the external mediators can be accused of a lack of willingness to compromise on a negotiated settlement that is acceptable to all parties. Even worse: Territorial integrity and self-determination have atrophied to become mere ciphers to be wielded interchangeably according to case and power position to disguise political partisanship and even to justify the use of violence. When it comes to the culture of security, there is still a lot to learn.

The second consequence relates to military instruments for ensuring security. By appealing for a world free of nuclear weapons, the American president has given an apparently revolutionary signal. Hot on the heels of this came a specific voluntary commitment: "To put an end to Cold War

17 *Obama's Speech in Moscow. President addresses New Economic School graduation*, 7 July 2009, available online at: http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090707062839abretnuh3.549922e-02.html&distid=ucs#ixzz0T61Xl526.

18 Cf. Final Act of Helsinki, in: Arie Bloed, (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 141-217, here: Section 1a) Declaration on Principles guiding relations between participating States, pp. 143ff.

thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same."[19] This is less about setting distant goals than determining the direction of current policy. After a decade of unrestrained rearmament and ever more swollen military budgets around the world, the opportunity to return disarmament and arms control to the international agenda has grown. "Serious endeavors by the United States and Russia toward a nuclear-weapons-free world would make it easier to reach an agreement on adequate behavior with all other nuclear-weapon states, regardless whether they are permanent members of the UN Security Council. A spirit of cooperation could spread from the Middle East via Iran to East Asia."[20]

The fact that the spirit of co-operation is also again needed urgently on the continent of Europe itself has barely affected public consciousness. "If you deploy your SS-20s, we will bring our Pershings into position" was the motto of the 1980s arms race. This confrontational spirit has returned almost unnoticed, only now the missiles have the names Patriot and Iskander. The incessant turning of the spiral of rearmament already failed to increase security in the Europe of the Cold War blocs, and the revival of old thought experiments about hermetic missile defence or the ill-conceived concept of a new task force for European conflict scenarios will be no more successful. The more heavily security relations are burdened by mutual distrust, the worse are the consequences of the failure of agreed arms control measures as a stabilizing force. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), once the epitome of transparency, verification, and military confidence-building, has been put on ice. The regular exchange of information and mutual site inspections – more than 5,000 since 1992 – have ceased. It will take a huge effort to repair the damage caused "by unilateral policy approaches, individual interests, and the drawing of linkages to at least partially irrelevant issues".[21] Given that it is, in the first instance, their interests that are on the line, it is Europeans that should assume responsibility for this task. That one's own security encompasses the security of one's opponent was once a matter of consensus in the alliance. Hard times would be ahead if this were to collapse.

19 *Remarks by President Barack Obama*, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic, 5 April 2009, available online at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered.

20 Helmut Schmidt/Richard von Weizsäcker/Egon Bahr/Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Toward a Nuclear-Free World, in: *International Herald Tribune*, 9 January 2009.

21 Wolfgang Zellner/Hans-Joachim Schmidt/Götz Neuneck, Editor's Preface, in: Zellner et al. (eds), *The Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe*, Baden-Baden 2009, p. 15.