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Medvedev's Initiative: A Trap for Europe

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Notice

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Introduction

The informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers that took place on Corfu on June 27-28, 2009 has launched so called 'Corfu process'. Theodora Bakoyannis, Greek Foreign Minister, summarizing the debates at the meeting said that this process should be an 'open, sustained, wide-ranging and inclusive dialogue on security' with a view 'to solve the security challenges' Europe is facing, 'guided by the spirit of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security'¹⁾. A next step will be the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens in December 2009.

The Corfu process was initiated, at least partly, by Russia's assertive efforts to thrust on Europe a legally binding 'Pan-European security treaty' which will set up a 'new security architecture in Europe'. The latter means reshaping of existing and creation of new institutions and norms regulating security relations in Europe or in a wider geopolitical space outstretched 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok'. It is also known as 'Medvedev's initiative' as the initial proposal has been advanced by the president of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, in June 2008.

Moscow's idea of setting up a 'new security architecture in Europe' was not supported by the participants of the meeting on Corfu²⁾. Most of Europeans are skeptical about piling up new and modifying existing security related institutions seeing this as an attempt to enfeeble NATO, the OSCE, the EU and other European bodies. Instead, they preferred a dialog with Russia on a number of concrete security issues ranging from the future of the CFE Treaty to energy security, democracy and human rights.

Yet in no case one may expect that due to semi-fiasco in Corfu Moscow refuses from its basic idea – to translate some general political formulas and concepts related to European security into a legally binding form. Speaking after the meeting of the NATO-Russia Council hold on Corfu on June 27, 2009 Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister, said that Russian considerations about 'the initiative of Russian President Medvedev to craft a new European Security Treaty, were heard. A number of delegations reiterated the interest in engaging in their substantive consideration also in the RNC (Russia-NATO Council – Yu.F.) format along with the discussions that have already begun in the OSCE, in our relations with the EU and in the political science community'³⁾. It means that Moscow will continue and most probably intensify its efforts to establish a 'new security architecture in Europe' instead of the current one based on NATO and, in a wider context, on transatlantic cooperation and solidarity.

¹⁾ 'Corfu Informal Meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the Future of European Security Chair's Concluding Statement to the Press'. – See: http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/06/38505_en.pdf

²⁾ French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said after the meeting 'We don't need a new structure. We have many at our disposal -- U.N., EU, OSCE, Council of Europe. We have the principles, we have the structures, let's strengthen them'. – See: 'OSCE Sceptical On Security Proposal', *The Moscow Times*, Tuesday, June 30, 2009. - <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/1010/42/379101.htm>

³⁾ Transcript of Opening Statement and Response to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Press Conference Following Informal Russia-NATO Council Meeting at Level of Foreign Ministers on Corfu, June 27, 2009. – See: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b4325699005bcb3/15051d4e4e095e92c32575e40045431b?OpenDocument



For their part a number of leading European figures hope that debates on European security as such will help to improve trust between Russia and the West and thus engage Moscow in a cooperative relationship⁴⁾. On the other side of Atlantic a number of influential American politicians and analysts close to the current administration support the Russian idea seeing it as an element of a wider “reset” of Russia-US relations even at the expense of ‘subsuming of NATO into a larger structure’⁵⁾.

This poses a few questions. What are the genuine driving forces and goals of Medvedev's initiative? How it relates to strategic interests of the European countries? To answer those questions it would be important to uncover what in actual fact Russia wants to achieve by promoting a ‘Pan-European security treaty’.

Medvedev's initiative: development of Russia's approach

For the first time Medvedev proposed to conclude ‘a regional pact based ... on the principles of the UN Charter and clearly defining the role of force as factor in relations within the Euro-Atlantic community’ in the speech in Berlin on June 5, 2008. He insisted that it should be a legally binding treaty ‘in which the organisations currently working in the Euro-Atlantic area could become parties’. The talks on that treaty, Medvedev said, should start at a pan-European summit⁶⁾. The arguments Medvedev adduced to back up his proposal revealed its real meaning: to marginalize NATO and on the final end to substitute the transatlantic security and defence links by a ‘general regional collective security system’. As for the OSCE, it exasperates Moscow by monitoring of elections in Russia and other new independent states. Medvedev informed German audience that ‘Atlanticism as a sole historical principle has already had its day’; that NATO has ‘failed so far to give new purpose to its existence. It is trying to find this purpose today by globalising its missions, including to the detriment of the UN's prerogatives, and by bringing in new members’; and that ‘an organisation such as the OSCE ... prevented from becoming a full-fledged general

⁴⁾ In February 2009 Javier Solana has mentioned that Medvedev's proposals ‘are still to be precise further. But the underlying ideas deserve to be taken seriously. And engagement in a debate is in itself a road to build trust’. – See: Dr. Javier Solana Madariaga, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009. - http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=235

⁵⁾ For instance, Thomas Graham, Senior Director at Kissinger Associates, previously a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia at the National Security Council, wrote in April 2009 “The administration should give preliminary approval to participating in a conference on European security architecture, as proposed by President Medvedev ... The challenge is to build a security architecture based on three pillars: the United States, the European Union, and Russia. If this ultimately leads to the subsuming of NATO into a larger structure over the long term, we should be prepared to accept that. America's essential goal is not securing NATO's long-term future as the central element of our engagement with Europe, no matter how valuable an instrument of U.S. policy in Europe NATO has been in the past; the goal is ensuring security in Europe, now and in the future”. – See: Thomas Graham “Resurgent Russia and U.S. Purposes. A Century Foundation Report”. – The Century Foundation. – 2009. – P.24

⁶⁾ Dmitry Medvedev. Speech at Meeting with German Political, Parliamentary and Civic Leaders, June 5, 2008, Berlin. http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/06/05/2203_type82912_type82914type84779_202153.shtml



regional organisation' because of 'the obstruction created by other groups intent on continuing the old line of bloc politics'⁷⁾.

Medvedev reiterated the idea of a Pan-European security treaty at a number of occasions including at the EU-Russia summit in Khanty-Mansiysk at the end of June 2008 and at the meeting with Russian ambassadors on July 15, 2008. Naturally, the idea was met with a sceptical international response. It is hardly possible to succeed in Europe in proposing of a large-scale political initiative if substantiating it by primitive rhetoric about the Atlanticism that 'had its days' and NATO that has lost its *raison d'être*.

The Concept of Russia's foreign policy, a directive doctrinal document developed within the Foreign Ministry and approved by Medvedev on July 12, 2008 mentioned a 'new European security architecture' in one short and murky paragraph.

'The main objective of the Russian foreign policy on the European track is to create a truly open, democratic system of regional collective security and cooperation ensuring the unity of the Euro-Atlantic region, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, in such a way as not to allow its new fragmentation and reproduction of bloc-based approaches which still persist in the European architecture that took shape during the Cold War period. This is precisely the essence of the initiative aimed at concluding a European security treaty, the elaboration of which could be launched at a pan-European summit'⁸⁾.

The language used in this document was in a way misleading. One could hardly catch the meaning of the concepts like "truly open", or "democratic" regional security system. The former, for instance, may mean that this security system should not be limited by strict geographical boundaries, or that any political actor or a state in a region may participate in it. The only clear message was that "Medvedev's initiative" was aimed at marginalization of NATO. That was the real essence of the passage that a new security system in Europe would not "to allow ... reproduction of bloc-based approaches".

Most probably the just quoted paragraph was a last minute and badly thought-out insertion into a more or less polished text of the Concept of Russia's foreign policy. Albeit establishment of "a truly open, democratic system of regional collective security and cooperation" has been characterized as the key goal of Russia's policy in Europe this idea has not been elaborated further in the text of this directive document; and the main bulk of the European section of the Concept was given up to traditional diplomatic topics like Russia's relations with the EU, Council of Europe, NATO and NATO-Russia Council, and bilateral relations with a few European states.

Up to August 2008 Medvedev's initiative looked like an amateurish improvisation designed to demonstrate that the just elected Russian president was able to present new impressive political ideas. At the same time it was a naïve and hopeless attempt to strengthen Russia's

⁷⁾ Ididem

⁸⁾ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. Approved by President of the Russian Federation on July 12, 2008. - http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750_shtml



influence upon security developments in Europe and abate the influence of Western institutions such as NATO. Most probably it was advanced by a few senior staff members of the Presidential Administration, perhaps in cooperation with a group of so called 'political analysts' close to the Administration, who were not able or not willing to develop more or less meticulous expose of this plan, including the content and subject of the proposed Treaty, parties to it, its correlation to existing security arrangements and other important details, and as well to produce sound arguments backing the idea that can be accepted by European political circles.

In August 2008 Medvedev's initiative has disappeared from the foreign policy agendas both of Russia and the European states due to Russian aggression against Georgia. Yet in September 2008 it began to play much more important role in the Russian foreign policy than before. Russian diplomacy activated its efforts in promoting it. On the one hand, due to intrusion into Georgia some European states, France, Germany, Italy and Belgium above all, became more susceptible to Russian initiative, which, as they believed, might constrain Russian aggressiveness⁹⁾. On the other hand, drastic deterioration of Russia's international reputation fuelled Moscow's search of new ideas and tools able to mitigate the negative reaction of the West to Russian outrageous behaviour in the Caucasus as well as to strengthen its ability of influencing developments in Europe. For this reason establishment of a 'new European security architecture' was included into the list of principal avenues of Russian policy in Europe; and Russian Foreign ministry intensified political and propaganda campaign promoting Medvedev's initiative.

Addressing the World Policy Conference in Evian, France, on October 8, 2008 Medvedev exposed a few general details of the Russian vision of a proposed treaty. He emphasized that it should concentrate on hard security issues only and announced that

- a) The 'basic principles of security and cooperation' in the Euro-Atlantic area must be affirmed.
- b) All participating states should guarantee neither to use force against one another, nor to threaten the use of force.
- c) The treaty must guarantee 'equal security' for all. No state or international organization can have the 'exclusive rights' to protect peace and stability in Europe.
- d) At last, the treaty should establish 'basic parameters for arms control' and establish new cooperation mechanisms for combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and drug trafficking.

At the same time Medvedev once again accused NATO and the USA in pursuing policy hostile to Russia. In a highly aggressive manner he mentioned 'de facto revival of the policy

⁹⁾ Russian experts from the influential Institute of World Economy and International Relations wrote: "...The conflict in the Caucasus has led primary European countries (France and Germany above all) to recognition of a necessity to restructure European and global security systems. ... Many in Russia hope that in a new global situation, which is characterized by easing of American leadership and strengthening of new centres of power (including Russia) the leading EU states will support proactive interaction with Russia in managing a whole spectrum of global problems: from financial and economic issues up to security problems". - See: V.G. Baranovsky (the head of project), I.D. Zvyagelskaya, I.Ya. Kobrinskaya, V.A. Kremenyuk, V.V. Mikheev, The report "Rossiya i mir: 2009" (Russia and the world: 2009), Part II, "Foreign policy", IMEMO RAS, Russian Trade-Industrial Chamber and Foundation of prospective studies and initiatives. P. 30. - http://www.globalaffairs.ru/docs/imemo_prognosis.pdf



of deterrence so popular in the twentieth century' and listed Moscow's standard set of accusations for the West¹⁰⁾. Despite Medvedev's provoking tune his declarations met some positive response from a few European states. The French President Nicolas Sarkozy emphasized the importance of Euro-Atlantic solidarity yet at the same time expressed the firm belief that Russia is a privileged partner of the EU in security area, supported Medvedev in his critique of the USA and suggested holding the OSCE summit in 2009 to discuss Medvedev's idea of a new system of European security¹¹⁾.

A month later, speaking at the EU-Russia summit in Nice in November 2008 Medvedev has added two important points to his proposal: Russia agreed to the participation of the EU and NATO together with the CIS and the CSTO in future negotiations for a 'new European security architecture', and suggested that until a new treaty is concluded participants of negotiations have to avoid doing any 'unilateral actions'. He declared

*'the main thing is that we be prepared to ... discuss these issues under the aegis of the OSCE and with the participation of all European institutions, including NATO, the European Union, the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation – Yu.F) and the CIS. ... I fully agree that until we sign a special global agreement on ensuring European security, we should all refrain from taking any unilateral steps that would affect security'*¹²⁾.

Consent to the EU's and NATO's participation in future negotiations was a concession to Europe. A number of European states made it clear that any new security arrangements should include NATO and the OSCE. At the same time a participation of the CSTO in those talks would allow Moscow to portray this amorphous and loose military block as a sound international actor fully legitimate and recognized in Europe and thus to consolidate it. Yet the principally important and highly dangerous was Russian suggestion to refrain from any 'unilateral actions' until a new agreement is concluded, which will take a very long time. It means that any measure taken by NATO, the EU or individual European state that is not welcomed by Moscow may be interpreted as a 'unilateral action' and thus to be cancelled. However, this Russian proposal was de facto supported by President Sarkozy, who has said that deployment of American ABM 'will add nothing to (European – Yu.F.) security but only complicates the situation'¹³⁾.

¹⁰⁾ Medvedev announced 'military bases have been established along our borders. The third ABM deployment area is being created in the territory of the Czech Republic and Poland. ... NATO is actively discussing the admission of Georgia and Ukraine. What's more, it sees the issue in battle terms: admitting these countries would be victory over Russia, while keeping them out would be tantamount to capitulation. ... The real issue is that NATO is bringing its military infrastructure right up to our borders and is drawing new dividing lines in Europe, this time along our western and southern frontiers'. - See: Dmitry Medvedev. Speech at World Policy Conference. October 8, 2008, Evian, France. - http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/10/08/2159_type_82912type82914_207457.shtml

¹¹⁾ Arkady Dubnov, 'Nashli vremya i mesto' (They found the time and place), *Vremya novosti*, October 9, 2008

¹²⁾ Joint Press Conference together with President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, and President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, November 14, 2008, Nice. - http://www.president.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/11/14/2100_type63377type63380type82634_209203.shtml. The language Medvedev used proved that authors of his speech and the president himself have no idea what exactly they are talking about. In fact, 'global agreement on ensuring European security' means that all or almost all states of the world should participate in an agreement of a regional scale. This would be hardly practical.

¹³⁾ Ibidem



A few more details to Russian position on Medvedev's initiative have been formulated by Moscow's since Medvedev's speech in Nice. Russian ambassador in Belgium, Lukov, mentioned that the treaty may include urgent consultations with the state which believes that its security is threatened ¹⁴. In December 2008 Foreign Minister Lavrov announced that an identification of the basic principles for the development of arms control regimes, confidence building, restraint and reasonable sufficiency in military development should be developed and established by the proposed treaty. Yet his deputy Alexander Grushko, speaking at the Joint meeting of the OSCE Forum for security and co-operation and the Permanent Council on 18 February 2009, proclaimed that the new treaty is not intended to replace the CFE Treaty, the Treaty on Open Skies, or the Vienna Document of 1999. At the same time Grushko said that the restoration of the CFE regime now 'requires not only the ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty but also the adoption of other far-reaching measures needed to ensure its viability given the new conditions'. He said also that the OSCE is not 'the one and only forum for the elaboration of the treaty'. A wide variety of multilateral formats could prove useful (the Russia-EU dialogue and, over the longer term, the NATO-Russia Council) ¹⁵.

It looked like that intensive promoting the idea of a 'new security architecture in Europe' and a Pan-European security treaty was combined with apparent inability of the Russian diplomacy to develop more or less coherent and detailed concept of such 'architecture'. However, Moscow was quite steadfast in one particular point. Russian senior officials did not conceal that the final aim of restructuring of 'an European security architecture' is to diminish NATO's role in the European security landscape. They insisted (and insist now) that 'systemic defects' of existing European security institutions and practices resulted from so called 'NATO-centrism'. The latter 'by definition negates the creation of a truly universal collective security system in the Euro-Atlantic area, and artificially impedes honest discussions on the problems which the Caucasus crisis has laid bare', Lavrov wrote at the end of December 2008 ¹⁶. What is more, Russian officials claim that the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the recognition of Kosovo, the war on Georgia in August 2008, the crisis of the CFE Treaty and some other negative developments in Europe resulted from the 'centralism of NATO'.

Those arguments are crying example of monstrous political hypocrisy and dissimulation. NATO used force in the former Yugoslavia with a view to stop atrocities and ethnic cleansing implemented by Milosevic's regime, which was supported by Russia. It was Russia, not NATO that fuelled Serbian nationalism and savageness. The war in the Caucasus was in fact Russian aggression against Georgia ¹⁷. At last, the crash of the CFE Treaty resulted

¹⁴ Address of Russian ambassador in Belgium V.B. Lukov to joint parliamentary hearings on development of Russia-Belgium relationship. Brussels, November 26, 2008. - http://www.belgium.mid.ru/press/posol_r_034.html

¹⁵ Statement by Mr. Alexander Grushko, Deputy minister for foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, at the Joint meeting of the Forum for security and co-operation and the Permanent Council. 18 February 2009. Document OSCE FSC-PC.DEL/9/09, 18 February 2009

¹⁶ Sergey Lavrov "Russian Foreign Policy and a New Quality of the Geopolitical Situation", Diplomatic Yearbook 2008. - http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/19e7b14202191e4ac3257525003e5de7?OpenDocument

¹⁷ In particular, in 2004-05 the Russian leadership has sent dozens of military instructors into South Ossetia and Abkhazia and most of top positions in military and security 'ministries' of those two breakaway territories were replaced by Russian officers, in fact mercenaries. In May 2004 Russian military began to build first military base in Java, South Ossetia. On April 30, 2008 the first illegal Russian paratroopers from the Novorossiysk airborne division went into Abkhazia in clear violation with the



from Russia's stubborn refusal to withdraw its forces from Moldavia and eliminate the Gudauta military base in Abkhazia. Now a restoration of the CFE Treaty regime is blocked by Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and establishment of a few Russian military bases at those territories. Being addressed to a general public both in Russia and in Europe those assertions are nothing but primitive propaganda. Yet if they are used in a professional audience it is a sort of blackmail. The hidden message could be as follows: if European political elites would like to prevent new Russian actions similar to just mentioned, they are to agree with Russian approach to a 'new European security architecture', in other words to marginalize NATO.

Lavrov's address of June 23, 2009: the same old vine in a new bottle

The latest version of Medvedev's initiative was set out by Foreign Minister Lavrov in his address at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference in Vienna on June 23, 2009. Actually, it was an attempt to put the same anti-NATO vine into a new bottle. The Kremlin decided to ground its old dream to marginalize NATO on a concept of 'indivisibility of security'. Lavrov portrayed the latter as fundamental principle of international politics and interpreted it as a 'commitment to not secure oneself at other's expense', and demanded to translate it into a compulsory codified rule of international law and. He announced

'The chief systemic drawback consists in that over the 20 years we've been unable to devise guarantees of the observance of the principle of indivisible security. Today we're witnessing the infringement of a basic principle of relations between states that was laid down in the 1999 Charter for European Security and in the documents of the Russia-NATO Council – the commitment to not secure oneself at others' expense'¹⁸⁾.

Existence of NATO, Lavrov continued, contradicts to the principle of 'indivisibility of security' because it results in formation of two zones of different security, the 'NATO area' and the one consists of European states that are not members of the North Atlantic Alliance, and consequently in fragmentation of so called 'Pan-European space'. 'The collision between pan-European and intra-bloc approaches leads to a fragmentation of the pan-European space occurring in practice'¹⁹⁾. The next, and the most important element of Lavrov's argumentation was that to improve security situation in Europe (or rather in the

peacekeeping operations. On May 26, 2008 Russian railway troops illegally crossed over to Abkhazia. On July 9, four Russian jets penetrated the Georgian air space which was admitted by Moscow. On August 3, 2008 the mobilization in the North Caucasus was announced and the arrival of the first 300 mercenaries into South Ossetia was confirmed. On August 4, 2008 medical and communication units of the 58th Army arrived in South Ossetia. On August 6, a regular regiment of Russian Border Guards occupied the first piece of the Georgian territory - the southern gate of the Roki tunnel. - See: Andrei Illarionov, Senior Fellow, Cato Institute and President, Institute of Economic Analysis, 'Another Look at the August War'. - Center for Eurasian Policy, Hudson Institute. - December 9, 2008). - http://www.hudson.org/files/documents/AndreiIllarionov_speech.pdf

¹⁸⁾ 'Address by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Opening of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009'. - See:

http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/9eb56f1ecaad3ab5c32575df00362cc9?OpenDocument

¹⁹⁾ Ibidem



OSCE area) one should either to close NATO, or to subordinate it to a Pan-European institution, which in his view could be the OSCE if it is turned into a 'full-fledged' organization able to assure 'hard security' of all its members. He declared

'The problem could have been easily solved and not necessarily through the liquidation of NATO (sic!) following dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. It would have been enough to consecutively institutionalize and transform the OSCE into a full-fledged regional organization within the meaning of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. That is the OSCE would be dealing with the full spectrum of Euro-Atlantic issues and, above all, ensuring in the region – based on legal commitments – an open collective security system',²⁰⁾

Politically this is nothing but an attempt to marginalize NATO by posing it under the control of an 'enforced' OSCE. This attempt is naïve enough as one can hardly expect that NATO member-states will ever agree to subordinate NATO to any international body. Also, if the OSCE is turned into a regional organization 'within the meaning of Chapter VII of the UN Charter' it will be even less effective in maintaining peace than the UN because the decisions would be taken not by a few members of the UN Security Council but by all 56 members of the OSCE. In addition, there is basic difference between NATO and the OSCE as the former is a defence alliance designed to defend its members against aggression and attacks from outside, while the latter is aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts between its members. At last, zones of different security in Europe exist not because of existence of NATO yet due to insecurity in areas beyond NATO's zone of responsibility. Partly this insecurity results from Russia's attempts to impose its domination by means of political intrigues, usage of gas export as political weapon and immediate use of military force. In particular, Latvia's security is stronger than that of Georgia due to Latvia's membership in NATO while Georgia is not protected against Russian aggression.

A Pan-European security treaty: how Moscow hopes to undermine NATO

Lavrov's presentation on June 23, 2009 confirmed that the Russian goal is the same as it was formulated earlier, namely to enfeeble NATO by establishment of new international institutions, rules and frameworks that will constrain NATO's activities²¹⁾. In addition, Lavrov outlined in a general way the content of a Pan-European security treaty, which reveals how Moscow plans to attend this aim.

²⁰⁾ Ibidem

²¹⁾ On May 16, 2009 Medvedev once again made it clear that Russia aims at undermining NATO. "As a military and political bloc NATO is becoming larger and security is becoming more fragmented and more piecemeal. I think that this is bad for everyone concerned, no matter what our negotiating partners say. So we need new approaches... So if we can create a new matrix of relationships, I think it will be effective. In any case, this is obviously better than advancing NATO in every direction. At any rate we are not happy with that idea and we are going to respond to it". See: Dmitry Medvedev. Interview with Sergei Brilyov, anchor of Vesti V Subbotu [News on Saturday] Programme on Rossiya TV Channel, May 16, 2009. - http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2009/05/16/1134_type84779_216376.shtml



According to Lavrov the proposed Treaty should consist of four principal parts. The first one should confirm in a legally binding form the basic principles for intergovernmental relations in the Euro-Atlantic area. They include the commitment to fulfil in good faith obligations under international law; respect for sovereignty; the inadmissibility of the use or threat of force both territorial integrity and political independence of states, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and the right of peoples to dispose of their destiny, and respect for all of the other principles set out in the truly fundamental document that is the United Nations Charter.

This is nothing but list of basic principles containing in the starting chapter of the Helsinki Final Act approved in 1975. It is indicative, however, that Russians do not include into a project of Pan-European security treaty such Helsinki guiding principles as: respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; and equal rights and self-determination of peoples. A reproduction of those principles as legally binding provisions would not be sufficient to provide security situation in Europe, the same as in any other part of the world²²⁾.

Yet the cornerstone of this part of the proposed Treaty and what is more of the whole Russian initiative is a demand to guarantee in a legally binding form "equal security". The latter is interpreted as a) no ensuring one's own security at the expense of others; b) no allowing acts (by military alliances or coalitions) that weakening the unity of the common security space, 'particularly prevent the use of their territory to the detriment of other states' security, to the detriment of peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area'; c) no development of military alliances that would threaten the security of other parties to the proposed treaty. Lastly, Moscow wants to confirm that no state or international organization can have the exclusive rights to maintain peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region²³⁾.

Those principles look attractive at the first glance, yet their implementation will create a trap for Europe. Some of them are mentioned in the Charter for European Security, approved at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999 and as such are internationally accepted. But if turned into legally binding clauses of an international treaty those general and rather abstract political formulas will be used as a powerful legal tools able to limit ability of a state to improve its defence and security²⁴⁾. In particular, Moscow will acquire a legal right to stop any action of the USA, NATO, the EU or individual European state at the pretext that it either ensures their own security at the expense of Russia's security or undermines the 'unity

²²⁾ German analyst Margarete Klein concluded: "This is a reasonable proposal, but is not sufficient on its own to ensure that the principles are enforced. After all, they have already been enshrined in many documents and nevertheless been violated – including by Russia itself. For example, Moscow decried the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state by Western countries as "immoral and illegitimate", but itself violated the principle of territorial integrity when it extended unilateral recognition to Abkhazia and South Ossetia – what is more, it did so following the use of military force". – See: Margarete Klein, "Russia's Plan for a New Pan-European Security Regime: A Serious Proposal or an Attempt at Division?", Russian analytical digest, N 55, February 18 2009, P.7

²³⁾ 'Address by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Opening of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009'. – Op. cit

²⁴⁾ Dmitry Trenin, Russian analyst close to the Kremlin, has deciphered this principal, quite correctly, as 'four no': 'no NATO in the CIS countries; no American bases in the CIS countries; no any support of "anti-Russian regimes" in the CIS countries; and no ABM deployment nearby Russian borders' because Moscow sees such actions and activities as attempts to ensure NATO member states security at the expense of Russian security. – See: <http://www.svobodanews.ru/Article/2008/11/28/20081128185141033.html>



of the common security space'. As for the clause that no state 'can have any preeminent responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE area' mentioned in the Charter for European Security, the latter does not specify what exactly means 'preeminent responsibility' (or 'exclusive rights'). Its meaning and content are murky. If being turned into legal provision this clause may mean, in particular, or rather be interpreted in a way that NATO is not allowed to undertake operations in area beyond the zone of its traditional responsibility, or even within this zone without consent of Russia or the CSTO.

In a wider context, the trap for Europe designed by Moscow results from the fact that if a political formula turns into a clause of a legally binding arrangement it automatically creates a necessity of establishing an international institution capable to monitor and ensure implementation of such a clause. Putting it differently, if for instance Europe agrees with the Russian idea to forbid 'ensuring someone's security at the expense of the other' then it will be necessary to establish a body authorized to assess and conclude whether this or that action 'ensures someone's security at the expense of the other' or 'undermines the unity of the common security space', or not, and to make mandatory decisions about such actions. Sergey Lavrov made it quite clear that Moscow plans to establish institutions of this kind able to control the West's activities in defence and security related areas. He announced 'It will also be necessary to agree the mechanisms to ensure the universal application of this and other previously agreed principles'²⁵⁾. Lavrov's speech in Vienna on June 23, 2009 made it clear that Russia sees a reformed OSCE as such institution. If being implemented this scheme definitely restricts the ability of NATO and the EU to protect security of their member states.

Implementation of Lavrov's proposals also could result in establishment in a Euro-Atlantic space security related institutions 'parallel' to NATO, for instance 'reformed' or 'enforced' OSCE, which will assume part of their responsibilities in peace-making and peace-building, and thus create additional difficulties for NATO and the EU. Therefore if discussions about a 'new European security architecture' are based on Russia's proposals, the West will be involved in debates about mechanisms marginalizing NATO, restricting its activities as well as activities of individual European states and the USA in security and defense areas, and providing Russia with some institutional capabilities to influence security and defense related decisions in the European space²⁶⁾.

The second part of the Treaty proposed by Moscow focuses on 'basic principles for the development of arms control regimes, the reinforcement of confidence, restraint and reasonable sufficiency in military building. This includes the principles of non-offensive

²⁵⁾ Sergey Lavrov, "How to Bring the Cold War to a Conclusive End?", *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, May 2009, 21-05-2009. - http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/3dad89fa866b2502c32575be003b7eff?OpenDocument

²⁶⁾ A few Russian experts and media presenters revealed the true essence of the Medvedev's initiative in a sarcastic tone. For instance, Yuliya Latinina, well-known media person, commented: 'Russia's president Dmitry Medvedev suggested to reform the system of collective security in Europe and to hold a special summit of OSCE in the next year for that. ... One should mention that a sonorous phrase "reforming of collective security system" veils very strange offer, according to which NATO has no right to admit new members, European countries have no right to deploy American missiles on their soil, and Russia has the right to do everything it wants. After the war on Georgia these offers sounded especially peaceful and convincing'. - See: Yulia Latinina, "O reshenii nerpoblem" (How to decide non-existing problems), *Ezhednevniy zhurnal*, December 17, 2008. - <http://www.ej.ru/?a=note&id=8663>



defence and the renunciation of any additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces outside of national territory'²⁷⁾.

It means that instead of discussing and negotiating particular arms control and hard security issues that are of special importance for Europe, like restoration of the CFE Treaty regime destroyed by Russia, or control over tactical nuclear weapons Moscow wants to revise the earlier agreed basic principles and mechanisms of arms control agreements, the CFE Treaty and confidence building measures above all. It confirms that Russian military are looking for new international legal instruments aimed at substantial reduction of military potentials of the NATO member states in Europe and areas nearby it. In addition, Moscow aims at enforcing the West to recognize and accept Russian military presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, de-facto occupied by Russian troops.

The third part of proposed Treaty is to be on the principles of conflict settlement including the inadmissibility of the use of force; respect negotiation and peacekeeping formats; confidence-building measures; fostering a dialogue between parties et cetera. Issues related to use of force, peacekeeping, conflict and dispute resolutions are regulated by the Charter of the United Nations, Helsinki Final Act and some other principal international documents. It is not clear what exactly Moscow wants to add to those documents.

The fourth part is seen as dedicated to countering the new threats and challenges, including the spread of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and illicit drug trafficking and other types of transnational crime. Cooperation between Russia and the Western countries in WMD proliferation, terrorism, drug trafficking and other new threats typical of the XXI century should be welcomed of course. Yet to be trustworthy Russia should support practically Western efforts aimed at cessation of Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons, in particular to stop supply modern weapons to Iran's regime; or stop blocking development of practical measures to prevent a spread of biological weapons, which is of growing importance.

International reaction on Medvedev's initiative

Basically, the international reaction on Russia's idea of concluding a Pan-European security treaty and restructuring of the existing security architecture on the continent is mixed and in a sense incoherent. It results from the fact that there are substantial differences in approaches of different European countries towards Medvedev's initiative.

Georgia, the three Baltic States – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and most states of Central Eastern Europe are, openly or latently, unsympathetic and suspicious of this Russian proposal²⁸⁾. They apprehend that Medvedev's initiative may enfeeble the North Atlantic

²⁷⁾ 'Address by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the Opening of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009'. – Op. cit

²⁸⁾ In February 2009 Toomas Ilves, president of Estonia, said 'After the dust from the guns of August has settled, we are left with one fundamental change: minimally the collapse of the post-1991 settlement, and more broadly the principles of the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975: no use of force to change national borders ... The collapse of this order represents a paradigm shift



alliance while it is strong NATO only that may protect them from Russian military aggression or pressure by force. Their leaders, political classes, and (in some countries) substantial part of public opinion are irritated with Moscow's hypocrisy and concerned with reluctance of part of the Western public to defend new NATO members in case of possible Russian aggression ²⁹⁾.

For their part, leaders of France, Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and few other European states believe that it would be expedient to benefit from the Russian offer and to negotiate with Russia on European security issues. They believe that the EU, NATO, the OSCE should be maintained and strengthened as principal building blocks of any European security architecture. At the same time they hope that negotiations may improve mutual trust; and that in result Russia will be more associated with Europe; that a web of new links and structures will emerge which will help to reduce Moscow's aggressiveness. They are persuaded also that there are a number of international security threats (WMD proliferation, terrorism, drug-trafficking et cetera) that can not be prevented without cooperation with Russia ³⁰⁾. The Great Britain has changed its previous strongly negative stance towards Medvedev's initiative. David Miliband, British Foreign Secretary, said that future talks with Russia should result in consolidation of the Western approach to the European security including human rights, economic security and other dimensions of security ³¹⁾.

Of critical importance is the position of the USA: the very idea of a pan-European negotiations (or conference) and arrangements on security issues in the European and Euro-Atlantic spaces is senseless until Washington agrees to participate in it. At the same time if

in European security equivalent to the end of the Cold War in 1989-91. No longer can we assume that international aggression, (as opposed to the civil wars of the Balkans) is excluded as a possibility in Europe. ... Russia on its part has moved beyond the paradigm, not only by changing it but also by proposing a new security architecture to replace the OSCE and other structures because „the old one clearly does not work“. The argument in brief is that the Georgian-Russian War shows that the existing arrangements failed'. – See: Toomas Ilves, Hendrik, President, Estonia, Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009. - http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=241&

²⁹⁾ According to the public opinion poll conducted by Harris Interactive for The Financial Times in five countries of Europe and in the USA, in September 2008 half of Germans and two in five Italians and Spaniards would oppose their countries sending troops to stop Russian military attack on the three Baltic States. Two in five French adults and just over one-third of Americans and Britons would support their countries sending troops. See: http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/FTHarrisPoll/HI_FinancialTimes_HarrisPoll_September2008.pdf

³⁰⁾ For instance, on February 3, 2009 French President Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have published a joint article in *Le Monde*, in which they expressed readiness to debate Medvedev's proposal but made it clear that existing international security agreements and structures should not be undermined. French and German leaders reiterated their confidence and commitment to the EU, NATO and OSCE, and 'to the well-tried tried and tested European standards underpinning our security, to the arms control and disarmament regimes, and to trans-Atlantic cooperation'. – See; Angela Merkel et Nicolas Sarkozy, « La sécurité, notre mission Commune », *Le Monde*, 03 Février, 2009

³¹⁾ Speaking to the Munich Security Conference in February 2009 David Miliband said: 'We welcome President Medvedev's call for a debate about the future of European Security. In taking this debate forward we should be pursuing our mutual interest in resolving and preventing conflict in Europe, tackling WMD proliferation, combating organised crime and addressing the threat from extremism. ... Though we must also be clear; this does not undermine our commitment to leave the door to NATO membership open for those who desire it. Its starting point needs to be an acceptance of the fundamental principles of territorial integrity, democratic governance and international law, and recognition that, in the 21st century, breaking these principles will have serious consequences. It needs to embrace a wide definition of security: not just military security and state sovereignty, but economic, energy and climate security, human security and human rights'. – See: Miliband, David, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009. - http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=243



the USA supports this idea it may – and most probably will - encourage a number of European countries which have not formed definite position on the issue to agree with such negotiations. The new American administration, unlike the previous one, is not so reluctant to Medvedev's initiative yet to the date Washington reserves its position on practical multilateral debates on a 'new security architecture in Europe'. The Joint Statement published after the meeting of President Medvedev and President Obama on April 1, 2009 in London says only:

'We discussed our interest in exploring a comprehensive dialogue on strengthening Euro-Atlantic and European security, including existing commitments and President Medvedev's June 2008 proposals on these issues. The OSCE is one of the key multilateral venues for this dialogue, as is the NATO-Russia Council'³²⁾.

It seems that the Obama administration sees the issue of 'a new security architecture in Europe' as an element of a wider strategic deal with Russia known as 'reset' of Russia-US relationship, which was under the discussion in Washington and Moscow in Spring 2009. Most probably Washington will make substantial concessions to Russia, including its consent to beginning of official discussions of Medvedev's initiative if Russia effectively supports American efforts aimed at stopping of Iran's nuclear program and stabilization in Afghanistan. At the moment Moscow refuses from making such a deal; yet its stance may change.

In this complicated political context the Western approach to Medvedev's initiative includes two basic elements. The first one is that the existing security institutions should not be undermined and should participate in debates on security issues in Europe. At the same time the West is ready to discuss with Russia actual security issues. For instance, at the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers on December 2-3, 2008 in Brussels NATO members underscored that the existing structures – NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, that are based on common values, continue to provide every opportunity for countries to engage substantively on Euro-Atlantic security with a broad acquis, established over decades, that includes respect for human rights, territorial integrity, the sovereignty of all states, without dividing lines, and the requirement to fulfil international commitments and agreements. They concluded:

³²⁾ Joint Statement by President Dmitry Medvedev of the Russian Federation and President Barack Obama of the United States of America April, 1, 2009, London. See: - <http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/04/214839.shtml>



*'Within this framework, Allies are open to dialogue within the OSCE on security perceptions and how to respond to new threats, and seek the widest possible cooperation among participating states to promote a common Euro-Atlantic space of security and stability. The common aim should be to improve implementation of existing commitments and to continue to improve existing institutions and instruments so as to effectively promote our values and Euro-Atlantic security'*³³⁾.

The EU position has been presented by the Czech delegation in Vienna at the Joint Session of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council on February 18, 2009³⁴⁾. It was a little bit more developed and detailed than that of NATO. The EU, the statement says, believes the OSCE is the natural forum in which to pursue the debate on European security; that the debate on European security in the OSCE should focus on restoring mutual confidence and trust, allowing all participating states to address their legitimate security concerns. Also, the EU declared that

*'It is equally important that work continues to revitalise the CFE regime bringing it back into full operation. We should strive for full implementation of the Vienna Document 1999 and the Open Skies Treaty. The EU calls upon all parties concerned to preserve and fully implement the existing acquis of arms control agreements and CSBMs, as well as to explore options for its further strengthening'. ... "The comprehensive security architecture as developed over years based on existing organisations, shared commitments and principles should not be undermined. The EU remains open to consider ways and means to strengthen them". ... "The security of the European continent is inextricably linked with that of North America and the discussion among the 56 OSCE participating States is one of its abiding strengths. The promotion of a common space of security and stability from Vancouver to Vladivostok requires our combined and continuous efforts in order to respond effectively to present and emerging security challenges'*³⁵⁾.

Most of the participants of the informal ministerial meeting on Corfu emphasized that the existing security institutions are functioning quite well and no other institutions are to be created³⁶⁾. However, the concluding remarks summarizing the results of discussions on Corfu made by Theodora Bakoyannis left the most important issues – a Pan-European

³³⁾ 'Final communiqué. Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Foreign Ministers held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, December 3, 2008'. See: – <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-153e.html>

³⁴⁾ The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

³⁵⁾ 'EU Statement in response to the address by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Alexander Grushko'. Joint Session of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council no. 38. Vienna 18 February 2009, Document FSC-PC.DEL/8/09

³⁶⁾ Just after the meeting on Corfu Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb referring to NATO, the European Union and the OSCE said 'My feeling is that no one wants anything brand new. ... Almost everyone thinks the existing security organizations in Europe are working quite well'. – See: Nicholas Paphitis 'Greek OSCE chairmanship urges European countries to build single voice on security', *The Daily Star*, June 29, 2009



security treaty, transformation of the OSCE, et cetera opened. The Greek Foreign Minister said only

'the Ministers concurred that it is also time to consider that much work remains undone, and that the vision of a united continent, built on universal principles and indivisible security remains a target rather than a reality. It is high time to "Reconfirm our acquis, Review the state of play of European Security and Renovate our mechanisms to deal with traditional and new challenges" ³⁷⁾.

In addition, Theodora Bakoyannis has listed traditional security problems that remain unresolved and new threats that are emerging. This list includes:

- 'Protracted conflicts, ethnic tensions and unresolved border disputes continue to plague parts of the OSCE area, having the potential to turn into serious crises;
- Europe's fundamental arms control regime, the CFE Treaty, a cornerstone of stability has been in limbo for almost two years;
- Democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental principles on human rights need to be strengthened in parts of the OSCE region;
- A deepening economic crisis might jeopardize the social coherence and political achievements in many OSCE states;
- Energy security, illegal migration, human trafficking, terrorism and fundamentalism, cybercrime and rising instability in regions adjacent to the OSCE area become more and more security preoccupations for OSCE states' ³⁸⁾.

This list reflects mostly the Western vision – or visions – of security issues in Europe today. Yet the thesis about 'renovation' of mechanisms to deal with security threats may reflect, albeit indirectly, the Russian approach. Besides, Theodora Bakoyannis busily repeated the mantra of 'the indivisibility of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok', which used by Russians to substantiate marginalization of NATO. It means that future debates on security issues in Europe may focused either on a number of most important issues, like restoration of the CFE Treaty regime and restitution of territorial integrity of Georgia, or on Russia's proposals aimed at substantial enfeebling of European and transatlantic security and defence capabilities.

Basically the further trajectory of the Corfu process depends on the answer to the crucial question: whether it is possible to make a 'fair deal' with Moscow on strategic issues which will be acceptable to the West as a whole, or to a few leading Western countries at least? Or Russian aggressiveness results from systemic characteristics of Russian society and governance, and any deal with the West would be seen in Moscow as a sign of Western weakness fuelling thus Russian further aggressive moves?

³⁷⁾ 'Corfu Informal Meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the Future of European Security Chair's Concluding Statement to the Press'. Op cited

³⁸⁾ Ibidem



This question is especially actual because there are some circles in Europe and in the USA who advocate an engagement with Russia despite of its aggression against independent European country³⁹⁾. They emphasize that Russian international 'extremes' result from deep traumas of mysterious Russian psyche caused by the crash of the Empire, crisis of transition, and nostalgic feelings inevitable in any society going through fundamental changes. The principal mistakes made by the West, the advocates of that theory insist, were ignoring Russia's concerns about the NATO's enlargement; support of 'colour revolutions'; obligation to admit Ukraine and Georgia to NATO; American missile defence in Poland and the Czech Republic; and at last inability to prevent Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia that ignite the Russian-Georgian war. In order to assess whether this approach is correct or not we should outline what is the strategic meaning of Medvedev's initiative and how it correlates with basic trends in Russia policy towards Europe.

Medvedev's initiative and Russia's 'grand strategy'

Multilateral debates with Russia on European security issues are often substantiated by a point that in the final end such discussions may engage Moscow into a constructive relationship with NATO and the Western states on a basis of common interests. The group of American former high-rank officials and analysts close to the Obama administration has expressed such vision quite clearly:

*'Protecting and advancing America's national interests in the decades ahead requires a strategic reassessment of the United States' relationship with Russia with an emphasis on exploring common interests. A constructive relationship with Russia will directly influence the United States' ability to advance effectively vital national-security interests in non-proliferation, counterterrorism, and energy security, and to deal with many specific challenges such as Iran or European security'*⁴⁰⁾.

Similar views are typical of some European politicians and academics who believe that cooperation with Russia is of key importance for neutralization of a new threats and assuring both hard and soft European security including stability of energy supplies. They hope that

³⁹⁾ For instance, a group of influential American analysts and political figures from the Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia close to the Obama administration stated: 'The potential collapse of the post-cold war security architecture in Europe - established by the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the NATO-Russia Council, among other agreements and institutions—is also a serious threat to European security. Here, the fundamental problem is Russian dissatisfaction with a security system established at the time of Moscow's greatest weakness, during the 1990s. Russia does have legitimate interests in Europe, though it sometimes pursues them through unacceptable means. ... Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev has called for dialogue on new security architecture and this provides an important opportunity for the United States, NATO, and the European Union to make specific proposals'. – See: 'The Right direction for US policy towards Russia', A Report from the Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia, March 2009, Washington, D.C., P.10

⁴⁰⁾ 'The Right direction for US policy towards Russia', A Report from the Commission on U.S. Policy toward Russia, March 2009, Washington, D.C., P.1



Medvedev's initiative provides an opportunity to diminish Russian mistrust towards Europe and the West as a whole and improve thus Russian-Western relations.

Of course, neither the USA, nor Europe is interested in political and strategic opposition with Russia. What is more the West is interested in cooperation with Moscow in a number of security related areas. However 'it takes two to tango': the principal question is whether Russia is interested in such relationship with Europe and the USA? To answer it we should look at Russia's 'grand strategy' towards Europe and also to assess how particular segments of and figures in Russian policy making-community see Russia's interests and how Medvedev's initiative correlates with those views and interpretations.

Albeit various groups, lobbies and figures in Russia differ on how common interests and goals should be pursued, basically, all segments and factions of Russian elite share a certain set of common ideas, interests, perceptions and illusions about foreign policy and strategic issues. Russian 'grand strategy' results from mentality typical not only of major part of Russian elites yet also of a major part of Russian society as a whole inherited both from the Soviet and Imperial past. Its principal goal is restoration of the country's global superpower position by establishment of its sphere of dominance in Eurasia and Central Eastern Europe. Dmitry Rogozin, the present Russian ambassador to NATO, a personage having a shady reputation yet undeniably well informed about views and opinions in and around the Kremlin, said recently that the current tensions in Europe, result from

'destruction of the whole Yalta-Potsdam security system, the system of modern international security architecture, ... in which we've lived all those decades and saved the world from major wars. ... Destruction of this system is fraught with escalation of conflicts all over the world' ⁴¹⁾.

Thus, Rogozin revealed the idea, which Moscow normally does not like to publicize; namely that a restoration of the Yalta-Potsdam system, one pillar of which was Soviet domination over Central Eastern Europe, is a precondition of stable international security and as well Russia's final goal.

Russian elites believe also that since Russia is the second nuclear power and has enormous energy resources the international community should recognize its superpower position in Eurasia and neighbouring areas of Europe. Moscow hopes that the West's potency deteriorated because of Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran; differences between the USA and Europe; and - since the end of 2007 - due to economic crisis. Russia, the Kremlin thinks, should seize the propitious international opportunity before this 'window of opportunity' closes. Of course, the Russian ruling circles understand that the current crisis strongly damaged Russia's economy. However it does not result in major changes in its foreign policy as yet. Moscow expects that multibillion money reserves accumulated during the period of extra-high oil prices allow Russia to hold out till the new rise of oil and gas prices and that the West's ability to resist Russia's pressure decreases too because of the crisis.

⁴¹⁾ Record of the press-conference of Dmitry Rogozin, Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO, on 'Changes in Russia-NATO relationship after Kosovo independence', February 2, 2008. - <http://www.rian.ru/pressclub/20080222/99667207.html>



Moscow's strategic ambitions are not backed up by the country's true weight on the world arena. Although possessing the second largest nuclear arsenal, Russia failed to prevent NATO enlargement. Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas provides Moscow with some tools of political pressure upon a few European states. However, Russia can not radically reduce its energy export to Europe as the latter is the main source of revenues vitally needed for Russian 'petro-state type' economy. The divergence of strategic interests of the USA and Europe is seen by the most of Russian policy makers considerably more profound and serious than it really is.

The gap between Moscow's ambitions and capacities results in international failures. Being unable to recognize their strategic blunders Russian ruling cohorts puts the blame for those failures on external forces, the USA and NATO above all; and accuses them in preventing its rise as a powerful centre of the international system. In this light the Kremlin sees slackening of the West is one of Russia's fundamental foreign policy goals.

With that end in view the Kremlin bends every effort to emasculate transatlantic links and to enfeeble NATO which is seen as (and in fact is) core element of the transatlantic security and defence systems. With this in a view Russia also attempts to divide so called 'New' and 'Old' Europe and establish effective domination over the post-Soviet states⁴²⁾. In particular, Moscow's stubborn attempts to prevent the deployment of the 'third site' of American BMD in the Czech Republic and Poland signals that Moscow wants to legitimize its right to dictate security and defence related issues in the former WTO area.

Among other tools that Russia uses to achieve those goals are attempts to establish international institutions, regimes and/or systems of semi-formal consultations that abate transatlantic links and structures, NATO above all, and provide Russia with some levers of influence upon European security policy⁴³⁾. The mentioned institutions and regimes were – and are – often veiled as 'not confrontational, not discriminatory and open' pan-European collective security systems without 'lines dividing Europe', differing thus from a defence alliance like NATO, which is called as 'closed' and 'discriminatory'. Those attempts roots in the Soviet period, starting with the Soviet idea of an all-European process aimed to legitimize the Soviet dominance over the former WTO countries. The latter was called as cementing 'the geopolitical results of the second World War'. The other examples are Gorbachev's 'Common European House'; Yeltsin's 'pan-European security order'; the idea of Russia-Germany-France 'triangle' advanced during the Iraqi war in 2003; and current

⁴²⁾ Medvedev's foreign policy doctrine presumes both the former Soviet republics and the former Soviet bloc members are within regions of Russia's 'privileged interests'. Medvedev defined those regions as the areas where the countries located with which Russia shares 'special historical relations', with which it is 'bound together as friends and good neighbours', and with which it will 'build friendly ties'. (See: Interview given by Dmitry Medvedev to television channels Channel One, Rossia, NTV. - http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml) 'Special historical relations', 'good neighbourhood', 'friendly ties' are used in the Russian political jargon with reference not only to the former Soviet republics but also to the former Soviet bloc members.

⁴³⁾ The arsenal of methods Moscow uses to attain those goals includes: usage of Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas, including establishment of "privileged energy relationships" with a number of European countries; attempts to control a part of gas downstream in a number of European states with a view to obtain a tool of political influence upon them; usage of NATO's dependence on Russian transit routes to the ISAF; demonstration of military force ("patrol flights" of Russian strategic bombers nearby air-space of some European countries, Russian-Byelorussian military exercises) and military pressure upon Europe (destruction of the CFE-Treaty regime that is of substantial importance for Europe; threats to withdraw from the INF Treaty and to station new Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad area that may result in a new missile crisis in Europe); exploitation of anti-American feelings spread across some parts of European societies and elites especially during the George W. Bush presidency.



proposal of a USA-EU-Russia 'triangle'⁴⁴⁾. Medvedev's initiative is the most recent and most far-reaching enterprise of this kind. In this light setting hopes on engaging Moscow into a constructive relationship with NATO and the Western states by discussing of a 'new European security architecture' is looking unpractical.

Medvedev's initiative and positions of various Russian élites

Those are the basic foreign policy attitudes shared by the vast majority of Russian political class. However, various segments of Moscow's political and military elites differ about possible use of Medvedev's initiative in Russia's practical foreign policy and tactics to realize it. A few analysts and political commentators (Fyodor Lukyanov, Timofei Bordachev, Nadya Alexandrova-Arbatova and some others) centred round Sergey Karaganov, known as a confidant of Sergey Prihod'ko, the chief of international staff of the Presidential Administration, use 'soft type' arguments backing up Medvedev's initiative. For instance, Fyodor Lukyanov, the editor-in-chief of Karaganov's journal *Russia in Global Affairs*, makes reference to a theory that the Medvedev's initiative is in a line with much more general 'natural mutual gravitation' of Russia and Europe to each other and enlarging gap between Europe and America. He characterizes this initiative as a 'novel intellectual approach' needed for emergence of a 'Greater Europe' able to counterweight the USA and China⁴⁵⁾. Of course, neither Fyodor Lukyanov nor any other analyst of a Karaganov's circle was able to develop so sophisticated argumentation themselves. Basically, they imitate the theory of emerging 'Eurosphere' or a new 'European empire' embracing the former Soviet Union, Africa and the Middle East developed in the early 2000s by a few European political thinkers.

For her part, Nadya Alexandrova-Arbatova, argues that Medvedev's initiative is a kind of signal addressing to the West that Medvedev looks for substantial changes in Russian foreign policy, wishes to refuse from confrontational rhetoric and jesters typical of his predecessor, Vladimir Putin, and make Russia more cooperative with the West⁴⁶⁾. Those points are sorts

⁴⁴⁾ Former Polish Foreign Minister Adam Daniel Rotfeld wrote: 'Russian proposals (Medvedev's initiative – Yu.F.) are hardly new. Suffice it to recall Mikhail Gorbachev's initiative of the end of 1980s, to build, as part of the perestroika policy, a united democratic Europe – "our common European home". Public statements of Russian leaders – Vladimir Putin, Dimitri Medvedev and Sergei Lavrov – have been more a manifestation of continuity of Russian political way of thinking than an answer to the change which occurred in Europe in the past twenty years'. – See: Adam Daniel Rotfeld, 'Does Europe Need a New Security Architecture?', Paper presented at the Seminar organized by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and MFA, Helsinki, 26-27 March, 2009, Finland, P. 13

⁴⁵⁾ Lukyanov wrote recently: 'Europe may quite soon discover that it is losing its position as the US's main partner, while Asia replaces it. It will be an unpleasant realization, undermining the traditional horizon of European politics. At the same time, possible US attempts to gain European aid in strengthening American dominance over all the world (which in Washington's eyes is what the new era of trans-Atlantic solidarity should mean), may make Europe resilient on its own. ... During the next few decades, Russia and the European Union are destined to closely interact with each other if they want to play important roles in the 21st century. However, the creation of a model for such interaction requires and the renunciation of numerous stereotypes inherited from the past century. The construction of a new "Greater Europe" on the basis of Russia and the EU is a task comparable in scale to that which the architects of European integration set themselves after World War II'. – See: Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Europe Needs a New Security Architecture', Russian analytical digest, N 55, February 18, 2009, p. 5

⁴⁶⁾ Alexandrova-Arbatova wrote: 'From the very beginning, President Medvedev's foreign policy agenda differed from that of his predecessor ... Medvedev is focused on cooperation with the West, rather than confrontation. While in Berlin in June 2008, during his first trip as the newly elected president, he proposed a universally binding international security agreement



of 'carrot' Russian analysts close to the Kremlin propose to Europe. Yet they develop a stick too. In the article published in April 2009 Karaganov outlined a few basic points of the concept typical of this part of the Russian political and bureaucratic elite⁴⁷⁾:

- Europe (and the West as a whole) is in the face of strategic dilemma: either to accept Russia's proposal or to be threatened by a prospect of a renewal of Cold war.
- 'De-facto freezing of NATO enlargement' and mutual recognition of Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are integral elements of a future European security treaty. 'If attempts to enlarge NATO continue there is a threat of Russia's transformation from a revisionist state, which changes disadvantageous rules of a game imposed upon it during the 1990s, into a revanchist state'.
- The OSCE should be transformed into an OCSCE – an Organization of Collective Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has military-political functions. (It actually means that this OCSCE will absorb NATO or capture some of its functions.)
- The suggested treaty should be supplemented with a treaty on Union of Europe, which will be a unification of Russia and the EU on the basis of common economic, energy, and human spaces. This entity should be supplemented by a constructive 'triangle cooperation' with the USA and China.

The theory of a 'strategic dilemma' facing Europe is a clear cut example of the blackmailing tactics inheres in Russia's foreign policy. For its part, the idea of European - Russian 'strategic partnership' or even unification able to counterweight the USA and improve thus Europe's posture in the international system may attract some Europeans. Yet looking attractive this theory is fundamentally wrong. It totally ignores the fact that Russia has already turned into a revanchist state as well as a deep value gap between Russia and Europe, principal differences between political nature of these two entities, and, what is even more important, the essence of Russia's 'grand strategy' aimed not at formation of a kind of strategic alliance with Europe but at capitalizing on differences within the transatlantic community.

At last, Medvedev's international policy is still more militant and anti-Western than Putin's policy was. It was Medvedev who ordered Russian troops to march into Georgia, proclaimed the doctrine of Russia's zones 'privileged interests', decided to station Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad area in response to American BMD in Poland and the Czech Republic, and proclaimed more than once crude anti-Western statements typical of diehard Russian circles.

The activities of Karaganov's group (and some other groups and figures in Russian academia and mass-media that gravitate to the Kremlin rather than to Foreign Ministry and military)

using the template of the Helsinki accords. This proposal has been criticised as a new Gorbachev-like initiative – "say something glamorous first, and worry about implementation later". But in its substance, it was a message to the West, first and foremost NATO, to identify a new agenda for transatlantic cooperation, to readjust it to the post-bipolar security challenges and to reduce the gap in security between Russia and the West – surely not an unworthy objective". – See: Nadia Alexandrova-Arbatova, 'Russia after the Presidential Elections: Foreign Policy Orientations'. In: 'Russian Foreign Policy. The EU-Russia Centre Review', Issue 8, October 2008, P. 11

⁴⁷⁾ Sergey Karaganov, 'Magiya tzifr – 2009' (The magic of figures – 2009), *Russia in global affairs*, N 2, March-April 2009. - <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/37/11573.html>



reveal some intentions and methods of the international staff of the Presidential Administration. Most probably, the latter strives to demonstrate that it is able to achieve the strategic goals mentioned above by 'soft methods' rather than rude pressure. It cultivates some 'special relationship' with academic and political circles in the Western countries who naively believe that it would be possible to establish cooperative relationship with Russia if to stop 'irritate' the Kremlin by further NATO's enlargement, American BMD in Europe et cetera.

Partly, such activities of the presidential staff result from a bureaucratic rivalry with the Foreign Ministry. Yet also this policy reflects interests of fractions of Russian top circles, mainly business and bureaucratic groups involved deeply in economic relations with the West. Those circles shares the basic attitudes of Russian 'grand strategy' yet would like to avoid a new Cold war as it may upset their business, political and in some cases personal interests related to Europe.

While the Presidential Administration is inclined to use 'soft arguments' supporting Medvedev's initiative, the Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his high rank lieutenants make no secret of the fact that this initiative is aimed at marginalization of NATO and the OSCE. The main argument they use is that 'NATO-centrism' of the existing European security architecture is outmoded and what is more is a source of insecurities at the continent. This may have two explanations. The top officials from the Foreign Ministry may underestimate Europe's ability to resist Russian pressure and overestimate European dependence on Russia energy and communications with the ISAF as well as controversies between Europe and the USA. Also, Russian Foreign Ministry may wrongly conclude that current debates in NATO about the future of the Alliance mean the beginning of the end of it. In addition, this approach may result from European 'soft' reaction to Russian invasion into Georgia. However, whatever the reasons of such policy are, its content is more or less clear: Russia should exert pressure upon Europe and the USA to gain as much as possible from current Western political weakness and inability to shape coherent joint policy towards Russia.

At the same time, the approach to Medvedev's initiative characteristic of the Russian Foreign Ministry may signal that its top circles are in a latent opposition to this idea the same as Russian military command. Russian diplomats are knowledgeable enough to realize that despite debates about NATO's future attempts to marginalize it are hardly acceptable for the vast majority of Europeans. Despite differences in attitudes towards the USA all European members of the Alliance are vitally interested in NATO's existence. In this light one may suppose that anti-NATO argumentation backing up this Kremlin's initiative is designed to just prompt Europe to refute it. On the one hand, this will provide additional arguments to Russian diehard circles to intensify opposition with the West; while on the other allows Russia to avoid making concessions that those circles consider as unacceptable.

There is a body of evidence that Russian military do not support Medvedev's initiative. Almost no Russian military officers and experts close to the armed forces participate in development and propaganda of this idea. Unlike mass-media close to the Kremlin which more or less regularly published articles supporting "Medvedev's initiative", neither Krasnaya zvezda, the official news-paper of the Defence Ministry, nor Voenno-promyshlennii kurier, the influential unofficial mouthpiece of the Russian military and



defence industry, have published anything substantial in support of a 'new security architecture in Europe'. It is also indicative that Sergey Ivanov, the first vice-premier responsible for defence industry and one of the top figures in the Russian security sector, when speaking at the Munich Security conference in February 2009 has outlined Russia's approaches to a wide set of arms control and security issues yet has not said a word about a 'new security architecture in Europe' and did not mention corresponding Medvedev's initiative. Given a Byzantine nature of Russian politics it was a clear signal that he himself, and most probably circles he belongs to do not approve the initiative advanced by the president of Russia.

This may result from two basic reasons. Russian military command suspects that being involved into negotiations and being highly interested in their successful results the Kremlin's administration and the President himself may make such concessions to the West, which will be incompatible with the interests of Russian military coterie. In particular, Russian military command may be concerned with a prospect of establishment in one or other way some restrictions on deployment of Russian forces and military activities at the Russian territory. It is not a secret that the main reason why Russia withdrew from the CFE Treaty was so called 'flank limits' because the generals were strongly irritated by the restrictions on armaments in those zones.

Also, as a matter of fact Russian military command is not interested in a 'new security architecture in Europe', even the most advantageous for Russia. Firstly, it will mean a strengthening of the Foreign Ministry's role in formation of Russian foreign and security policy, enfeebling thus role of military in shaping of the country's international behaviour. Yet what would be even more important, successful implementation of Medvedev's initiative will most probably prevent deployment of new Russian Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad area. Meanwhile, given the deterioration of the Russian general purpose (conventional) forces and growing difficulties in maintaining the strategic nuclear arsenal Russian military are very interested in production and deployment of new Iskander missiles (especially its cruise version of battle range of 2000 kilometres and more) in the Western part of the country⁴⁸⁾. They consider these missiles as the only weapon able to counterbalance a hypothetical deployment of American highly-precise platforms, sea and air-based long range cruise missiles above all, in areas nearby Russian western borders.

In this light Russian military, especially the Command of Land Forces, are interested neither in American refusal from the BMD deployment in the Czech Republic and Poland as in this case there will be no justification for stationing Iskanders, nor in mutual refusal of "unilateral actions" until possible negotiations result in concluding of a European security treaty, nor in positive results of those negotiations. Thus, one may expect that Russian Ministry of Defence and the Command of Land Forces, which will be involved directly into formulation

⁴⁸⁾ Russian mass-media made it known that it is planned to station in the Kaliningrad region up to five missile brigades (60 launchers) equipped with Iskander missiles. There are three modifications of Iskander missile:

- Iskander-E, also known as SS-26 Stone, is a ballistic missile of battle range of about 280 kilometres.
- Iskander-M, a ballistic missile of the battle range up to 500 kilometres or more.
- Iskander-K, cruise missile also known as R-500. In 2007 Russian military have tested it with a range of about 400 kilometres. However, information appeared that this missile could be of battle range up to 2 000 kilometres, as it is an upgrade modification of Soviet land-based cruise missile RK-55, also known as CSS-X-4 Slingshot.



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of Russian stance at hypothetical negotiations, will be highly reluctant to any compromise solutions, and will prefer the absence or failure of negotiations rather than their success based on mutually accepted concessions.

Conclusions

Since the Corfu process started in the end of June, 2009 and will hardly be stopped unless Moscow initiates a new aggression against its neighbours the West should developed a coherent single strategy including formulation of the final end - or ends - it likes to achieve in the result of debates with Russia. It seems that this strategy could be focused on a few most important security issues facing Europe but not on a Pan-European security treaty whatever shape it may assume. One should remember that the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975 and which was portrayed as the peak of a 'détente' did not prevent the missile crisis of the 1970-80s, one of the most dangerous episodes of the Cold war.



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