

# Medvedev's Initiative: A Trap for Europe?<sup>1</sup>

Yury Fedorov<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

The informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers (Corfu, June 27–28, 2009) launched the so-called 'Corfu Process'. Greek Foreign Minister, Theodora Bakoyannis, summarizing the meeting's discussions noted that the 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.<sup>3</sup>

The Corfu Process was initiated, at least partly, by Russia's assertive efforts to develop a legally binding pan-European security treaty which will develop 'new security architecture in Europe.' This implies reshaping existing, and creating new institutions and norms regulating security relations in Europe and in a wider geopolitical space stretching *east* 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok.' It is also known as the 'Medvedev Initiative,' since the initial proposal was advanced by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (June 2008).

Moscow's idea of developing 'new security architecture in Europe' was not generally supported by other participants in the Corfu meeting.<sup>4</sup> Most Europeans are skeptical about developing new, and modifying existing, security institutions,

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<sup>2</sup> Yury Fedorov is a Principal Research Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London UK; an Associate Fellow of AMO, Czech Republic and a lecturer at Metropolitan University Prague. He may be reached at: [fedorovyury@googlemail.com](mailto:fedorovyury@googlemail.com).

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://www.osce.org/documents/cio/2009/06/38505_en.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> For example, 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 at: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/1010/42/379101.htm>.

seeing such approaches as attempts to enfeeble NATO, the OSCE, the EU and other European bodies. When it comes to Russia, most prefer dialogue on a number of concrete security issues, ranging from the future of the Conventional Forces Europe Treaty (CFE) to energy security, democracy, and human rights (etc).

One should not expect, however, that as a result of Corfu, Moscow retreats from its approach of translating some general political formulas, related to European security, into a legally binding framework. Speaking after the meeting of the NATO-Russia Council (also held in Corfu, June 27, 2009), Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted that Russian considerations of

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) format along with the discussions that have already begun in the OSCE, in our relations with the EU and in the political science community.<sup>5</sup>

This implies that Moscow will continue, and most probably intensify, its efforts to establish ‘new security architecture in Europe’ instead of working to maintain the current system based on NATO and, in a wider context, on transatlantic cooperation.

For their part, a number of leading EU figures hoped that debates on European security would deepen trust between Russia and the West and thereby prod Moscow to a more cooperative relationship.<sup>6</sup> On the Western side of the Atlantic, a number of influential US political analysts close to the current administration support the Russian idea, seeing it as an element of a wider *reset* of Russia-US relations even if it comes at the expense of ‘subsuming NATO into a larger structure.’<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For a transcript of the Opening Statement and Response to Media Questions by Sergey Lavrov at following the informal Russia-NATO Council Meeting see: [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/15051d4e4e095e92c32575e40045431b?OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/15051d4e4e095e92c32575e40045431b?OpenDocument).

<sup>6</sup> In February 2009, Javier Solana mentioned that Medvedev’s proposals ‘deserve to be taken seriously. And engagement in a debate is in itself a road to build trust’. See: Javier Solana Madariaga, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009 at: [http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2009=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=235](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=235).

<sup>7</sup> 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 that “(t)he 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.

This raises an important question: what are the genuine driving forces and goals of Medvedev's Initiative, and how does it relate to the strategic interests of other European states? To answer this it is necessary to uncover what Russia's ambitions are vis-à-vis a pan-European security treaty.

## Medvedev's Initiative and the Development of Russia's Approach

Medvedev's initial proposal to conclude 'a regional pact based ... on the principles of the UN Charter and clearly defining the role of force as a factor in relations within the Euro-Atlantic community' occurred during a speech in Berlin (June 5, 2008) where he insisted that it should be a legally binding treaty 'in which the organisations currently working in the Euro-Atlantic area could become parties.' Talks for that treaty, Medvedev announced, should begin at a pan-European summit.<sup>8</sup> The arguments Medvedev deployed in support of his proposals revealed an important goal: to marginalize NATO, substitute existing transatlantic security and defence links by a general regional collective security system. Regarding the OSCE, it frustrates Moscow by monitoring elections in Russia, among other newly independent post-Soviet states. Medvedev cynically informed his German audience that

Atlanticism as a sole historical principle has already had its day ... [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 ... an organisation such as the OSCE ... prevented from becoming a full-fledged general regional organisation [because of] the obstruction created by other groups intent on continuing the old line of bloc politics.<sup>9</sup>

Medvedev reiterated the idea of a pan-European security treaty on a number of occasions including at the EU-Russia summit in Khanty-Mansiysk (June 2008) and again at a meeting with Russian ambassadors (July 15, 2008). The idea was met with scepticism. It is difficult to gain the trust of other European states by proposing an encompassing political initiative substantiated by rhetoric about Atlanticism that has 'had its days' and NATO that has lost its *raison d'être*.

The Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy, a doctrinal document developed within the Foreign Ministry, and approved by Medvedev (July 12, 2008), denoted new European security architecture in a single paragraph:

<sup>8</sup> Dmitry Medvedev, Meeting with German Political, Parliamentary and Civic Leaders, June 5, 2008, Berlin, available at: [http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/06/05/2203\\_type82912\\_type82914type84779\\_202153.shtml](http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/06/05/2203_type82912_type82914type84779_202153.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

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.<sup>10</sup>

The language deployed in this document was misleading, and notions of ‘truly open,’ or ‘democratic regional security system’ were elusive. The former, for instance, may imply that this security system should not be limited by geographic boundaries, or that any political actor or state may participate. The only clear message was that Medvedev’s Initiative was aimed at marginalizing NATO. That was the real essence of the passage that a new security system in Europe would not “allow ... [the] reproduction of bloc-based approaches.”

Most probably the paragraph noted above was a last minute insertion into an existing text on the concept of Russia’s foreign policy. Although the establishment of ‘a truly open, democratic system of regional collective security and cooperation’ has been characterized as a key goal of Russia’s policy in Europe, this idea was not further elaborated in this document, and the bulk of the European section of the Concept was subordinated to more traditional diplomatic topics such as Russia’s relations with the EU, Council of Europe, NATO and NATO-Russia Council, and specific bilateral issues.

Until August 2008 Medvedev’s Initiative looked amateurish; a demonstration that the newly elected president was capable of producing and articulating new and impressive political ideas. At the same time, it was a naïve attempt to bolster Russia’s influence on security developments in Europe while cutting into the influence into Western institutions such as NATO. It was likely advanced by a few senior members of Medvedev’s Administration, perhaps in cooperation with a group of so-called ‘political analysts’ who were either unable or unwilling to develop a more meticulous exposé of this plan, including the content and subject of the proposed treaty, parties to it, its correlation to existing security arrangements among other important details, and sufficient argumentation supporting the idea which could be accepted in European decision-making circles.

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<sup>10</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. Approved by President of the Russian Federation, July 12, 2008, available at: <http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

In August 2008 Medvedev's Initiative had all but disappeared from the foreign policy agendas of both Russia and EU states, due to Russia's aggression against Georgia. However, in September 2008 it began to play a much more central role in Russian foreign policy than before. Russian diplomacy enhanced its efforts in promoting it. On one hand, due to the invasion of Georgia, some EU states, (France, Germany, Italy and Belgium), warmed to the Russian initiative, which they believed might constrain Russian aggressiveness.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, the deterioration of Russia's international reputation fuelled Moscow's search for new approaches and tools to mitigate the negative reaction of Russia's behaviour in the Caucasus, as well as strengthen its ability to influence developments in Europe. For this reason, the establishment of a 'new European security architecture' was included in the list of priorities of Russian policy in Europe and the Russian Foreign Ministry intensified political and information campaigns promoting Medvedev's Initiative.

Addressing the World Policy Conference in (Evian), France, on October 8, 2008, Medvedev expressed 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) The treaty should establish basic parameters for arms control and new cooperation mechanisms for combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and drug trafficking.

Simultaneously, Medvedev accused NATO (and the US) of pursuing policies hostile to Russia. Aggressively, Medvedev indicated the, *de facto*, revival of deterrence – as a legitimate policy – and listed Moscow's standard

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<sup>11</sup> Russian experts from the Institute of World Economy and International Relations wrote that "(t)he conflict in the Caucasus has led primary European countries (France and Germany above all) to a 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 the 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, 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, available at: [http://www.globalaffairs.ru/docs/imemo\\_prognosis.pdf](http://www.globalaffairs.ru/docs/imemo_prognosis.pdf).

set of accusations against the West. Despite Medvedev's provocative tone, his declarations were received by some positive responses from some EU states. French President Nicolas Sarkozy emphasized the importance of Euro-Atlantic solidarity, though also expressed his belief that Russia *is* a privileged partner of the EU in the security area, supported Medvedev's critique of the US, and suggested holding the OSCE summit in 2009 to discuss Medvedev's idea of a new system of European security.<sup>12</sup>

A month later, speaking at the EU-Russia summit in Nice (November 2008) Medvedev added two important points to his proposal: Russia agreed with the EU's and NATO's participation 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 the negotiations must avoid undertaking 'unilateral actions.' Medvedev suggested that

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) 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.<sup>13</sup>

Consenting to the participation of the EU and NATO in future negotiations was a concession. A number of EU states made it clear that any new security arrangements should include NATO and the OSCE. At the same time the participation of the CSTO in those talks would allow Moscow to portray this amorphous and loose military bloc as a sound international actor, fully legitimate and recognized in Europe, and thus able to consolidate it. Importantly, Russia suggested general refrain from any 'unilateral actions' until a new agreement was concluded, which may take a very long time. This suggests that any measures taken by NATO, the EU or individual European states, unwelcome by Moscow, may be interpreted as a 'unilateral action' and thus be restrained.

A few additional points of details have helped clarify Moscow's position vis-à-vis Medvedev's Initiative since the Nice speech. Lukov (Russian Ambassador to Belgium), noted that the treaty may include urgent consultations with the state which believes that its security is threatened.<sup>14</sup> In December 2008 Lavrov (Russian Foreign Minister) announced that an identification of the basic principles for the development of arms control regimes, confidence

<sup>12</sup> Arkady Dubnov, 'Nashli vremya i mesto' (They found the time and place), *Vremya novostei*, October 9, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Press Conference (together with French President Sarkozy and European Commission President, Barroso), November 14, 2008; available at: [http://www.president.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/11/14/2100\\_type63377type63380type82634\\_209203.shtml](http://www.president.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/11/14/2100_type63377type63380type82634_209203.shtml).

<sup>14</sup> Address of the Russian Ambassador to Belgium, Lukov, November 26, 2008, available at: [http://www.belgium.mid.ru/press/posol\\_r\\_034.html](http://www.belgium.mid.ru/press/posol_r_034.html).

building measures, and restraint in military developments should be established and developed by the proposed treaty. Yet his deputy, Alexander Grushko, speaking at the joint meeting of the OSCE Forum for security and cooperation, and the Permanent Council (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 (1999). 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 also said 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).<sup>15</sup>

It looked as though the intense promotion of Medvedev's Initiatives' focus on developing new security architecture in Europe came while a sense of confusion prevented Russia's diplomatic mechanisms from fully advancing such a comprehensive security concept. However, Moscow was steadfast on a particular point. Russian senior officials did not conceal that the final aim of restructuring 'European security architecture' is meant to diminish NATO's role in the European security landscape. They insisted 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.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Russian officials claim that the wars in (former) Yugoslavia, the recognition of Kosovo, the war in Georgia (August 2008), the crisis of the CFE Treaty among other negative developments in Europe, resulted from the 'centrality of NATO.'

Such arguments act as examples of political hypocrisy. NATO deployed force in (former) Yugoslavia with the aim of ending the policy of ethnic cleansing implemented by Milosevic's regime (which was supported by Russia). It was Russia – not NATO – which fuelled hyper-nationalism in Serbia. Also, the war in the Caucasus was, in fact, Russian aggression against Georgia.<sup>17</sup> Lastly, the collapse of the CFE Treaty resulted from Russia's

<sup>15</sup> Statement by Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexandre Grushko, at the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation and the Permanent Council, 18 February 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Sergey Lavrov "Russian Foreign Policy and a New Quality of the Geopolitical Situation", Diplomatic Yearbook 2008. This document is available at: [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005\\_bcb3/19e7b14202191e4ac3257525003e5de7?OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005_bcb3/19e7b14202191e4ac3257525003e5de7?OpenDocument).

<sup>17</sup> In 2004/5, Russia sent dozens of military instructors to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and most senior military and security-related ministries' positions were filled by Russian Officers. In May 2004, Russia began to construct its 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 of peacekeeping operations. On May 26, 2008 Russian railway

stubborn refusal to withdraw its forces from Moldova and decommission the Gudauta military base in Abkhazia. Now, the restoration of the CFE Treaty regime is being blocked by Russia's occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and by the construction of several Russian military facilities on those territories.

## Lavrov's Address: Same Wine, New Bottle

The latest version of Medvedev's Initiative was articulated by Lavrov in his address at the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference in Vienna (June 23, 2009). This address attempted to pour the same anti-NATO wine into a new bottle. The Kremlin decided to base its interest of marginalizing NATO on a concept of 'indivisibility of security.' Lavrov portrayed the latter as a 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. He announced that 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.<sup>18</sup>

The existence of NATO, Lavrov continued, contradicts the principle of 'indivisibility of security' because it results in the formation of two zones of *different* security, a 'NATO area' and a non-NATO area; fragmenting the 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.'<sup>19</sup> The next, and the most important, element of Lavrov's argument was that, in order to improve security in Europe (or rather within the

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troops illegally crossed over into Abkhazia. On July 9, four Russian jets violated Georgian airspace (later admitted by Moscow). On August 3, 2008, general mobilization 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 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, available at: [http://www.hudson.org/files/documents/AndreiIllarionov speech.pdf](http://www.hudson.org/files/documents/AndreiIllarionov%20speech.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Address by Lavrov to the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009. See: [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/9eb56f1ecaad3ab5c32575df00362cc9?OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/9eb56f1ecaad3ab5c32575df00362cc9?OpenDocument).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



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

problem could have been easily solved and not necessarily through the liquidation of NATO [sic] following the 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.<sup>20</sup>

Politically, this would an attempt to marginalize NATO by placing it under the control of a more robust OSCE. This attempt is naïve, as one could hardly expect NATO to voluntarily agree to subordinate itself to any other international body. Also, if the OSCE is turned into a regional organization 'within the meaning of Chapter VII of the UN Charter', it would be even less effective in maintaining peace than the UN because decisions would have to be taken by all 56 members of the OSCE, not the five permanent representatives of the UNSC. In addition, there is a basic difference between NATO and the OSCE: the former is a defence alliance designed to defend its members against exogenous aggression; while the latter aims to prevent and resolve conflicts between its members. Finally, zones of different security in Europe exists not because of NATO, but due to insecurity in areas beyond NATO's zone of responsibility. In part, such insecurity is the result of Russia's attempts to impose its political will through intrigues, the use of gas exports as a political weapon, and the depolyment of raw military force. For instance, Latvia's security is more comprehensive than Georgia's due to Latvia's membership in NATO while Georgia is not protected against Russian aggression.

## How Moscow Hopes to Undermine NATO

Lavrov's address confirmed Russia's goal of undermining NATO by establishing new international institutions, rules and frameworks to constrain NATO's activities.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Lavrov outlined the content of a Pan-European security treaty, which reveals how Moscow plans to achieve this goal.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> On May 16, 2009 2009, Medvedev made it clear that Russia aimed to undermine 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... if we can create a new

According to Lavrov, the proposed treaty should consist of four main parts. The first should confirm, in a legally binding form, the basic principles for intergovernmental relations in the Euro-Atlantic area. This includes a commitment to fulfil, in good faith, obligations under international law; respect for sovereignty; the inadmissibility of the use or threat of force against both the territorial integrity and the political independence of states, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and the right of peoples to dispose of their destiny, and respect for all other principles set out in the UN Charter.

This is nothing but a list of basic principles in the opening chapter of the Helsinki Final Act (1975). It is indicative, however, that Russia does not include itself in a project for a pan-European security treaty such as: respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; equal rights; and self-determination of peoples. A reproduction of those principles, as legally binding provisions, would be insufficient for providing a security foundation in Europe, as it is in any other part of the world.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, the cornerstone of this part of the proposed treaty is the demand to guarantee, in a legally binding form, ‘equal security.’ The latter is interpreted as: a) not ensuring one’s own security at the expense of others; b) not allowing acts (by military alliances or coalitions) that weaken the unity of the common security space, ‘particularly to 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’; and 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 may bear exclusive rights to maintain peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>23</sup>

Such principles look attractive at first glance. However, their implementation will trap the EU. Some of these principles were mentioned in the Charter

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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: Medvedev, Interview with Sergei Brilyov, Vesti V Subbotu [News on Saturday], Rossiya Television, May 16, 2009. See: [http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2009/05/16/1134\\_type84779\\_216376.shtml](http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2009/05/16/1134_type84779_216376.shtml).

<sup>22</sup> 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*, 55, February 18, 2009, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Lavrov, OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009.

for European Security, approved at the OSCE Istanbul Summit (1999) and, as such, are already internationally accepted. But, if turned into legally binding clauses of an international treaty, such abstract political formulas may be used as a powerful legal tool able to limit the ability of a state to enhance its defence and security mechanisms.<sup>24</sup> In particular, Moscow would acquire a legitimate right to prevent any action of the US, NATO, the EU or individual European states on the pretext that it either ensures their own security at the expense of Russia's, or undermines the 'unity 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, 'preeminent responsibility' (or 'exclusive rights') means. This clause may be interpreted in a way that NATO is not permitted to undertake operations beyond the zone of its traditional responsibility, or even within this zone, without the consent of Russia or the CSTO.

In a wider context, the trap for the EU results from the fact that if a political formula turns into a clause of a legally binding arrangement it automatically necessitates the establishment of an international institution capable of monitoring the implementation of such a clause. In other words, if the EU agrees with Russia's idea to forbid 'ensuring someone's security at the expense of the others,' then it would be necessary to establish a body authorized to assess and conclude whether a particular action 'ensures someone's security at the expense of the others,' or 'undermines the unity of the common security space', or not, and make binding decisions about such actions. Lavrov suggested that Moscow plans to establish institutions of this kind able to control the West's activities in defence and security related areas. He announced that 'it will also be necessary to agree on the mechanisms to ensure the universal application of this and other previously agreed principles.'<sup>25</sup> Lavrov's Vienna speech made clear that Russia sees a reformed OSCE as such an institution. If implemented, this scheme restricts the ability of NATO and the EU to advance their members' security as they see fit.

The implementation of Lavrov's proposals also could result in the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic security institution that parallels NATO. For instance, a reformed or enforced OSCE, which would assume partial responsibilities

<sup>24</sup> Russian analyst, Dmitry Trenin, deciphered this principle accurately as, four no's: 'no NATO in the CIS countries; no US bases in the CIS countries; no support for anti-Russian regimes in the CIS countries; and no ABM deployment near Russia's borders' because Moscow views such actions as attempts to ensure NATO's security at the expense of Russia's. See: <http://www.svobodanews.ru/Article/2008/11/28/20081128185141033.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Sergey Lavrov, "How to Bring the Cold War to a Conclusive End?", *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, May 21, 2009, available at: [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/3dad89fa866b2502c32575be003b7eff?OpenDocument](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/3dad89fa866b2502c32575be003b7eff?OpenDocument).

for peace-making and peace-building, would also create difficulties for NATO and the EU. Therefore, if discussions about ‘new European security architecture’ are based on Russia’s proposals, the West would engage in debates about mechanisms for marginalizing NATO, restricting its activities as well as those of individual European states, and the US, in security and defense areas, and providing Russia with additional institutional capabilities to influence security related decisions in Europe.

The second part of the treaty proposed by Moscow focuses on basic principles for the development of arms control regimes, and the reinforcement of confidence, restraint and reasonable sufficiency in military building. This includes the principles of non-offensive defence and the renunciation of any additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces outside of national territory.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of negotiating particular arms controls among other ‘hard’ security issues, that are important for Europe, such as the restoration of the CFE Treaty regime, or control over tactical nuclear weapons, Moscow wants to revise the earlier basic principles and mechanisms of arms control agreements, the CFE Treaty and confidence building measures. It confirms that Russia’s military is looking for new international legal instruments aimed at a substantial reduction of military potentials of NATO in Europe and proximate areas. In addition, Moscow aims to force the West to recognize and accept Russian military presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, occupied, *de facto*, by Russian soldiers.

The third part of the proposed treaty is based on principles of conflict settlement (including the inadmissibility of the use of force); respect for negotiations and peacekeeping formulas; confidence-building measures; and fostering dialogue between parties (etc). Issues related to the use of force, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution are regulated by the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, among other international documents. It is unclear what Moscow intends to add.

The fourth part is dedicated to countering new threats and challenges, including the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), international terrorism, and illicit drug trafficking and other types of transnational crime (TOC). Cooperation between Russia and Western countries on these matters should be welcome. Yet, to be seen as committed to cooperation, Russia should also support Western efforts to prevent Iran’s nuclear weapons program and end its supply of modern weaponry to Iran, and stop blocking the development of practical measures to prevent the spread of biological weapons, which is of growing importance.

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<sup>26</sup> Lavrov, OSCE Annual Security Review Conference, Vienna, June 23, 2009.

## International Reactions to Medvedev's Initiative

The international reaction to Medvedev's Initiative is mixed and largely incoherent. Disparity results from acute differences of approaches found among various European actors. Georgia, the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), and most Central and East European states are suspicious of this Initiative.<sup>27</sup> They reason that it may undermine NATO while it is still capable of defending them from Russian military aggression and pressure. Their decision-makers and (in some countries), sizable segments of the public are irritated by Moscow's hypocrisy, and are concerned with the reluctance of Western states to explicitly declare the defence of new NATO members in case of possible Russian aggression.<sup>28</sup>

For their part, the leaders of France, Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, Belgium (among others) believe that it would be expedient to benefit from the Russian offer and negotiate with Russia on European security issues. They believe that the EU, NATO, and 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, as a result, encourage Russia to deepen its ties to the EU so that a new network structure could emerge to assist in reducing Moscow's belligerence. They are also persuaded that there are a number of international security threats (WMD proliferation, terrorism, drug-trafficking, etc) that cannot be solved without Russian cooperation.<sup>29</sup> The UK has altered its previously negative stance towards Medvedev's

<sup>27</sup> In February 2009, (current) Estonian President, Toomas Ilves noted that '(a)fter 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 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, for 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, Speech at the 45th Munnich Security Conference, February 7, 2009, available at: [http://www.security.conference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2009=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=241&](http://www.security.conference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=241&).

<sup>28</sup> According to public opinion polls (carried out by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Financial Times) conducted in the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, fifty percent of polled Germans and two-fifths of polled Italians and Spaniards, would oppose their state sending troops to stop Russia from militarily engaging the Baltic states (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia). In contrast, two-fifths of polled French, and just over a third of polled Americans and Britons, would support their states involvement. See: [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/FTHarrisPoll/HT\\_FinancialTimes\\_HarrisPoll\\_September2008.pdf](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/FTHarrisPoll/HT_FinancialTimes_HarrisPoll_September2008.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> For instance, on February 3, 2009 French President Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel 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

Initiative and David Miliband (UK Foreign Secretary), said that future talks with Russia should result in the consolidation of the Western approaches to European security, including human rights, economic security, and other dimensions of security.<sup>30</sup>

Of critical importance is the position of the US: the very idea of pan-European arrangements on security in the European and Euro-Atlantic spaces is moot unless Washington agrees to participate. At the same time, if the US supports this idea, it may – and most probably will – encourage a number of European countries which have not taken a definite position on the issue, to agree to such arrangements. The Obama administration, unlike Bush's, is not as reluctant in accepting Medvedev's Initiative, yet (to date) Washington preserves its position on practical multilateral debates for 'new security architecture in Europe.' The Joint Statement published after the meeting of Medvedev and Obama (April 1, 2009) in London notes that

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.<sup>31</sup>

It seems that Obama views 'new security architecture in Europe' as an element of a wider strategic deal with Russia commonly known as a 'reset' of Russia-US relations, which was under discussion in Washington and Moscow in Spring 2009. Washington will probably make substantial concessions to Russia, including its consent to begin official discussions on Medvedev's Initiative,

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and commitment to the EU, NATO and OSCE, and 'to the well-trying and tested European standards underpinning our security, to the arms control and disarmament regimes, and to trans-Atlantic cooperation'. See: Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, "La sécurité, notre mission Commune," *Le Monde*, February 3, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Speaking at the Munich Security Conference (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, See: David Miliband, Speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009, available at: [http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2009=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=243](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=243).

<sup>31</sup> Joint Statement by Medvedev and Obama, April 1, 2009, see: <http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2009/04/214839.shtml>.

if Russia effectively supports US efforts of ending Iran's nuclear program, and supports NATO's stabilization mission in Afghanistan. It is not at all clear that Russia will, at this point, accept such a formula, however, Medvedev is a pragmatic leader and Russia may alter its position if it perceives greater benefits from doing so.

In this complicated political context, the Western approach to Medvedev's Initiative includes two basic elements: firstly, existing security institutions should not be undermined and may participate in security negotiations. At the same time, the West is ready to discuss unfolding security issues with Russia. For instance, at the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers (Brussels, December 2-3, 2008) NATO underscored that the existing structures, based on NATO, the EU, the OSCE and the Council of Europe, share common values, and provide opportunities for states to engage substantively on Euro-Atlantic security within a broad legal framework, that includes: respect for human rights, territorial integrity, the indivisibility of state sovereignty of all states, and the requirement to fulfill international commitments and agreements. They concluded that

(w)ithin 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 the implementation of existing commitments and to continue to improve existing institutions and instruments so as to effectively promote our values and Euro-Atlantic security.<sup>32</sup>

The EU position was presented by the Czech Republic's delegation in Vienna at the Joint Session of the Forum for Security Co-operation and Permanent Council (February 18, 2009). According to the statement, the EU believes that the OSCE is a 'natural' forum from which to debate wide European security issues, and that such a debate within the OSCE should focus on restoring confidence, allowing all participants to address their security concerns. The EU declared that

(i)t 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 considering ways and means to strengthen them ... The security of the

<sup>32</sup> Final Communiqué: Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Foreign Minister level, December 3, 2008, see: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-153e.html>.

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.<sup>33</sup>

In Corfu, most participants emphasized that existing security institutions function well, and additional institutions are unnecessary.<sup>34</sup> However, Bakoyannis' concluding remarks left the most important issues, a pan-European security treaty, and the transformation of the OSCE, open. Bakoyannis noted that

the Ministers concurred that it is also time to consider that much work remains to be done, 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.”<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, Bakoyannis listed some traditional and emerging threats which remain unresolved. This list includes:

- Protracted conflicts, ethnic tensions and unresolved border disputes;
- Europe's fundamental arms control regime, the CFE Treaty;
- Democracy, the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights;
- A deepening economic crisis;
- Energy security, illegal migration, human trafficking, terrorism and fundamentalism, cybercrime and rising instability in regions adjacent to the OSCE area (...).<sup>36</sup>

This list mostly refers to Western visions of security challenges facing present-day Europe. Yet the thesis about a ‘renovation’ of mechanisms to deal with security may also reflect, albeit indirectly, Russia's approach. Indeed, Bakoyannis reasserted the mantra of ‘the indivisibility of security from Vancouver to Vladivostok,’ used by Russia to substantiate a marginalization of NATO. It indicates that future debates on security issues in Europe may focus either on

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<sup>33</sup> 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 Cooperation and Permanent Council no. 38. Vienna 18 February 2009, Document FSC-PC.DEL/8/09.

<sup>34</sup> Following the Corfu meeting, Finnish Foreign Minister, Alexander Stubb (referring to NATO, the EU and the OSCE) noted that: “noone 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.

<sup>35</sup> Corfu Informal Meeting of OSCE Foreign Ministers on the Future of European Security Chair's Concluding Statement to the Press. Op cited.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



a number of the most important issues, like the restoration of the CFE Treaty regime and the restitution of the territorial integrity of Georgia, or on Russia's proposals aimed at undermining European and transatlantic security and defence capabilities.

A further trajectory of the Corfu process depends on answering crucial questions: whether it is possible to conclude a 'fair deal' with Moscow on strategic issues, acceptable to the West (as a whole), or to a few 'leading' Western countries? Or, does Russian aggressiveness result 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, thus fuelling further Russian belligerence?

This question is especially important because there are some circles in Europe (and the US) which advocate engagement with Russia despite its aggression against an independent country.<sup>37</sup> They emphasize that Russia's international behaviour stems from deep traumas in the collective Russian psyche caused by the crash of the Russian and Soviet Empires, crises related to transition, and nostalgia inevitable when such a heterogeneous society goes through fundamental changes. The principal mistakes made by the West – advocates of this approach insist – was in ignoring Russia's concerns about NATO's enlargement (including potential Ukrainian and Georgian membership); Western support for the so-called 'colour revolutions' in the post-Soviet space; and the inability to restrain Georgia from aggression against South Ossetia, which instigated the Russo-Georgian conflict (2008). In order to assess whether this approach is correct or not an outline of the strategic implications of Medvedev's Initiative, and how it correlates with basic trends in Russia's policy towards Europe, needs to be undertaken.

## **Medvedev's Initiative, Russia's 'Grand Strategy'**

Multilateral debates, with Russia, on European security are often substantiated by the point that ultimately such discussions may engage Moscow in a

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<sup>37</sup> For instance, a group of influential American analysts and political figures from the Commission on US policy to Russia stated that '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.

constructive relationship to NATO and Western states on the basis of shared interests. A group of US (former) high-ranking officials and analysts close to Obama expressed such a vision clearly, suggesting that

(p)rotecting 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.<sup>38</sup>

Similar views are found among some European politicians and academics who perceive that cooperation with Russia is of vital importance to neutralize new challenges, and assure both hard and soft European security, including the stability of energy supplies. They assert that Medvedev's Initiative provides an opportunity to reduce Russia's inherent distrust towards Europe, and the West more generally, and improve Russian-Western relations.

Neither the US nor EU has an interest of political or strategic opposition to Russia. In fact, the West is genuinely interested in cooperation with Moscow on a number of security issues. However, 'it takes two to tango' and the principal question is whether Russia is truly as interested as the EU and US are? To answer this, it is required to examine Russia's 'grand strategy' (towards Europe), and assess how particular segments of, and personalities in, Russia's policy-making community see Russia's interests, including how Medvedev's Initiative correlates with such views.

Various groups and personalities in Russia differ on how common interests and goals should be pursued, although most factions of the Russian elite share a basic set of ideas, interests, perceptions and illusions about foreign policy. Russian 'grand strategy' results from a mentality, typical not only of a major part of Russian elites, but also of a major part of Russian society, inherited from both its Soviet and Imperial past. Its principal goal is the restoration of Russia's superpower status through the recreation of its 'sphere of influence' in Eurasia and Central/East Europe. Dmitry Rogozin, (present) Russian Ambassador to NATO, recently said that current tensions in Europe, result from the

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.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> 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, available at: <http://www.rian.ru/pressclub/20080222/99667207.html>.

In this, Rogozin revealed a concept Moscow loathes to publicize; that the restoration of the Yalta-Potsdam system, a pillar of which was Soviet domination over Central/Eastern Europe, is a precondition for a stable international environment and is Russia's ultimate objective.

Russian elites also believe that since Russia is the world's second most influential nuclear power, and has enormous energy resources at its disposal, the international community should recognize its superpower position in Eurasia. Moscow hopes that a 'window of opportunity' has opened due to the West's perceived deteriorated global position – owing to fractures leading-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003), the failures in Iraq, the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and, since the end of 2007, the economic crisis – and that Russia could seize the opportunity to emerge as a superpower again. Of course, Russian ruling elites have understood that the current economic crisis has damaged Russia's economy too; however it has not yet resulted in any major alterations to its foreign policy. Russia expects that its large financial reserves, accumulated during periods of high oil and gas prices, allows Russia to maintain its posture until the next spike in hydrocarbon prices, and that the West's ability to resist Russia's pressure will decrease because of the crisis.

Moscow's strategic ambitions are not fully supported by its true weight in international relations. Although Russia possesses a massive military and the second largest nuclear arsenal in the world, it failed to prevent NATO enlargement into its traditional sphere of influence. EU dependence on Russian oil and gas may provide Moscow with *some* tools for lumping political pressure on a few European states, however, it is stuck in a quagmire since it cannot radically reduce its energy exports to the EU, as the sale of hydrocarbons is *the* main source of state revenues needed for Russia's 'petro-state type' economy. Also, divergence of strategic interests between the US and EU is regarded by many Russian policy makers as considerably more profound and serious than reality reflects.

The gap between Moscow's ambitions and capacities results in international debacles. Unable to recognize strategic blunders, Russia's ruling elites blame failure on external forces, notably the US and NATO, accusing them of preventing its rise to superpower status. To counter such external meddling, the subordination of the West is one of Russia's most fundamental foreign policy objectives. With such an objective, Russia seeks to interrupt transatlantic links, and enfeeble NATO. Russia also attempts to divide the so-called 'new' and 'old' Europe, and re-establish effective control over the post-Soviet states.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Medvedev's foreign policy doctrine presumes both the former Soviet republics and the former Soviet block states are within Russia's 'privileged interests.' Medvedev defined those regions as areas where Russia shares 'special historic relations,' to which it is 'bound together as friends and good neighbors,' and to which it will 'build friendly ties.' See: Interview with Dmitry Medvedev, available at: [http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2008/08/31/1850\\_type82912type82916\\_206003.shtml](http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml).

Russia uses a variety of tools to achieve its objectives including: attempts to establish international institutions, regimes and/or systems of semi-formal consultations that disrupt transatlantic links and structures, and provide Russia with some levers of influence on European security policy.<sup>41</sup> The aforementioned institutions and regimes were – and are – often veiled as ‘non-confrontational, non-discriminatory and open’ pan-European security systems without ‘dividing lines,’ thus differing from a defence alliance (NATO), which is regarded as ‘closed’ and ‘discriminatory.’ Such attempts are rooted in the Soviet period, beginning with the Soviet idea of an all-European process aimed at legitimizing Soviet domination over the former Warsaw Pact states. The latter was regarded as cementing ‘the geopolitical results of the second World War.’ Other examples include: Gorbachev’s ‘Common European House;’ Yeltsin’s ‘pan-European security order;’ the idea of a Russia-Germany-France ‘triangle’ advanced in the lead-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003); and the current proposal of a US-EU-Russia ‘triangle.’<sup>42</sup> Medvedev’s Initiative is the most recent and most far-reaching enterprise of this kind. Setting hopes on engaging Russia in a constructive relationship with NATO, and the Western states, by discussing ‘new European security architecture’ is largely impractical especially if such a pan-European approach is not universally accepted among Russia’s decision-making elites.

## Medvedev’s Initiative and Russian Elites

Russian political and military elites differ over Medvedev’s Initiative for Russia’s foreign policy and the tactics to realize it. A number of analysts and political pundits (Fyodor Lukyanov, Timofei Bordachev, Nadya

<sup>41</sup> The arsenal of methods Moscow uses to attain those goals includes: usage of Europe’s dependence on Russian oil and gas, including the establishment of “privileged energy relationships” with a number of European countries; attempts to control gas-flows to 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 near the air-space of some European countries, Russian-Byelorussian military exercises) and military pressure on 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 missile in Kaliningrad that may lead to 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.

<sup>42</sup> (Former) Polish Foreign Minister, Adam Daniel Rotfeld, argued that ‘Russian proposals (Medvedev’s Initiative) 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 a 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 presentation at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Helsinki, March 26-27, 2009. p. 13.

Alexandrova-Arbatova, among others), centred around Sergey Karaganov, confidant to Sergey Prihod'ko, (chief of the international staff of the Presidential Administration), use 'soft' arguments to support Medvedev's Initiative. For instance, Lukyanov, (Editor-in-Chief of Karaganov's journal, *Russia in Global Affairs*), suggests that Medvedev's Initiative is in-sync with a more general 'natural mutual gravitation' of Russia and Europe to each other, and an growing gap between Europe and the US. He characterizes this initiative as a 'novel intellectual approach' needed for the emergence of a 'Greater Europe' able to counterweight the US and China.<sup>43</sup> Neither Lukyanov, nor other analysts of Karaganov's circle, were able to develop such sophisticated arguments themselves. Instead, they imitate the theory of an 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, Alexandrova-Arbatova argues that Medvedev's Initiative is a signal to the West that Medvedev is looking for substantial changes to Russian foreign policy, and wishes to refrain from the confrontational rhetoric typical of Putin, and make Russia more cooperative with the West.<sup>44</sup> Such points are a type of 'carrot,' some Russian analysts propose to Europe. However, they develop a 'stick' too. In an article published in April 2009, Karaganov outlined a few basic points of the concept, typical of this part of the Russian political and bureaucratic elite:

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<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> 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 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.

- Europe (and the West as a whole) face a strategic dilemma: either accept Russia's proposal or be threatened by the prospect of a renewal of Cold War conditions;
- De-facto freeze 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 and/or 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 US and China.<sup>45</sup>

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

Finally, Medvedev's foreign policy is more militant and anti-Western than Putin's was. After all, Medvedev ordered Russian troops into Georgia, proclaimed the doctrine of Russian zones of 'privileged interests,' decided to station Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad, – in response to US MD in Poland and the Czech Republic – and used extremely anti-Western rhetoric.

The activities of Karaganov's group (together with some other groups that gravitate to the Kremlin rather than to the Foreign Ministry or military) reveal some intentions, and methods, of the Presidential Administration. The latter strives to demonstrate it is able to achieve its strategic goals through 'soft methods' rather than overt pressure. It cultivates some 'special relationships' with academic and political circles in Western countries who naively believe

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<sup>45</sup> Sergey Karaganov, 'Magiya tzifr – 2009' (The magic of figures – 2009), *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2, March-April 2009, available at: <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/37/11573.html>.

that it would be possible to establish a cooperative relationship with Russia through being conscientious of Russian political and strategic sensitivities.

Activities of the Presidential Administration often result from bureaucratic rivalry with the Foreign Ministry. This approach also reflects the interests of fractions within Russia's top circles; mainly business and bureaucratic groups engaged in economic relations with the West. Such circles share the basic attitudes of Russia's 'grand strategy' though are keen to avoid a new Cold War as it may upset their business, political and in some cases personal interests in Europe.

While the Presidential Administration is inclined to use 'soft' approaches to support Medvedev's Initiative, Lavrov, and his high-ranking lieutenants, make no secret that this initiative is aimed at the marginalization of NATO and the OSCE. The main argument they use is that 'NATO-centrism' of the existing European security architecture is outdated, and a source of insecurity on the continent. This may have two explanations: high officials from the Foreign Ministry may underestimate Europe's ability to resist Russian pressure and overestimate European dependence on Russian energy and communications with the ISAF and over-state rifts between Europe and the US. Also, Lavrov may wrongly conclude that current debates in NATO about the future of the Alliance, implies the beginning of its end. In addition, this approach may result from the 'soft' European reaction to Russia's invasion of Georgia. Whatever the reasons for such a policy are, its content is clear: Russia should exert pressure on Europe, and the US, to gain as much as possible from perceived Western political weakness and its inability to shape a coherent policy towards Russia.

At the same time, the approach to Medvedev's Initiative characteristic of Russia's Foreign Ministry may signal that its highest circles are in latent opposition to this idea, as Russia's military command seems to be. Russian diplomats are knowledgeable enough to realize that debates about NATO's future attempts to marginalize it are hardly acceptable for the vast majority of Europeans. Despite differences in attitudes towards the US, all European members of NATO are interested in NATO's continued existence. In this light, anti-NATO argumentation supporting the Initiative is likely to prompt Europe's rejection of it. On one hand, this provides additional arguments to Russia's more hawkish circles to intensify opposition to the West; and on the other hand it allows Russia to avoid making concessions such circles deem unacceptable.

There is much evidence that Russia's military does not support Medvedev's Initiative. Almost no Russian military officers or experts close to the armed forces have participated in the development of this Initiative. Unlike the mass-media which regularly publishes articles supporting Medvedev's Initiative, neither *Krasnaya zvezda*, (official newspaper of the Defence Ministry), nor *Voенно-promyshlennii kurier*, (the influential, unofficial mouthpiece of Russian military and defence industries), have published anything substantial in support

of the proposed ‘new security architecture in Europe.’ It is also indicative that Sergey Ivanov, (First Vice-Premier responsible for the defence industry, and one of the key figures in Russia’s security sector), when speaking at the Munich Security Conference (February 2009), outlined Russia’s approaches to a wide set of arms control and security issues, did not even mention ‘new security architecture in Europe’ or Medvedev’s Initiative. Given the Byzantine nature of Russian politics, it was a clear signal that he, and probably the circles he belongs to, disapprove of the Initiative.

This may stem from two basic reasons: Russia’s military command suspects that involvement in negotiations – and being interested in their successful results – the Kremlin, and Medvedev himself, may make concessions to the West which would be incompatible with the interests of the Russian military. In particular, Russia’s military command may be concerned by the prospect of restrictions on the deployment of Russian forces and military activities on Russian territory. It is not a secret that the main reason Russia withdrew from the CFE Treaty was the so-called ‘flank limits,’ as Russia’s generals were strongly concerned by the restrictions on armaments in those zones.

Also, Russia’s military command is not interested in ‘new security architecture in Europe,’ even if it were advantageous for Russia. Firstly, it would mean a strengthening the Foreign Ministry’s role in the formation of Russian foreign and security policy, thus reducing the role of the military in the shaping of the country’s international behaviour. Even more importantly, the successful implementation of Medvedev’s Initiative could prevent the deployment of new Russian Iskander missiles to Kaliningrad. Meanwhile, given the deterioration of Russia’s *general purpose* (conventional) forces, and the mounting difficulties maintaining its strategic nuclear arsenal, Russia’s military is increasingly interested in the production and deployment of new Iskander missiles to the Western part of the country.<sup>46</sup> They consider these missiles as the only weapon able to counterbalance a hypothetical deployment of US high-precision platforms; sea and air-based long range cruise missiles, to areas near Russia’s western borders.

Ultimately, Russia’s military, especially the Command of Land Forces, are not interested in the US’s abandonment of the MD shield deployment to the

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<sup>46</sup> Russian media made it known that Russia planned to station, in Kaliningrad, 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 a modified upgrade of Soviet land-based cruise missile RK-55, also known as CSS-X-4 Slingshot.



Czech Republic and Poland, as it undermines the justification for stationing Iskanders. It is also disinterested in the mutual rejection of 'unilateral actions' until negotiations result in a European security treaty. It is thus to be expected that Russia's Ministry of Defence, and the Command of Land Forces – which will be directly involved in the formulation of Russia's position during any negotiations – will be reluctant to accept any compromise solutions, and prefer the absence or failure of negotiations rather than their success based on mutually accepted concessions.

## Conclusion

Since the Corfu process began, and can hardly be negated unless Russia initiates new aggression against one of its neighbours, the West should develop a coherent strategy including the formulation of the objectives it hopes to achieve in negotiations with Russia. This strategy could focus on a few more important security issues facing Europe, but not a pan-European security treaty whatever shape it may assume. It should be remembered that the Helsinki Final Act (1975), portrayed as the peak of 'détente' between East and West, did not prevent numerous political and strategic crises in the 1970 and 1980s – some of the most dangerous episodes of the Cold War – and relations with Russia need to be conducted with an air of caution no matter the pitch of its overture.