

Security of the Broader Baltic Sea Region:

Afterthoughts from the Riga Seminar

Edited by Andris Spruds
and Karlis Bukovskis



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“Security of the Broader Baltic Sea Region: Afterthoughts from the Riga Seminar” includes a summary of views expressed and articles from selected participants at the “Riga Seminar: Security of the Broader Baltic Sea Region” that took place in Riga, Latvia, April 28-30, 2014 under the auspices of the Latvian Institute of International Affairs (LIIA), the European Leadership Network (ELN) and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). The publication provides concerns, evaluations and proposals on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region and beyond, presented by the participants of the event, as well as afterthoughts, such as a detailed evaluation of the security problems in Europe, in the Baltic states, and concrete ideas on how the security relationship between Western countries and the Russian Federation can be developed in the context of the 2014 security crisis in Ukraine. This publication is prepared by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and has been supported with funds from the Nuclear Threat Initiative. Its contents represent the views, findings and opinions of the authors, and are not necessarily those of the Nuclear Threat Initiative or of the European Leadership Network.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: THINKING OF SECURITY IN RIGA

by Andris Spruds and Karlis Bukovskis

A security architecture in Europe has been in the making for years. Political and diplomatic engagement, confidence building measures and arms control mechanisms, and multilateral institutionalized frameworks have been seen as important steps towards a stable and peaceful security architecture in Europe and beyond. Unfortunately this has come to a halt. Russia's interference in Ukraine, annexation of Crimea and continuous competition of integration projects in the neighbourhood of the European Union (EU) and Russia has become an important "game changer" in regional and global politics. Perceptions of engagement and expectations of wider regional cooperative frameworks have apparently been replaced by growing mistrust, mutual deterrence strategies, and great power rivalry. The growing tension has essentially undermined the security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area. Instead a variety of security and perceptual landscapes co-exist in Europe. However, emerging security challenges make it even more important to engage a wide range of stakeholders endeavouring to understand the motivation of various players, and at the same time identify mechanisms for preventing conflict escalation and implement confidence-building measures.

The question of whether we are experiencing an emerging new world order has not been solely determined by the conflict in Ukraine. We have seen a dynamic shift with the tectonic plates of international politics and economics for years. A protracted turmoil in the Middle East, rise of the Islamic State in Iraq, security concerns in Afghanistan from NATO troops withdrawing, growing tensions in South East Asia, a slow recovery following economic recessions in European countries, and manifestation of anti-EU sentiments during the most recent European Parliament elections have left a lasting impact on global and regional traditional and non-traditional security agendas.

The Baltic Sea region has been one of stability, engagement, and increased contentment. A growing Euro-Atlantic community around the Baltic Sea has reduced geopolitical "grey zones" and extended windows of opportunities for stabilization, growth, and confidence building. Baltic countries have joined a community of "like minded" states, which has led to an increased confidence and perception of security. It has encouraged the new fully fledged members of the EU and NATO to launch pro-active and constructive regional and international engagement policies. Moreover, Euro-Atlantic integration has facilitated intensified economic interactions and expanded multilateral institutional frameworks in the Baltic Sea region, and with Russia. However, the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's assertiveness in the neighbourhood has once more invoked ghosts of the tragic past, perceptions of insecurity, and concerns of a spill-over and destabilization of the region. The result of the perceived insecurity and weakness has been a strategy for the containment of Russia as one alternative. This has been voiced among decision-making and expert communities in the countries of the Baltic Sea region.

This debate has also influenced and further complicated attempts to finalize a comprehensive arms control and nuclear weapons reduction framework in Europe. Willingness to develop existing cooperative initiatives and promote confidence building on the continent remains. However, diverging opinions among nations already existed before the conflict in Ukraine.

Baltic countries, inter alia, had expressed a considerable wariness regarding the proposed and deliberated withdrawal of United States (US) tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, estimated to further increase asymmetry relations with Russia. The recent conflict and imposed US and EU sanctions against Russia and Russia's counter-sanctions provide an impetus to search, at least in the short term, for crisis management, rather than confidence building, mechanisms and measures. Not all bridges are burned though, and this may hopefully become a precursor for a return to dialogue and long term cooperation.

This publication provides reflection and follow-up to a comprehensive exchange of thoughts and a variety of perspectives expressed during the Riga Security Seminar. "Security of the Broader Baltic Sea Region: Afterthoughts from the Riga Seminar" includes a summary of views expressed by participants who attended, and articles by selected authors. The seminar took place in Riga, Latvia, from April 28-30, 2014. This publication provides concerns, evaluations, and proposals on the security situation, both in the Baltic Sea region and beyond, and is presented by participants at the event, as well as afterthoughts which include a more detailed evaluation of security problems in Europe, in the Baltic states, and some concrete ideas on how security relationships between Western countries and the Russian Federation can be developed in the context of the 2014 security crisis in Ukraine.

Authors of the "afterthoughts" chapters draw a picture of shared lacked vision around security between Russia and the West, not only regarding the Ukrainian crisis but the whole European security structure on a long term basis (Steve Andreasen). This ongoing lacked vision not only directly affects Ukraine, but makes one wonder about the security of Baltic countries and the Baltic Sea region in general (Margarita Seselgyte). Can we draw lines and be assured that the West and Russia have a shared vision concerning NATO and EU member states? If so, we could proceed with confidence building and crisis management. Arms control treaties and negotiations are seen as practical and necessary tools for confidence building between Russia and the West (Jeffrey D. McCausland) and could constitute another element for a shared vision on European security. Shared visions or different visions on security matters in Europe, in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, eventually lead to a new world order. The Ukrainian crisis has all the ingredients to become a "game changer" for a new world order (Lukasz Kulesa).

The successful implementation of the Riga Security Seminar and current analytical publication was enabled by a number of joint efforts. The seminar and publication benefited from a lasting cooperation between the Latvian Institute of International Affairs and its international partner institutions, especially the European Leadership Network (ELN). An international body of distinguished participants and authors was imperative in providing a plurality of opinions and recommendations, and to ensure an invigorating and thought-provoking debate. Support from the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) was absolutely indispensable by funding the seminar and publication, and contributing towards bringing the entire project to a very successful end result. Close cooperation with the ELN and NTI was highly appreciated by Latvian stakeholders and establishes a solid foundation for continued dialogue, along with cooperation and joint efforts for promoting intellectual engagement on security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area in the long run.

PRINCIPAL THESIS OF THE DISCUSSIONS AT RIGA SEMINAR: SECURITY OF THE BROADER BALTIC SEA REGION (APRIL 28-30, 2014, RIGA, LATVIA)

by Elizabete Vizgunova

Reactions regarding the Crimean annexation and the state of international relations following it:

- The Crimean annexation and Ukraine precedent has been a “game changer”. There are clear signs European security structures and the Euro Atlantic security environment have already changed;
- Consequences of the annexation of Crimea will not be the same as after the Georgian war – the expectation that things will be “back to business as usual”. Instead, the Eastern Partnership project, following an effective Russian media campaign and covert warfare, and Western sanctions, illustrate an action-reaction chain and the answer from Russia to changes in the balance of power in Eurasia;
- Russia is portraying itself as the leader of the multipolar world, where the West is no more entitled to be a leader. Yet, this could be considered as a premature argument, as many countries are critical of Russian actions. Russia’s actions are based upon a perception it has created of itself, that is based in Vladimir Putin’s idea of Russia’s “courtyard” (the post-Soviet space) as only partially sovereign. It harbors the Russian-speaking minority that legitimizes Russia’s intervention *via* hard-power and soft-power tools;
- China has been staying in the sidelines, sending some signals which understand the Russian position, but not provoking a direct clash with the EU and United States of America. This signifies it will rise as a winner of the current crisis. Russia feels backed by China and, because of their geographical disposition, traces similar geopolitical challenges for both countries. This creates an evermore present ideological struggle, based on Western and democracy-prone, and Eastern, authoritarian-prone, ideas;
- The US has clearly signaled that the 21st century is “the century of Asia”. For the EU, a further seeking of reassurance from the US as a universal means of security is ineffective and there is a need for more self-sufficiency, primarily in the defense and energy sectors.

The causes of Crimea’s annexation – Western apathy and Putin’s logic:

- NATO’s expansion in the post-Soviet space has contributed to Russia’s military doctrine by making it reactive. Crimea’s annexation can be perceived as a last resort action to prevent the Eastern Partnership’s success;
- The EU’s strategy towards Eastern Partnership countries has been too bold, by not having a uniform opinion towards all six countries, and by being torn in the “grey area” in the conflict of interests between European and Eurasian values. The EU’s strategy, alongside other Western

partners (US and Canada) towards Russia, has been even less coherent, contributing to the current lack of dialogue, mutual antipathy, different political discourses, and dissimilar operational terms when explaining international affairs;

- The governmental institutions in Russia are largely held by Vladimir Putin and his subordinates. Putin is afraid to “lose control” of the state and its exclusive zone of interest, and he is essentially trying to be a representative of a “Russian imperialistic tradition” that contributes to the construction of a new self-perception of Russia;
- The annexation taking place can be attributed to the perceived external threats of Russia’s security from a possible EU and NATO expansion in Russia’s neighboring territories, next to losing the political and economic control over their assets;
- Russia is not expecting Western countries to take a strong stance to protect its values and interests in Ukraine, taking into account the weak reaction after the war in Georgia in 2008. A short freeze of relations, followed by a tacit agreement on Russia’s “special interest” in Crimea, or a creation of a couple of “Finlandized” countries is anticipated;
- Russia, from its point of view, has a “privileged interest” and a sphere of influence, as well as the right to protect Russian minorities by all means;
- Russia, by projecting itself as a “winner” in the current crisis, is projecting democracies as “wrong” forms of government. Russia is not a democratic country; thus inner and inter-state dialogue is troubled.

The necessary actions of Western countries in the 21st century: a common “Russian strategy”, promotion of democratic values, engaging the Russian society:

- Western countries need to address their economic decline and start paying for their defense capabilities. This could help prevent a further submission to the rules from other partners and prevent national intrastate and regional conflicts;
- Although military expenditures in NATO countries are not expected to rise sharply, they should be brought to a reasonable level in the countries that are behind to send a message of willingness to larger NATO partners. As for countries that can afford to modernize their military, such as Poland, an updated military capacity should be considered;
- The EU and the US have dissimilar interests in energy terms regarding Russia. The EU is the most important consumer of energy resources, and should tighten its relations with Russia. At the same time, it should learn to use its consuming power as a tool to gain control over energy markets;
- The Internet is a global resource; therefore a dimension of competition is added with it. There is tension around a multilateral approach lobbied by US and European countries, and a unilateral approach, lobbied by Saudi Arabia, China, and Russia, among others, where interference in internet users’ personal lives is an accepted practice. There is a need to push for world-wide internet regulation and governance, to promote freedom of expression and global unity, human rights, and democratic values. An argument in favor of such global regulation is the internet surveillance conducted by governmental intelligence such as NSA which should be addressed in the Western hemisphere;

- Media and wormongering in media: Russia's aggressive policy in cyberspace and media outlets are issues which need to be addressed seriously on a broader NATO scale. More transparency on sources and editorial politics of media outlets need to be put in place in Russia via international channels, e.g. a partnership with NATO's Strategic Communication Center in Riga, to fight not just challenges in Ukraine, but in areas such as Afghanistan, Lybia, and Syria;
- The current state of affairs is a sign that the Western "Russian strategy" has so far been unsuccessful and largely in-existent;
- The Vilnius Eastern Partnership summit showed the EU has little commitment to democratic values as it was ready to uptake ties with Ukraine's corrupt government. The West needs to strengthen its image in front of countries working their way towards democracy, as well as enhance its presence in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine, and to others willing to seek closer ties, that way sending a strong message to Russia it is not ready to succumb to its conduct;
- Sanctions are important for assuring Eastern partners of the devotion of the Western countries to democratic values, sovereignty, and individual freedoms, as well as their well-being. However, they should not replace a wider "Russian strategy" that needs to be applied uniformly from such partners as the US, EU, and Canada. Political dialogue should play a crucial role to stabilize the situation, create a common discourse on the events in Ukraine, and globally, based on democratic "rules of the game", and adjust terminology;
- There is a need for a greater NATO presence in all Baltic countries, as well as establishing closer links to Scandinavia, following talks of deterrence and reassurance in the Wales summit while seeking a shape a post-2014 NATO. Yet, swift moves, such as accepting the Baltic countries in NATO in 2004 and not calculating the potential Russian reaction are now considered imprudent. The Euro Atlantic space in its current shape must become a red line of no interference for Russia, but must be done taking moderate steps towards cooperation;
- Georgia showed Russia's military operations are not always a success and it might try to turn the situation around, looking once again on nuclear warfare as a legitimate means to ensure its position in the world. NATO should pay more attention to continued regulation on producing nuclear weapons. Serious negotiations need to be initiated with Russia on missile defense, cyber security, the usage of Space, conventional forces, and nuclear forces;
- Russian society could be engaged in international dialogue. The great majority of Russian citizens have not traveled; therefore there is a need to reach out to citizens who have no particular interest in international relations issues. The people who broker in daily lives - teachers, doctors, local businessmen - need to be engaged. This relates too to the information war. The information war proposes Russia has been more successful than most people think, and the EU needs to search for a direct way to approach the public via independent media channels.

A need for new political discourses and creating clear terminology in Russian-Western dialogue:

- The new-age warfare shows a new paradigm: boycotts, corruption, deliberate or collateral destabilization, and masked warfare, next to an information war, all of those being brought about by the crisis in Ukraine. Such forms of warfare are illegal under the UN charter, but, as they are simply not clear in official terms, they are inexistent in international political discourses;
- There is a need to create terms in the Western-Russian dialogue through the UN charter, which is, taking into account the current state of international affairs, incomplete. Such terms as “Russian aggression against Ukraine”, “Ukrainian territory” needs to be agreed upon. If an agreement can be reached on these terms, then dialogue can be addressed, having in mind the principles each part is ready to defend;
- A new discourse needs to be adopted, explaining governmental engagement in the penetration of a private life in the forms of hired armed groups and intelligence agencies across a wide range of activities, because it is going to become dominant reality for some countries;
- Discourses regarding arms control – the changing nature of alliances, prospective adversaries, as well as developing military balance between countries – needs to be considered at an international level;
- To evaluate the state of international security and military preparedness, such terms as drones, cyber-war capacity, cyber defense, and others, need to be captured and measured as adequate means under international agreements.

Perceptions on international arms control:

- The prospects of arms control are affected by the changing nature of warfare (e.g. the recently introduced *balaklava* warfare);
- NATO buildup along Russia’s borders might bring its interest to control conventional arms buildups which conclude it is not in Russia’s interests to be in conflict with the rest of the world. It is therefore in NATO and Russia’s best interests to create a comprehensive arms control package. An individualistic approach still exists between NATO members on dealing with Russia;
- It is important to combine arms control and confidence building measures. It will be hard to make Russia give up its ability to threaten force in exchange for a regime that deprives it from this capacity. The West must therefore put into action technological means such as drones and satellites, creating the ability to provide information on the current situation inland;
- An extended nuclear deterrence package is important to countries that are closest to Russia, some of whom are NATO members. NATO’s nuclear strategy is unlikely to change, but it has to take into account that Russia has guaranteed itself there is going to be a growing defense strategy in the countries close to its borders;
- The Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is the cornerstone of European security. However, it has not been useful because Russian military experts may still interpret the content of the treaty. The treaty does not apply to the Baltic States because they are not signatories;

- The Vienna Document is a politically binding, not legally binding treaty, but Russia has failed to comply. These kind of precedents show real loopholes of the international arms control;
- The Open Skies Treaty can be interpreted as the most binding of all, as parties do not have an option to refuse its clauses. It has proven to be effective in such cases as the mission over Russia in April 2014;
- Russia has not violated the clauses of the Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, nor the Vienna Document, up to Crimea's annexation. This raises an idea that the documents could be changed, e.g. allowing observatory missions on a regular basis. The Open Skies Treaty should be extended to all OSCE members and allow digital photography during patrols;
- Both documents (The Vienna Document and the Open Skies Treaty) include a confidentiality clause, and parties are not obliged to publish results and discoveries made by expertise. This slows down involvement of international organization and confidence building measures among parties of the treaty;
- Between Russia and the US, there is an "Incidents at Sea" treaty (1972, formerly the U.S.–Soviet Incidents at Sea agreement) that could serve as an example to NATO while planning to extend its presence in Eastern regions.

Perceptions on the current international mechanisms of conflict prevention:

- A mayor confrontation between NATO member states and Russia seems unlikely, and such an option is overrated;
- The European security system has not been functioning properly, illustrated well by the Ukraine crisis. Russian-Western relationships have been undermined by a lack of trust for a long time;
- It is not excluded Russia might use Libya or Syria to signal its reluctance to cooperate with the United States of America in the close future. Cooperation and non-cooperation in other crisis situations in the world should be shielded from the consequences of Crimean annexation;
- The EU needs to pay more attention to engage Russia in frameworks it wants it to be a part of. Russia should not be excluded from the Council of Europe, and should be kept informed about all possible forums, resulting in a clearly delivered message that: "Europe is not against Russia". Yet, Russia's reluctance to engage is one of the reasons conflict prevention might slow down in the future;
- OSCE seems to be a neglected instrument, harboring very powerful tools (e.g. the human rights dimension brought about by the Moscow declaration in 1991 that stated human rights as an international standard. OSCE has top military staff and a mandate for evaluating military operations and budgets, therefore it is a powerful mean to serve defense), that, if put into action, could prove useful in crisis prevention. International organizations, as well as the UN Security Council, are largely paralyzed, both because of the reluctant Russian position and Chinese stance on Russia's side. There is a need for new frameworks to advocate the Western position, via official or unofficial channels (e.g. a dialogue with Russia's society).

The necessary actions in the Baltic Sea Region: how to avoid spill-over and future de-stabilization:

- It is in the best interest of Russia's neighbors to have a good relationship with the Federation. However, the Baltic Sea Region's sustainable development was brought about as soon as it stopped being Russia's backyard. The Baltic countries are very different, but they are all close to "sensitive" parts of Russia historically, especially having Kaliningrad right next to them. As long as a region remains in a "gray area" or "shared neighborhood", it will be torn by an interest conflict. This applies both to the Baltic Sea region and such countries as Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova;
- The Baltic Sea Region fosters the greatest threat to stability within itself because of lack of cooperation and reluctance between countries themselves. A successful cooperation could stabilize and prevent security risks in the form of reinvigorated border control cooperation, as well as Lithuanian-Polish and Baltic-Polish cooperation, possibly in the EU and NATO frameworks;
- In addition, each country has to develop a strategy on how to avoid possible risks in such areas as society, identity, and cyberspace, and border security towards Russia;
- Unity needs to be reinforced in the Baltic states to fight Russian "soft power" via such projects as a common Russian-speaking TV channel;
- Cooperation in the Baltic States (e.g. through such mechanisms as the Council of the Baltic States) can be criticized for many reasons, such as "cooperation for cooperation's sake", inefficiency, and lack of financial input;
- The sectors weakest in cooperation are the most important – the nuclear, electricity, and natural gas sectors. It seems that there are different policy preferences because of Lithuania and the high gas prices it pays, whereas Estonia has its oil shale, and Latvia benefits from "Inčukalns" natural gas storage. There is an urgent need for more pragmatic solutions not just in these sectors, but such projects as the Russian-speaking TV channel, Baltic Air policing, Rail Baltica, and others;
- Baltic security issues need to be considered in strategic terms. There is a need to create its own defense capability and build its own potential to fight off a plausible military attack for a couple of days, to avoid the fate of Georgia after the August war of 2008. This could be done by strengthening cooperation with such countries as Poland and Canada;
- The Black sea region could serve as an example to the Baltic Sea Region. It has engaged with Russia via projects such as free-visa travels, Blue Stream Pipeline, and tourism links to Turkey. All the above named show a country finding common ground on economic terms, even though their interests clash on the Syrian question.

THE NEED FOR A SHARED VISION FOR EUROPEAN SECURITY

by Steve Andreassen

European security continues to be dominated by the crisis in Ukraine and the resulting breakdown in relations between the West – the United States, NATO, and the European Union (EU) – and Russia. With no immediate resolution of Ukraine’s internal political crisis evident, and with the threat of direct Russian military intervention still looming in eastern and southeastern Ukraine, policy focus remains on identifying, agreeing to, and implementing near-term policy steps that could help de-escalate the crisis, stabilize the situation, and lead to a more fundamental resolution of the most serious confrontation among European nations since the Balkan wars of the 1990s. In short: start with small steps directly tied to the Ukraine crisis, and then build on those to address more fundamental issues in the Euro-Atlantic region. This focus on identifying practical near-term steps in the area of confidence building and crisis management relating directly to Ukraine, while understandable and essential, remains complicated by at least two factors.

First, there is no shared vision – within Ukraine, or between the West and Russia – of what it means to “resolve” the Ukraine crisis. In particular, it remains unclear as to whether armed separatists in Ukraine are prepared to reach a political agreement with the new administration in Kiev that would preserve the territorial integrity of Ukraine, or if complete independence from Kiev is their only acceptable outcome. Moreover, the extent of any overlap between Moscow’s view of an acceptable resolution of the Ukraine crisis – including the ultimate status of eastern and southeastern Ukraine – and that of Kiev and the West remains murky at best.

Second, and perhaps even more important, there is no shared vision between the West and Russia regarding security in the Euro-Atlantic region. Within the West, proponents of suiting up for another round of containment and a new Cold War argue that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s actions leave no doubt that his objective is to preserve and restore parts of the Soviet empire to Moscow’s control, including by military force. And if that’s Putin’s game, Washington, NATO, and the European Union have no choice but to match up with economic sanctions and military measures in an effort to isolate Russia diplomatically and reassure NATO member states. Meanwhile in Moscow, political momentum continues in a direction away from deeper integration between Russia and the West – if not a renewed zest for confrontation – and towards more intense diplomatic and economic ties with Asia.

The absence of shared objectives – both for resolving the Ukraine crisis, and more fundamentally, security in the Euro-Atlantic region – has severely limited the scope for agreement on near-term steps to de-escalate, stabilize, and resolve the current crisis. In particular, without a genuine effort from leaders in Washington, Europe, and Moscow to discuss and agree on at least the broad outlines of a shared goal for security in the Euro-Atlantic region, the outlook for near-term agreements on meaningful new measures to build confidence and manage the crisis in Europe remains bleak.

The incentives for “thinking big” about Euro-Atlantic security

Is it reasonable to expect American, European, and Russian political leaders to grapple with the broad contours of Euro-Atlantic security and any discussion of “shared goals” while the Ukraine crisis continues to unnerve Europe?

Many would say “no” – in both the West and in Russia – emphasizing that any discussion now of shared goals is a fool’s errand. Within NATO, many countries, in particular new NATO member states, believe the only “goal” in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine is to strengthen NATO to deter future Russian aggression, a narrative grounded in their own historical experience with Moscow. And it is clear that there are those in Russia – possibly including President Putin – who have also given up on any dialogue with the West, which from their perspective has ignored Russian security interests for years.

There are at least two dynamics in play, however, that may drive even reluctant leaders in Washington, European capitals, and Moscow towards engaging with these fundamental questions.

The first is NATO’s emerging response to Russian policy and incentives that may be created within NATO for rethinking Euro-Atlantic security. In Warsaw in June 2014, President Obama proposed a \$1 billion “European Reassurance Initiative” to support NATO allies in Central and Eastern Europe in response to Russian actions in Ukraine. The new money would support additional exercises and troop rotations in Eastern Europe; additional US naval deployments in the Black and Baltic seas, and steps to build the capacity of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova so they can work with NATO and provide for their own defense.

In assessing this latest NATO initiative, most analysts agree: \$1 billion over the next year is only a down payment. More resources from Washington — and NATO — will be required. A reasonable guess would be up to another \$1 billion per year for the next five years just to sustain a “persistent US air, land, and sea presence in the region,” as promised in Warsaw. Additional funds will be needed if the United States follows through on the prepositioning of equipment in Europe, improvements in NATO infrastructure, and changes in America’s European force posture. Whether or not NATO can find these resources remains an open question: the era of austerity continues to dominate defense debate in almost every NATO member state.

That said, as NATO moves to try and sustain and expand the European Reassurance Initiative, it also has an interest in at least attempting to ensure that these steps are taken in ways that minimize the incentives for a Russian response that would further inflame Euro-Atlantic security, or foreclose a more cooperative – if not still elusive – approach to security on the continent, and also reduce the longer-term costs of reassurance. In short, NATO’s European Reassurance Initiative must include more than new defense muscle. In parallel with any new defense measures, there is both a security and financial incentive for NATO to begin outlining the contours of a new security strategy for the Euro-Atlantic region — one that goes beyond simply reassuring NATO.

Second, the West’s emerging response to Russian policy may help highlight for the Kremlin leadership Moscow’s near-term interest in minimizing the costs of its Ukraine policy and, in the longer term, a more cooperative approach to Euro-Atlantic security. While it may be hard to get inside the heads of Russian leaders, it is even harder to imagine how Russia is better off if it is both politically and economically disconnected from the European Union and the United States over the next decade as a result of its actions in Ukraine. True, there are those in Moscow today who

apparently think otherwise (or think that NATO and the EU simply will not follow through with their “threats”), but the reality of billions of dollars of capital already fleeing Russia, combined with the prospect of a NATO defense force that becomes more focused and capable on its eastern border, has the potential to be an important factor in Russian decision making. In short, Russia too is facing near-term incentives to rethink its current trajectory towards security in the Euro-Atlantic region – one that goes beyond simply pursuing its objectives in Ukraine.

Building mutual security

With these dynamics in mind, is there a shared goal for Euro-Atlantic security that could be embraced by all nations in the Euro-Atlantic region? One alternative — for Washington and for European capitals, Moscow included — is to work toward the shared goal of “Building Mutual Security” in the Euro-Atlantic region. That is the recommendation made one year ago by four senior and respected statesmen: former US Senator Sam Nunn, former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, former UK Defense Secretary Des Browne, and former German Deputy Foreign Minister Wolfgang Ischinger, and endorsed by 28 former political leaders, military officers, defense officials, and security experts from across the region.

The prescient diagnosis from this group: Stagnant security policies across the Euro-Atlantic region have fueled tensions and mistrusts for more than two decades, and in the absence of a new security strategy, there was a risk that security and stability in the region would break down (as it now has in Ukraine). Their policy prescription: Urgently begin a new political and military dialogue mandated by the highest political levels, where security can be discussed comprehensively and practical steps can be taken on a broad range of issues.

A new dialogue mandated by political leaders may not be popular right now in the West or in Moscow. But it should be clear to all nations in the Euro-Atlantic region that we are not in this crisis in Ukraine because there has been too much dialogue between leaders and senior officials on core security issues. Rather, we are all paying the price for running Euro-Atlantic security policy on bureaucratic autopilot — unwise in a region that includes six of the world’s 10 largest economies, four out of five declared nuclear-weapon states, and more than 90 percent of global nuclear inventories.

To get started down this road, Nunn, Ivanov, Browne, and Ischinger have advocated the formation of a contact group that would include a core group of nations from the region, perhaps joined by a representative from the European Union, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. If a “smaller” contact group to deal with the Ukraine crisis ever gets off the ground, it could be a building block for a broader contact group; or, taking note of the shared incentives to avoid cementing a new dividing line in Europe, leaders could act to form a contact group with the bigger mandate envisioned by Nunn, Ivanov, Browne and Ischinger.

Back to confidence building and crisis management

How might progress towards adopting a shared goal, such as building mutual security in the Euro-Atlantic region, affect efforts to reach agreement on near-term and more far-reaching steps in the area of confidence building and crisis management to de-escalate the Ukraine crisis, stabilize the continent, and catalyze efforts to rebuild trust in Europe? What would the near-term priorities be within the new rubric of building mutual security?

A good place to start would be areas already in play in the Ukraine crises: the Vienna Confidence and Security Building Measures Document (which includes a range of measures applied to all OSCE countries) and the Treaty on Open Skies providing for aerial overflights and imaging of much of Europe.

Even prior to the Ukraine crisis, some NATO members and other states bordering Russia feared Moscow could deliver a substantial blow. That impression has grown, exacerbated by Russian support for separatist forces throughout Ukraine. Moreover, as NATO moves forward with its European Reassurance Initiative, Russia may view NATO's conventional capabilities as an even greater prospective threat to its security.

In this context, steps to strengthen the Vienna Document's confidence and security building measures relating to conventional forces in Europe would have practical and political significance, both for the immediate crisis in Ukraine and the broader crisis in European security. In particular, steps in this area could make Russia appear less threatening to its neighbors and NATO's "reassurance" look less threatening to Russia. For example, participating states could agree to support increases to the evaluation visit quota and adjustments to the way observations are scheduled, opening up the possibility to more effective and frequent observation of conventional force movements and concentrations.

In addition, states could consider regional military liaison missions; that is, reciprocal agreements between nations would permit small numbers of officers to monitor activities in defined regions. This provision could be included as an expanded Vienna Document. Similarly, there are a number of European states currently not covered by the Treaty on Open Skies e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova, whose addition would expand the application of the Treaty and strengthen European security. Extending the Treaty's technical collection capabilities could also increase transparency and help rebuild cooperation and trust.

Also in the area of conventional forces, implementation of the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty has been suspended since 2007. While the CFE Treaty's original rationale – reducing the risks of a short-warning, strategic, conventional attack by Russia against NATO, or vice versa – has faded, the Treaty provided confidence building and stability benefits for its parties for many years after the Cold War ended. Many of these benefits are still relevant today.

In the absence of the CFE Treaty, or an agreement as to what comes next, the unraveling of the CFE Treaty contributes to the perception, if not the reality, of a Europe once again divided. In the wake of the Ukraine crisis, a mandate from European leaders to hammer out a politically-binding agreement that covered at least some of the key CFE Treaty-related provisions relating to relevant ceilings, information exchanges, accession clauses, and inspections would be a valuable step forward.

By focusing first on practical near-term steps on confidence building and crisis management relating to the existing Vienna Document, Open Skies, and CFE (or its remnants) under the rubric of building mutual security, nations in the Euro-Atlantic region could help build pathways out of the current Ukrainian morass, as well as preserve and expand the building blocks of an integrated European security structure tied to an agreed vision.

The political effort required now by leaders in Washington, Europe, and Moscow to embrace a shared vision for building mutual security is certainly not evident today and may be absent for months to come. But that very effort to agree on a shared goal for security in the Euro-Atlantic region may be the essential prerequisite to progress on confidence building and crisis management.

SECURITY IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: “ISLAND OF PEACE” OR A POTENTIAL BATTLE GROUND?

by Margarita Seselgyte

Introduction

The Baltic Sea region is an interesting topic for research. It might provide stimulating insights for students of culture, economy, politics, and history. It could also be analysed from the point of view of security studies, attributing to it various labels, such as “security community”, “security complex”, or “security regime”. Definitions of which countries are parts of this region vary according to the issues addressed. In practical politics the Baltic Sea region is most often associated with the Macro – Regional strategy of the European Union (EU).¹ The main aim of this strategy is to serve as a cooperation framework for eight countries² around the Baltic Sea in addressing the common challenges and promoting a more balanced development in the area. Other formats of regional cooperation include the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)³, the Nordic Council⁴ and the Baltic Assembly.⁵ The majority of states in the region also belong to wider regional institutions such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, and NATO.

Dense institutional networks covering the states around the Baltic Sea makes this region very interdependent in various fields: the economy, politics, and security. Apart from a high institutionalisation another particularity of the Baltic Sea region is that it is one of the most economically prosperous and competitive regions in Europe. Christian Ketels from Harvard Business School at the 16th annual Baltic Development Forum noted that in 2014 the Baltic Sea region “remained highly competitive, outperforming the rest of Europe on many levels of economic dynamism.”⁶ Finally, it could be argued that the Baltic Sea region throughout history has been one of the most stable and secure regions in Europe. Gediminas Vitkus notes that even in the most turbulent times of European history, economics, trade, and culture flourished in the region. He calls the Baltic Sea region a security regime, as security issues there are “mostly regulated by norms, rules of behaviour or conventions acceptable to all local actors.”⁷ Riina Kaljurand et al. also argues that the main factors behind the stability and security of the region are “healthy economies, homogenous culture, and common membership of most Western security organisations”.⁸

¹ EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, approved by the Council of the European Union, on 29/30 October, 2009, <http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>

² Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

³ A political forum for regional intergovernmental cooperation. Members are Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Russia, and Sweden, Iceland, Norway and the European Commission, <http://www.cbss.org/>

⁴ Members include Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council>

⁵ Members are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, <http://baltasam.org/>

⁶ Eteris E., Growing together for the prosperous Baltic Sea region, *The Baltic Course*, 2014.06.04, <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/analytics/?doc=92427>

⁷ Vitkus G. Changing Security Regime in the Baltic Sea Region. NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Individual Research Fellowship 2000-2002 Programme Final Report. Vilnius, June 28, 2002, p. 3.

⁸ Kaljurand R., Neretnieks K., Ljung, B., Tupaj J. Developments in the Security Environment of the Baltic Sea Region up to 2020, Report, International Centre for Defence Studies, Tallinn, 2012 September, p.3.

The ability to peacefully solve disputes through institutions, and strong emphasis on trade and economic welfare, has created favourable conditions for the region to turn into a particular island of peace and prosperity in Europe.

Developing instability at the Eastern borders of the EU, strengthening authoritarian rule in Russia, its increasing assertiveness in international politics and changing military balance in the region, however, might pose a serious challenge for security and stability in the region in forthcoming years. There is a rising concern that an overall stable region might not avoid the spill over effect and even become a battle ground between Russia and Western powers. This short paper analyses main security trends and challenges in the region and outlines dilemmas which the Baltic Sea region states will have to address in order to preserve peace and stability.

Baltic Sea region and global security trends

The Baltic Sea region is a deeply institutionalised and interdependent community and its interdependence goes further than the borders of the region. The EU, NATO, and other cooperative frameworks embed the Baltic Sea region into a wider network of security. Riina Kaljurand et al. argues “the security of the Baltic Sea region cannot be seen separately from the security of the transatlantic space, as the variables of regional and global security are increasingly intertwined.”⁹ Accordingly, security of the region cannot be evaluated without reference to global security trends. Proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, illegal migration, financial instabilities, and climate change are just a few security challenges mentioned, also relevant to the Baltic Sea region. Yet certain global security trends deserve particular attention in order to anticipate possible developments of the security situation in the region.

The US pivot towards Asia has been a matter of security concern in Europe already for some time. Eastern and Central European states, due to historical experience, were the first ones to react to the possible US withdrawal from European affairs. In 2009 more than 20 luminaries from Eastern and Central European states sent an open letter to President Obama expressing their concern about the future of transatlantic relations.¹⁰ Concerns regarding the decreasing US presence in Europe have also been expressed in other parts of Europe. Due to the fact that US security guarantees are the cornerstone of security in the majority of the Baltic Sea states, the US pivot towards Asia will directly affect the security situation in the Baltic Sea region.

Decline of the European military might, and its heavy dependence on the US military force in order to ensure European security, has become even more pressing during the global financial crisis. Shrinking defence budgets in Europe and the US have placed the possibility of the US pivot towards Asia into an even more worrying perspective. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in his speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2011, emphasized that over two years of the crisis defence spending of the European members of NATO decreased by \$45 billion (USD).¹¹ Numerous calls for Europeans to invest more in defence were coming from both

⁹ Kaljurand R., Neretnieks K., Ljung, B., Tupay J., p.3.

¹⁰ An Open Letter to the Obama Administration from Central and Eastern Europe, *Gazeta wyborcza*, 15.07.2009, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6825987,An_Open_Letter_to_the_Obama_Administration_from_Central.html,

¹¹ Blitz J, NATO Chief Warns Europe Over Defence Budgets, *Financial Times*, 07.02.2011, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/db0fb476-32fd-11e0-9a61-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz34WTWpVkJ>

sides of the Atlantic. Former US secretary Robert Gates in 2011 warned European allies of the “dim and dismal” future if Europeans continue cutting their defence budgets.¹² These trends have become particularly upsetting for countries whose security strategies retained threats requiring hard security responses. During past years there has been a growing split in Europe regarding the anticipation of the security environment. A part of the European States tend to emphasize post-modern transnational threats, such as illegal migration or internal ones such as socio-economic stability. Others are still preoccupied with traditional ones, such as conventional types of attacks and violation of sovereignty. These differences are also reflected within European societies, which in general are becoming less and less conscious of traditional threats and ultimately less willing to compromise their welfare for the defence of their countries, or even more so, Europe.

Change in the threat perception in Europe is very much interlinked with a changing attitude towards Russia. After the Cold War, Russia was no longer perceived as a major threat or adversary, but rather as a partner that needed rehabilitation and enhanced inclusion into European affairs. Moreover, internal chaos, economic challenges, and outdated, ineffective armed forces were not making Russia menacing from a military perspective, even to the usually cautious countries in Eastern Europe. Europeans, relying on their own strategy of creating security through more institutionalisation and cooperation, tried to involve Russia in as many formats of cooperation as Russia wished to join. However, reasonably active cooperation with Russia has not brought the expected revenues – positive internal developments in Russia. On the contrary – the regime was getting stronger, and democracy – more restricted.

Changing military balance in the region

When Europeans were cutting their defence budgets and armed forces, opposite trends were evolving in Russia. Despite all hope to gradually change Russia by European “soft” power, it did not happen. Democracy in Russia started to degrade quite rapidly after the beginning of Putin’s second first term.¹³ Decline of democracy in Russia was occurring hand in hand with increasing assertiveness in international affairs. Two documents adopted respectively in 2009 and 2010 deserve special attention. The first one is a new Russian security strategy¹⁴ and the second one, its new military doctrine.¹⁵ The Russian Security strategy has openly claimed a strategic parity with the US, identified NATO enlargement as a challenge, and tried to establish Russia as a global, instead of a regional, player. These sentiments have been repeated on several occasions in the speeches of Vladimir Putin, who emphasized Russia’s need to be strong as one of the main goals of Russian security policy, and in order to reach this goal put emphasis on investment in defence

¹² Kashi D., US Asks Europe To Spend More Money For Defense, But It’s Not Going To Happen, *International Business Times*, 13.06. 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/us-asks-europe-spend-more-money-defense-its-not-going-happen-1567531>

¹³ Russia, Freedom in the World 2013, Freedom House Annual Report, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/russia#.U6FdoRGKDcs>,

¹⁴ Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации до 2020 года, утверждена Указом Президента Российской Федерации от 12 мая 2009 г. № 537, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html>

¹⁵ Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, 5 февраля 2010 года, Утверждена Указом Президента Российской Федерации, http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/461

reforms.¹⁶ Daivis Petraitis, an expert on Russian defence policies from the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, argues that despite the fact the Russian defence system has undergone numerous reforms in past years, the latest one is qualitatively entirely different from previous ones, and thereby is more important for security in the Baltics. According to him, the last reform is based on the thorough analysis of contemporary warfare and modern armies, and if it succeeds Russia will have well-prepared and equipped armed forces able to fight conflicts in the neighbourhood.¹⁷ It is worth noting that even before the reforms in Russia, the Baltic Sea region was quite militarized. At the end of Cold War, Russia withdrew its armed forces from the Baltic States, Poland, and Eastern Germany, however those forces have not been moved far. Adrian Hyde-Price contends that most were redeployed to bases in the Kaliningrad Special Defence District, the Leningrad Military District, or the Kola Peninsula,¹⁸ causing a concentration of armed forces particularly dense in the Baltic Sea region as compared with Central Europe.

In the framework of current military reform developments the borders of the Baltic Sea region gain particular importance. First of all, in 2010 a new Western Military District was established by merging the Moscow and Leningrad military districts.¹⁹ Reinforcement of this particular district and offensive exercises directed towards the West (Zapad 2009, Ladoga 2009, Zapad 2013) not only highlights changing military balance in the region, but also raises many questions regarding Russia's intentions. Secondly, deployments of S-400 in Kaliningrad are seriously hampering the defensibility of the Baltic States and partly Poland, Sweden, and Finland. Moreover plans exist in the future to launch Iskander systems in Kaliningrad. Finally, military imbalance would seriously increase should nuclear weapons be deployed in the region. Therefore reappearing messages about the installation of tactical nuclear weapon in Kaliningrad are very thought provoking.

The Russian Military doctrine of 2010 has devoted special attention to nuclear weapons, emphasizing their significance in the Russian defence system. Nuclear weapons might be perceived as a strong deterrent in the short term, allowing Russia to compensate its conventional weakness. On the other hand, the Russian Military doctrine allows the use of tactical nuclear weapon in certain circumstances, not only as a response to nuclear attack, but in cases "of aggression on the Russian Federation with conventional weapons, when it endangers the existence of the state"²⁰ Tactical nuclear weapons were employed during the military exercise Zapad 2009. Considering recent events in Crimea and Ukraine, these developments might pose serious risks for neighbouring countries. Ongoing conflict in Ukraine already demonstrates affirmative results of the Russian defence reform. Completely new types of armed forces were observed in Crimea: modern, disciplined, and well equipped.²¹ Another point worth noting is that Russia is preparing for a new type of war, exploiting various dimensions of attack: conventional, economic, energy, cyber, information etc. These trends were observed during Zapad 2013 and are also visible in Ukraine.

¹⁶ Kaljurand R., Neretnieks K., Ljung, B., Tupay J., p.14.

¹⁷ Petraitis D., Rusijos ginkluotuoju pajėgu reforma 2005 – 2015 m. Lietuvos metinė strateginė apžvalga 2010-2011, Generolo Jono Žemaičio karo akademija, Vilnius, 2011, p. 189.

¹⁸ Hyde-Price, A, NATO and the Baltic Sea Region: Towards Regional Security Governance, NATO Research Fellowship Scheme 1998 – 2000. Final Report. www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/hyde.pdf

¹⁹ Kaljurand R., Neretnieks K., Ljung, B., Tupay J., p.21.

²⁰ Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, 5 февраля 2010 года, Утверждена Указом Президента Российской Федерации, http://news.kremlin.ru/ref_notes/461

²¹ Chivers C.J., Herszenhorn D. M., In Crimea, Russia Showcases a Rebooted Army, *The New York Times*, 02.04.2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/03/world/europe/crimea-offers-showcase-for-russias-rebooted-military.html>

Thus in order to understand the developments in the Baltic Sea region it is important to realise that when European militaries are in decline, and the US is pivoting towards Asia, new sizeable, well prepared, and equipped adversary armed forces are emerging in the region. It should be added that these armed forces are ruled by undemocratic leaders with a growing assertiveness in international politics and a strong reliance on nuclear weapons. In 2007 Russia suspended its participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), which means Russia has unilaterally decided to no longer permit inspections or exchange data on its deployments. Although the Vienna document still provides the grounds to do this a fair amount of trust and transparency has been lost. Moreover, this unilateral action increases the probability of an unexpected attack in the region. Finally, events in Ukraine have proved that Russians today have not only the capabilities, but also a will (politically and within society)²² to go to war - and then the question remains: Do they also have an interest to turn the Baltic Sea region into a battle ground?

Conclusions: main security dilemmas for the Baltic Sea region

In the current security environment countries around the Baltic Sea will likely be facing several dilemmas should they wish to remain an “island of peace” instead of a potential battle ground. First of all, in the face of changing military balance in the region and the unwillingness of Europeans to invest more in defence, countries in the region will have to cooperate more with each other. One of the greatest challenges with trying to do this will be to overcome mistrust towards each other. It is quite difficult even for similar societies such as the Nordic ones are. Legal and political obstacles (e.g. deriving from different security policies choices) will have to be solved and certain short term national interests will need to be sacrificed. Finally, more, or less common discourse on threat assessments will have to evolve.

Secondly, postmodern European societies lack vigilance and consciousness regarding traditional security challenges, which is reflected in the security policies of countries in the Baltic Sea region. Any decision related to increased investment in defence or use of military instruments may make political forces in power extremely unpopular. Although the membership of Finland and Sweden in NATO would be beneficial for security in the Baltic Sea region, even in the face of the growing assertiveness of Russia and events in Ukraine, societies of those countries are not supporting it. They do not feel threatened by Russia. On the other hand, threat perceptions in the three Baltic States and Poland are dominated by traditional threats and quite a pessimistic attitude towards Russia. In order to stimulate mutual trust and reinvigorate security cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, the correct balance between traditional and postmodern challenges will have to be renegotiated at all levels of society.

The third dilemma relates to attitudes towards Russia around the Baltic Sea region. Although (due to events in Ukraine) cooperation with Russia is stalled at various levels, there is still a lack of unity among countries in the Baltic Sea region about how Putin’s regime should be treated. On one hand, a strong believe prevails in Germany that cooperation with Putin’s regime is better than isolation. On the other hand, the Baltic States, Poland, and the current Swedish government,

²² Around 94 per cent of Russians support Putin’s action in Crimea. Minina E. Why do Russians support intervention in Ukraine? *Aljazeera*, 29.03.2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/03/why-do-russians-support-interv-2014328174257483544.html>

warn others about Putin's unpredictability and far reaching goals, and call for stronger security measures. Opinions are divided about discussions on sanctions, as well as regarding the invitation to Putin for the D-day celebrations in Normandy.

Finally, security in the Baltic Sea region, especially in the face of current security developments, depends on the US military presence. Therefore countries in the region will have to find the recipe for how to maintain US interest in the region. It might involve increase of their own contribution to security, possibly through the EU and NATO formats, but not excluding regional or even bilateral forms of cooperation. The other important part of this recipe might also be strong commitment to democratic values and support for them in the neighbourhood.

FROM CONFIDENCE BUILDING TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT

by Jeffrey D. McCausland

*Introduction*¹

During the last forty years, Europe has developed a rich experience in conventional arms control and confidence building measures. Arms control and confidence building measures played an important role in enhancing military stability on the European continent during the Cold War and throughout the tremendous changes that took place in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. These regimes have contributed to European security by increasing the transparency and predictability of conventional military forces as well as reducing conventional levels of arms with accompanying intrusive on-site inspection regimes.

The agreements in place today are extensive and complex. Their provisions comprise the confidence building measures embodied in the Vienna Document (1999) as well as force limitations/transparency measures contained in various arms control treaties. These include the 1990 Conventional Armed Force in Europe (CFE) Treaty, the 1992 Treaty on Open Skies, the 1996 CFE Flank Agreement, and the 1999 adapted CFE Treaty.

Consequently, there can be little doubt that conventional arms control has been a valuable diplomatic tool that has been used to reduce the possibility of war. The question policymakers confront today is how these arrangements can serve to stabilize the current situation and lessen tensions now as well in the future. Clearly aspects of existing arms control agreement could have a direct bearing upon security in the Baltic region. But it is also important to consider how these agreements, and other existing cooperative initiatives, may affect other challenges to European stability overall today and in the future.

Definitions are key to this analysis.² “Arms Control” is any legally or politically binding agreement between sovereign states which (1) provides transparency and predictability of military activities; (2) constrains or prohibits certain military operations; or (3) limits the holdings of military equipment and/or personnel. Overall, such arms control agreements place restraints on the use, possession, or size of certain specified weapons.

It is also important to establish a clear distinction between “arms control” and “disarmament.” “Arms control”, as suggested above, refers to agreements between two or more sovereign states to limit or reduce certain categories of weapons or military operations in order to diminish the possibility of conflict. “Disarmament” is normally imposed by a state or group, on one or more states, at the conclusion of a war. Examples are the limits imposed on Germany at the end of World War I and II, or the restrictions placed on Iraq by the United Nations at the conclusion of the Gulf War.

This distinction is important. Arms control regimes are created and maintained by a “harmony of interests” among the participating state parties. Disarmament requires external pressure to ensure implementation and compliance. While this may sound simplistic it is important for two

¹ This paper solely reflects the ideas of the author and is not an official statement of the United States government or the US Army War College.

² Miggins M. Political Affairs Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, Verification and Implementation Coordination Section (VICS), lecture presented at the NATO School, Oberammergau, Germany, Spring 2000.

reasons. First, during a crisis it is critical to consider whether or not a convergence of interests is still present that will translate into the political will required for compliance. Second, policymakers must resist the urge to believe that unilateral concessions over questions of compliance will somehow improve the security climate. To do so may encourage an opponent to believe that they can pursue a policy best summarized by the phrase: “*what’s mine is mine and what is yours is negotiable*”. Finally, it is fundamental to keep in mind that arms control is a “tool” of policy. It is not an objective of policy.

It is also important to consider whether the implementation of existing treaties is occurring during a period of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, or crisis management. During periods of conflict prevention all participating states parties have overlapping interests in improved relations. For conventional arms control in Europe this occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s. Arms control during conflict resolution seeks to prevent a renewed outbreak of violence in the aftermath of war. The arms control portion of the Dayton Accords or the agreement to disarm the Kosovo Liberation Army would be examples. In both of these circumstances the potential “harmony of interests” between states parties was relatively high.

But today the West is clearly confronted by a crisis, and it is unclear at this moment whether the Russian Federation is willing to seek any form of compromise to reduce immediate tensions. Consequently, the West must fulfill its own obligations and seek the full implementation of all agreements by Moscow while recognizing that this will be difficult. Longer term NATO members must also consider how this tool of diplomacy can be effective in what may be a totally new security environment. This new period may not yet have a name, but it is certainly no longer the “post-Cold War era”. Policymakers must use arms control to deal with the challenges of today while also thinking about how this tool may be used in the future.

Lessons learned

A famous historian once remarked that: “History does not repeat itself, but it may rhyme...” This is a good admonition for any effort seeking to glean insights from the past. While similar events throughout history may be instructive, lessons learned have to be continually evaluated against the current context. Still, as we consider the role of arms control in crisis, several points are worthy of enumeration.

First, Carl von Clausewitz observed that “war is politics by other means” in his monumental work *On War*. Consequently, arms control has been and continues to be a highly political process. Without the necessary political will on all sides, the process itself is less likely to be productive, and will not come to closure. The formula for an agreement, the process of the negotiation, and the continued maintenance of a treaty are less important than the political will to achieve and maintain success. There is the old phrase “it takes two to Tango”, and this is as true in arms control as it is in ballroom dancing. The West must carefully consider whether or not the “harmony of interests” that made these agreements possible has completely broken down. Furthermore, it is important to recall that full implementation of arms control agreements has always been difficult for one or more signatories during moments of crisis.

The critical importance of converging interests in achieving an agreement is illustrated by the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Talks. MBFR began in 1973 and stalemated in 1979. This stalemate occurred not due to a flawed process but rather because of a lack of political will on both sides as well as the asymmetries of the respective military forces. The principle of establishing force ceilings at equal numbers was only accepted much later when the political climate had improved. Consequently, changes of position that go to the heart of a military's size and posture require the will of political leadership to take tough political decisions combined with the right political context.

Second, prospects for the successful conclusion and maintenance of any arms control agreement are significantly affected by the changing nature of warfare. Some observers have argued the Russian Federation created a new *Balaclava Warfare* strategy during its occupation of Crimea and threats along the eastern border of Ukraine. Ukraine is clearly a fragile state wracked by internal discord, the presence of dissidents, and weak internal security forces. Moscow is employing the use of special operations forces in combination with a sophisticated information warfare campaign and the application of cyberwarfare attacks with crippling effects. If this is true it is hard to envision how our current regime of conventional arms control treaties can have a significant effect. They were largely formulated to deal with the problem presented by the presence of large conventional military formations and the fear of short warning conventional attack.

Third, arms control is only a component in a broader national and alliance strategy. The strength of NATO lies in the consensus of the members. But this also means that any strategy, if it is to be fully adopted by all NATO members, must contain not only a military strategy that seeks to deter aggression but also measures to reassure populations throughout the Alliance. Michael Howard's seminal 1982 article, "Deterrence and Reassurance" in *Foreign Affairs* remains as true today, as it was when it was first published.³ Consequently, the process of arms control and a willingness to continue negotiations remains important even during a crisis. In this regard it is important to remember that NATO continued arms control negotiations with Russia during the Kosovo crisis.

Fourth, arms control is affected by other aspects of the relationships between states and their corresponding military forces. In response to the Russian invasion of Crimea, the US and its NATO allies could increase defense spending, reinitiate planning for the deployment of a ballistic missile defense shield to Europe, or at least increase the rotational presence of significant American or other NATO ground, air, and naval forces on the territory of Poland or the Baltic Republics. Such steps could easily be determined as an appropriate response to Russian aggression, and underscore Alliance solidarity. Many experts fear, for example, that President Putin firmly believes the European members of NATO lack the political willpower to make difficult security choices especially during continued periods of economic stagnation. Still, it is important to consider carefully whether or not any decision is required to ensure the security of member states or demonstrate the political will to respond to aggression. However, while such responses may well be necessary, they should be balanced against a clear understanding that such policies could adversely affect, at least temporarily, any possibility of renewed arms control discussions.

³ Howard M. Reassurance and Deterrence, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 61, No. 2, 1982, p. 309-324.

Fifth, there exists a degree of connectivity between arms control agreements. As previously suggested it is essential that all participants strive for full implementation of existing agreements to ensure reciprocity. Consequently, the United States should now insist on a clear explanation from the Russian Federation on recent missile tests which appear to be in contravention to the INF Treaty.⁴ It is also important the United States and Russian Federation continue full implementation of the New START agreement.

Furthermore, the success of arms control as a tool of policy must be measured against the standard of improved security. At various points in European security negotiations some European nations have appeared to want to pursue arms control for “arms control’s sake”. They have argued the “process” is more important than any specific outcome. At times this attitude has risked taking the focus away from pressing for full implementation of agreements already approved. This position, if adopted by all, will undermine the very confidence the agreements are intended to instill. At all times arms control remains a “means” to enhanced security for all participants and not a goal.

Finally, on-site observation and inspection are at the core of the success, and has been true throughout the history, of arms control. The failure of the Washington Naval Conference suggested even in the early 20th century that a comprehensive verification process in any arms control agreement is ultimately doomed to failure. One of the important early breakthroughs in the CSBM negotiations was the provision for on-site inspection, to provide a means of verifying that the other side was complying with its agreements. This set forth a principle on which negotiators were able to build for developing later CSBMs and for subsequent conventional arms control negotiations. Consequently, the West must both insist on full compliance from the Russian Federation while also fully complying with the requirements outlined in the relevant agreements.

What do we do now?

Careful consideration of what existing treaties may offer in terms of crisis management is also appropriate. This must also be coupled with a sober assessment of the state of the agreement and what longer term adjustments might be valuable. Clearly, existing arms control agreements are far from being a panacea to resolve the crisis, and from a Western perspective Russia has been uncooperative in fully adhering to their requirements. Still their ability to increase transparency has been useful.

CFE. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe or the CFE Treaty has been frequently characterized as the “cornerstone of European security”. It is important to acknowledge this agreement has not contributed to enhanced stability during the current crisis for a number of reasons. Russia ratified the Adapted CFE Treaty in 2004, but in 2007 announced it was suspending its participation. Consequently, it has refused to accept inspections, ceased to provide information on its conventional forces to the other signatories, and halted the ongoing process to negotiate further adaptations to the agreement. In 2011 after sustained efforts to find a solution to this dilemma the United States and its NATO allies announced they would cease fulfilling their treaty

⁴ Collina T, Kimball D. Russia Should Uphold Its INF Treaty Commitments, Issue brief published by the Arms Control Association, Washington, DC, May 23, 2014.

obligations with Russia.⁵ This put the future of the original 1990 pact and the 2004 adapted treaty in serious doubt, and the current crisis has only further reduced any hope of achieving a new adapted treaty.

However, even if the CFE Treaty were still fully in force, Russian security experts might well argue that the so-called “snap exercises” they have conducted (which has now resulted in a significant military force at the Ukrainian border) did not exceed ceilings established under the CFE Treaty. Furthermore, the CFE Treaty does not apply to the Baltic Republics. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are not currently signatories to the treaty and could only accede to its provisions if the adapted treaty entered into force.

Despite this gloomy assessment certain aspects of the treaty and its overall objectives may be worthy of consideration in terms of broader issues for European security. The treaty does provide a level of transparency between states in the North Caucasus (particularly Armenia and Azerbaijan) that helps lessen the possibility of renewed fighting over Nagorno Karabakh. It is also important that agreement among the Balkan countries is in accordance with the Dayton Accords, which in many ways is a “clone” of the CFE Treaty, and continues to remain fully in force. This is particularly important due to the fact that Balkan states will assume full responsibility for the maintenance of the agreement at the end of 2014.

Vienna Document. The Vienna Document is a politically binding agreement that was designed to prevent crisis and reduce tensions. As such, under international law, its provisions are not considered legally binding. It provides measures for the annual exchange of military information, consultation on unusual military activities, prior announcement of certain military activities, and observations of exercises.⁶ Despite controversy between Moscow and the West over the CFE Treaty, the Russian Federation has generally complied with its obligations under this agreement.

One would have to accept it has provided some assistance in the current crisis. It has been reported a Vienna Document observation was conducted by Latvia in Northwest Russia. There was also a follow-up Vienna document evaluation visit by Estonia to a Russian airborne unit.

Still, NATO members have further requested, in accordance with Chapter 3 of the agreement, for additional information about the disposition of Russian forces near the Eastern border of Ukraine. This is consistent with the provisions for an extraordinary military operation. Unfortunately, to date these requests have been rebuffed by Moscow, and Russia has further refused to take part in joint meetings of the Permanent Council as well as the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation. They have argued that the US and Ukraine have no reasons for concerns, and that Russia is not conducting any unusual or unplanned activities that are significant along the border with Ukraine. Obviously, this would appear to be contrary to the reported size and deployment of Russian forces along the eastern frontier of Ukraine. Despite Moscow’s unwillingness to provide additional transparency, it is important these requests are reinitiated if Russia continues to maintain or increase its force presence.

⁵ Key Existing Cooperative Initiatives in the Euro-Atlantic Region, Building Mutual Security in the Euro-Atlantic Region: Report Prepared for Presidents, Prime Ministers, Parliamentarians, and Publics, 2014, <http://www.BuildingMutualSecurity.org>

⁶ Overview of Vienna Document 2011, U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/t/avc/cca/c43837.htm>

The possibility does exist, however, even during this difficult time, to propose improvements in this agreement. Currently the use of the Vienna Document by NATO member states is hamstrung due to procedures for the allocation of annual observation quotas. All of the observation quotas are routinely exhausted in the first three months of any year, and this is true for 2014. Despite the fact this problem has been acknowledged for many years, a change to this process to force a more even distribution of observations across the calendar year has never been enacted. This is an issue that should be immediately addressed and adjustments to the Vienna Documents negotiated. In this effort those states bordering the Russian Federation, such as the Baltic Republics or Poland, should be encouraged to lead. Additional improvements such as increasing the size of a team of inspectors (currently four) or extending the maximum time for inspections (currently 48 hours) might be considered.

Open Skies. Open Skies is of an unlimited duration, and signatories have no right of refusal to overhead flights allowed under the treaty. The agreement covers the national territory of all member states, including territorial waters and islands. Currently, there are 34 States Parties to the agreement, which includes the majority of European states.

The treaty has four primary objectives.⁷ First, it seeks to promote a greater openness and transparency of military activities. Second, the treaty is designed to improve the monitoring of current and future arms control arrangements. Third, Open Skies is intended to strengthen the capacity of crisis prevention and crisis management. Finally, it provides aerial observation based on equity and effectiveness for all signatories.

Hungarian and Canadian inspectors conducted an Open Skies mission over Russia in April 2014. This followed an earlier observation flight by Russian and Belarusian observers over Poland. Such observations have been conducted nearly weekly. Still improvements could be made. Extending the Open Skies concept to all the OSCE members is an idea that should be explored. Recently an agreement was reached which certified the new Russian camera for their use on the AN-30 aircraft. This will now allow further progress to update the certification procedures for other digital sensors. While this is modest progress at best, it is still important to acknowledge it was achieved during this moment of greater tensions. Furthermore, discussions should commence to see how the application of the results from an Open Skies overflight could be used to address a wider range of transnational threats and verification challenges.

Agreement on the Prevention of Serious Incidents at Sea. This convention was agreed upon between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1972. It is not dissimilar from the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea that was endorsed recently by a series of Asian countries. This agreement was designed to avoid collisions, inform vessels when submarines were exercising nearby, and prohibits simulated attacks against aircraft or ships. The Russian Federation accepted adherence to this agreement following the demise of the Soviet Union. Clearly in light of the expanded Western naval presence in the Baltic and Black Seas the participation of other states parties in this convention would be useful.

The Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) played a key role in the formulation and maintenance of these agreements. It remains the world's largest security organization, though its status was greatly reduced with the end of the Cold War. The current

⁷ Williams A. B. *Treaty on Open Skies*, briefing prepared by Science Applications International Corporation. 10 September 1992.

crisis should now force a careful reexamination of how it can play a reinvigorated role in European security. The deployment of OSCE monitors to Eastern Ukraine was clearly a positive step and considerations should be taken to expand this effort. At the same time a careful determination should be made of lessons learned from these initial efforts to assure the safety of the monitoring teams.

Policymakers should also consider measures outlined in the OSCE report *Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations*.⁸ This was discussed in the Forum for Security Cooperation in 1993, and an expanded Summary of *OSCE Mechanisms and Procedures* was released in 2008.⁹ The actions outlined in these two documents are very appropriate to the challenges Europe is currently confronted with. In addition, the OSCE offers a more comprehensive approach to security, including issues such as freedom of the media, treatment of minorities, election monitoring, etc. While these areas are outside the scope of arms control, they may be of crucial importance in the ongoing crisis.

Conclusions

As suggested at the onset any arms control agreement depends upon a “harmony of interest” among signatories. This “harmony” is based on careful analysis by each participating state that the benefits to be gained from entering and maintaining the regime outweigh risks associated with reducing military forces in accepting a transparent regime which includes data exchanges and verification inspections. As a result, the ultimate goal of arms control has been to encourage development of the political environment to a point where it is no longer necessary. Consequently, it is particularly important during this moment of crisis that all states fulfill their existing obligations and insist that full reciprocity is provided by all signatories. Furthermore, while it is clear that the “harmony of interest” has been challenged by recent events, this should not be construed as a failure of any particular arms control agreement or process. It is important that policymakers recognize a more measured expectation for what arms control can and cannot accomplish. A crisis by itself does not mean the arms control process is at fault or has completely failed.

At the same time NATO policymakers must carefully ponder whether or not the current crisis heralds an entirely new security era in Europe. As previously mentioned, this may also require NATO political leaders to make difficult choices concerning additional economic sanctions, increased defense spending, and expanded allied force rotations to the Baltic region, Poland, and the Balkans. These responses must be measured, but they are important for two reasons. First, in order to rebut the apparent belief among Russian leaders that NATO is feckless and second, it is important that European member states, even the smaller countries, demonstrate their willingness to do so and do not solely expect the United States to bear the burden for any such response. These actions over time may convince the Russian Federation of the folly of its actions and encourage them to consider negotiations.

⁸ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Stabilizing Measures for Localized Crisis Situations*, 25 November 1993.

⁹ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Summary of OSCE Mechanisms and Procedures*, OSCE Secretariat, Conflict Prevention Centre, Vienna, June 2008.

At the same time the emerging security environment brought about by the crisis must be translated into efforts to adapt existing agreements in the manner described. Furthermore, consideration must be made about what additional treaties are both appropriate and feasible. Finally, even though the prospects for new and expanded agreements seem dim it is important to continue to develop and maintain the intellectual capital in this area of European security studies. The West should redouble its efforts to maintain a number of “Track 2” dialogues between American, European, and Russian interlocutors. Previous periods of strained relations have taught us that these are the times when it is even more important to use unofficial channels to search for policy options that could contribute to compromises on all sides.¹⁰

The world is currently reflecting on the 100th anniversary of the onset of the First World War. Many noted historians have argued that the immediate cause of this conflict in 1914 was the decision by European leaders to begin mobilizing their armies. This caused a chain reaction, as potential adversaries reacted to avoid being vulnerable to attack. It is impossible to calculate whether arms control arrangements such as those discussed here might have provided sufficient restraint during those tense moments and precluded conflict. Arms control arrangements potentially offer transparency mechanisms, force limits, and reassurances that serve to reduce tensions between potential protagonists during a crisis. But arms control as a policy tool is not an issue of altruism. It is, rather, the search for an appropriate security balance during a crisis, and within a continually changing security environment.

¹⁰ Mankoff J. Russia's Latest Land Grab, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 93, Number 3, 2014, p. 60-69.

A NEW WORLD ORDER AGAIN?

by Lukasz Kulesa

In conjunction with attempts to stop the bloodshed in the Eastern part of Ukraine in the spring and summer of 2014, fundamental questions are being asked about the impact of these events on a global and regional order. Some see the Ukrainian crisis as an important milestone, not only with regards to developments in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War, but in the wider process of the transformation of global governance and a security system. Other commentators warn against drawing too far-reaching conclusions from the events in Ukraine, pointing to their localized European character and extraordinary circumstances in which Russia decided to take military action.

In addition, other events threatened to overshadow the Ukrainian crisis. They ranged from a military coup in Thailand, political developments in Egypt, the threat of civil war in Iraq, the European Parliament elections, through to the change of the EU Brussels leadership. Even the June-July Football World Cup 2014 in Brazil played a role in turning attention away from Ukraine and lessening the sense of urgency associated with the crisis in the first part of 2014. By some predictions the relationship between Russia and the rest of the international community will be largely restored to *business as usual* by Autumn 2014. Crimea will be treated as an issue where we “agree to disagree” and the Eastern Ukraine situation transformed into a frozen conflict, or pacified with the tacit approval of Moscow.

However, even a return to some degree of stability in Eastern Ukraine will not hide the deep structural divisions within an international system that have been brought to the surface because of the Ukrainian crisis. Most of them had been visible earlier as major challenges in Russia – West relations and wider tensions regarding the future shape the global order and relationships between the West and raising “Rest”.

Shape of the things to come?

The crisis brought to Western countries a much clearer understanding of their predicament: while they still constitute the most potent block in the world militarily and economically, their vision of the world order is now challenged by a diverse group of actors seeking to re-draw the rules of the game.¹ In the case of Russia, it seems to empathically reject the existing rules of the European security system based on UN and OSCE-promulgated principles, which include respect for independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all states, and the notion of cooperative security. As regards China, its economic potential enables Beijing to express ever more forcefully its claims pertaining to territorial disputes with neighbours and the need for a reduced US and Western presence in the Far East. A different kind of challenge has been connected with the growth of the Islamist Jihadist movement throughout parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, attacking local allies of the West, but also the interest in striking Western targets. Importantly, in

¹ See Trenin D. *The Resurgent, the Assertive, and the Uncertain: Power Shift in Eurasia*, 16 June 2014, <http://carnegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=55915>

almost all of these cases, the revisionist forces cite the examples of Western double standards (e.g. support for friendly authoritarian regimes, extended deterrence relationship with selected allies) or previous cases of bending the rules of international law (e.g. humanitarian interventions in Kosovo and Libya or the 2003 Iraq invasion) as justifications of their actions. Especially in the case of Russia, President Putin and his entourage have been frequently comparing the “necessary” Russian actions in Ukraine with the long litany of Western sins, including the enlargement of NATO, and fermenting colour revolutions in the vicinity of Russia.²

In the new world order which Russia seems to want to create, international relations would still be formally based on the rules enclosed in the UN Charter (including equality of states and respect for their sovereignty) but in practice, stronger actors would be entitled to exercise power within their respective zones of privileged interests, limiting freedom of political, strategic, military, and economic maneuver for other countries in that particular area. At the same time, due to their own privileged position, they could be shielding their own political system from outside intervention. In addition, the international system would be cleansed from normative elements which have been used in the past as instruments of Western intimidation and interference, including humanitarian intervention or international monitoring of human rights. The notion of a “poly-centric world” is used in Russia to describe the situation in which a previously-dominant Western narrative regarding global governance is replaced by a plurality of approaches from various centers of power with their own – equally legitimate – international agendas.³ By framing its actions as part of an inevitable “correction” of the international system to limit the unwarranted influence of the US and European powers, Russia hopes to enlist support for its actions from a group of emerging powers (China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, South Korea, and Iran) and also smaller developing states which may be receptive to anti-Western propaganda.

The 27 March 2014 voting at the UN General Assembly regarding a resolution supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine in the context of Russian annexation provided an early test for the support of a new “post-Western” vision of world order. It brought ambiguous results.⁴ Only 11 countries voted to reject the resolution (in addition to Russia: Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Sudan, Syria, Zimbabwe, and North Korea), but 82 abstained or did not appear for voting – including China, Brazil, India, South America, Egypt, Iran, and Israel. While the results show a large part of the non-Western international community is not ready to openly condemn or isolate Russia for various reasons, they also confirm only a handful of countries are willing to support the rejection of all basic UN Charter principles by one of the major players in the system. The majority seem to realize that if such actions as the Russian annexation of Crimea became a new norm, they themselves would have little protection against pressure from stronger players in their own regional or bilateral conflicts.

Another aspect worth considering is the possibility of an emergence of a smaller anti-Western “axis of revisionists”, supporting one another or even coordinating their cooperation, aimed at

² See e.g. the speech by President Vladimir Putin justifying the annexation of Crimea: *Address by President of the Russian Federation*, 18 March 2014, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6889>

³ See e.g. *Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at the III Moscow International Security Conference*, Moscow, 23 May 2014, http://www.mid.ru/bdcomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b4325699005bcbb3/d2bb652bd0232e0344257ce40057b89d!OpenDocument

⁴ Kearns I., Raynova, D. *Is Russia really isolated in Ukraine?* European Leadership Network, 1 April 2014, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/is-russia-really-isolated-on-ukraine_1348.html

the dismantlement of the current system.⁵ China and Russia would have the potential to lead such a group, seeking allies mainly from their most dependent clients (Belarus, Armenia, and Burma) and possibly rogue states such as Syria or North Korea. The specter of Chinese-Russian entente was given some credence by the May 2014 visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to China, which saw the signing of a major 30 years' long gas delivery contract and a range of other agreements.⁶ It should also be noted that Russian and Chinese militaries have been engaged in recent years in a series of joint exercises.

However, on closer inspection, the scenario of an emerging “axis of revisionists” does not hold ground. While Russia is trying to increase its sphere of influence mainly through coercion and intimidation, China seems determined to expend its power regionally through a more diverse range of instruments, including economic diplomacy and exercise of its “soft power”. In terms of economic potential, the gap between them is growing: China being the 2nd country in the world in terms of GDP, and Russia the 8th.⁷ Russia may be an attractive partner for China in some areas, including oil and gas deliveries, raw materials, and the purchase of some types of advanced weapon systems (e.g. aircraft and air defence), but the Chinese leadership are not ready to switch from their “peaceful rise” narrative to a more confrontational stance towards the West. Also from the Chinese perspective, closer cooperation with Russia may divert its resources and attention from areas crucial to its standpoint (North-East and East Asia), and into the European region, which it considers as strategically peripheral. Soon the two countries may also return to confrontation in areas they both consider their spheres of influence, for example Central Asia or North Korea. Finally, neither Russia nor China seems to be ready to take into account the other country's interests when conducting business with the United States or various European countries. While we may see some Russian-Chinese cooperation in opposing the US on some issues (e.g. Missile Defence development or control over the Internet), it is unlikely that this “marriage of convenience” would form a united alliance ready to take on the West.

It should also be noted that the US and most Western countries have been opposing the notion that a split between Russia and the status quo powers is permanent. Strong language was used to express opposition to the Russian actions in Ukraine, but it was followed by limited and targeted sanctions (with the suggestion of possible escalation if, rather vaguely, Russia was found to be “uncooperative” in resolving the Ukrainian crisis), and suspension of cooperation in designated areas. At the same time, it was almost universally highlighted that Russia can change its course anytime. Even if that is not the case, it was argued that there is a need to continue cooperating with Moscow on a set of global challenges, including counter-terrorism, nuclear arms control, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.⁸ In the two latter cases, Russian assistance is of special importance to the US. Russia is not only expected to fulfill obligations under the New START treaty regarding its own nuclear forces, but also act as a “responsible power” in negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program and in the process of the removal of Syrian chemical weapons.

⁵ For an interesting exchange on the issue of a “return of revisionist powers”, see the May/June 2014 issue of “Foreign Affairs” and the articles by Walter Russell Mead (*The Return of Geopolitics*) and G. John Ikenberry (*The Illusion of Geopolitics*).

⁶ Gradziuk A. *China's Interests in its Cooperation with Russia*, PISM Bulletin, 30 May 2014; <http://www.pism.pl/publications/bulletin/no-76-671>

⁷ World Bank data for 2012, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table>

⁸ See e.g. *The „Cold Peace”: Arms Control after Crimea*, Arms Control Association Issue Brief 5, vol. 5, 20 March 2014; <http://www.armscontrol.org/issuebriefs/The-Cold-Peace-Arms-Control-After-Crimea>

Labeling Russia as a threat to international security could greatly complicate the handling of these issues, and in response Moscow could act as a spoiler and sabotage attempts to resolve non-proliferation and other global crises.

Is it possible to come back to business as usual?

Even if we conclude that Russian actions are unlikely to unleash the process of deconstruction of the current world order, or an all-out confrontation between Russia and the West, Moscow's assertiveness still puts additional strain on the system in a number of ways.

Firstly, and most importantly, the existing architecture of the European security system was seriously undermined. It faces either a serious overhaul, or a fatal collapse. The system, which traces its roots back to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Paris Charter for a New Europe, along with subsequent OSCE documents, is based on the principles of inclusiveness and equal security for all states in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian area, backed by pledges to refrain from the threat or use of force, and to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of all actors. The post-Cold War Europe saw examples of violating these norms through the use of force in inter-state violence (Armenia – Azerbaijan), internal conflicts (the civil war in Yugoslavia), and outside interventions (NATO in Kosovo in 1999, and Russia in Georgia in 2008). However, it has not witnessed, so far, an overt land-grab by one of its principal actors taking advantage of the internal weakness of its neighbor. The system has proven to be unable to block Russia's actions or to punish Moscow for its deeds. Moreover, Russia reserved the right to use all means necessary in the protection of its compatriots in other countries.⁹ That perspective makes the system permanently unstable. In the absence of trust between parties, other countries in the vicinity of Russia would need to base their policy vis-à-vis Moscow on worst-case scenarios.

Collapse or paralysis of the pan-European system remains the most likely option at this point. The choice facing most of Russia's neighbors can be described as either accommodation of Moscow's wishes (and acceptance of a limited-sovereignty status) or balancing against it. The "muddling through" option which some Eastern Europe countries practiced earlier would be very difficult to continue. As a result, instead of one security "roof" (embodied by the OSCE), which accommodated a number of different organizations (including NATO, the EU, and CSTO), the most probable scenario would see the emergence of two power centers in Europe: one Western and one Russian dominated, which would subscribe to different sets of norms and rules for international behavior. It is possible that some "free electrons", such as Turkey or Azerbaijan, would continue to conduct their policy largely independently from the two camps. In such a scenario pan-European security organizations and regimes, such as the OSCE or the European arms control system, would be slowly sidelined or abandoned altogether.

An overhaul of the system would require an adjustment of both Russian and Western policies, as well as taking into account the position of other countries in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian region. To be successful, that would require finding a "new equilibrium" of European security, allowing all sides to safeguard their core interests, a return to cooperation and, equally importantly, management of the conflicts between them without the threat or use of force. It is unlikely, taken

⁹ Kordunsky A. *Who are the compatriots Russia strives to protect in Ukraine?* "Christian Science Monitor", 4 March 2014, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0304/Who-are-the-compatriots-Russia-strives-to-protect-in-Ukraine-video>

Russia's position and potential, that a new equilibrium would be based on a return to status quo ante in Crimea, Ossetia, and Abkhazia. However, it would need to involve increasing the predictability of inter-state relations in Europe and minimizing the threat of aggression from Russia or any other state. That would be helped by the clarification of Russia's position regarding out-of-country compatriots (excluding the use of force for their "protection"), as well as clarification of limits for humanitarian interventions and NATO's enlargement policy (taking into account not only the position of NATO Allies and the interested state, but also the wider implications for regional stability). The new arrangement should also make clear the situation regarding self-determination claims by national minorities or other groups within member states of the OSCE area. Finally, a new arrangement on verifiable, reciprocal steps to reduce military tension and start trust-building and arms control processes would remain essential to avoid an arms race in the Russia – NATO neighborhood.

Secondly, the events in and around Ukraine would continue to have "ripple effects" globally, negatively affecting the security of other US and Western partners. The credibility of the United States and the West has been weakened, as they were unable to offer effective support to Ukraine, in spite of previous political assurances about support for its territorial integrity. The weaknesses of Western policy towards Ukraine can be easily equated with a failure to enforce the "red lines" on chemical weapon use in Syria, and is linked to pledges from US Allies in Europe, providing reassurances regarding a US and NATO willingness to support them in the case of war. As a result, the difference between US treaty allies (covered by a formal or informal security guarantee) and partners could be blurred, both in the perception of the allies and their opponents. The former could conclude that the US would not be willing or able to protect them against dominating regional powers, such as Russia, China, or Iran, and therefore they need to develop their own defence capabilities (possibly including WMDs). The latter could feel emboldened by the West's reaction to Russian adventurism and initiate similar crises using the Russian "playbook", in the hope they would create facts on the ground before adequate reaction. After Ukraine, an opponent can more easily underestimate the resolve of the US and other Western countries to come to the support of allies or partners.

Finally, the Ukrainian crisis presents a challenge to the vision of global order based on a set of universal values and principles, including the obligation to take collective action through the UN system in case of a threat to peace in security. The crucial element of the UN system, the Security Council, has been unable to act as a decision-maker as Russia remained one of its veto-holding, permanent members. The events seemed to also reveal the hollow nature of political assurances on security, at global (UN), regional (OSCE), and multilateral (1994 Budapest Memorandum) levels. After the Ukrainian crisis it is more likely that the States would prefer to use instruments of self-help and defence cooperation in the framework of military alliances as a means of protecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity against external pressure. It will be also noted, especially by countries possessing or contemplating the acquisition of nuclear weapons, that the Ukrainian decision to transfer weapons remaining in its territory to Russia in the early 1990s did not bring it tangible security benefits. The nuclear-free status of Ukraine certainly made the decision by Moscow to intervene in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 easier to implement.

Conclusion

The term “game changer” has been perhaps over-employed in recent years to describe significant international security events, including the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the 2003 Iraq war, the 2008 conflict in Georgia, or the end of ISAF mission in Afghanistan in 2014. Still, the annexation of Crimea and the Ukrainian-Russia conflict can be seen as a milestone in the process of the transformation of the post-Cold War international order. It may be remembered as the moment in which advances of the West into post-Soviet space were decisively blocked by Moscow, leading to Russia solidifying its position as an independent center of gravity for Eastern European and Central Asian countries, and a competitor of the West. It may also be seen in retrospect as a catalyst for the consolidation of the West threatened by the advances of revisionist powers, and the beginning of a new phase of a struggle for freedom globally and regionally (which the West can ultimately win due to the strength and attractiveness of its values). Much will depend on the decisions made by individual European countries, especially those in the vicinity of Russia which have found themselves under increased pressure by Moscow. Sadly, the least likely scenario is that events in Ukraine will motivate all the main actors to discuss in earnest ways to mend the European security system, and base it again on common values, effective conflict prevention, and conflict management instruments.

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