The United States, Europe, and Russia: The Road Ahead and the Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy

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Rapporteur’s Summary

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Under the auspices of the Aspen Institute’s Congressional Program, eighteen members of Congress met with fourteen outside experts in Brussels, August 12-17, to reflect on events affecting relations among the United States, the European Union, and Russia. In particular, they focused on the longer-term implications of the day’s preoccupying concerns—the violence in Syria, the Euro-zone debt crisis, and the exit from the Afghan war—by weighing the prospects of fashioning closer working relations among these three critical sets of states, and perhaps even a more ambitious and enduring security partnership.

Day one focused on the Euro-zone debt crisis and its implications for the United States (and Russia). Several speakers stressed the critical importance of economic ties between the United States and the EU, and, therefore, the immense consequences for the United States of the outcome to Europe’s current economic trials. As one participant underscored, the United States and the EU account for one-third of world trade; theirs is a $4 trillion trade and investment relationship, on which 15 million US jobs depend directly or indirectly. European states are the United States’ firmest and most like-minded partners in key international institutions, including the World Trade Organization. They, above all other countries, can be counted on to stand with the United States in dealing with the difficult security challenges in the new century. And, as models of liberal capitalism, they, with the United States, provide the alternative model to the rise of authoritarian capitalism.

Russia too, as one Russian participant noted, depends heavily on its economic relationship with the EU. Forty percent of the Russian budget comes from raw material exports to the EU. Russia provides 31 percent of the EU’s gas imports, 27 percent of its oil imports, and 24 percent of its coal imports. Eighty-five percent of Russia’s pipeline structure is focused on the European market. To say, he said, that the “EU-Russian energy relationship is already one of vital interdependence is a mild understatement.”

Understandably, therefore, congressional members and experts worried about the scale of the crisis currently engulfing the banks and budgets of portions of the Euro-zone. Most agreed that, while the manifestations of the crisis were economic, its roots were political and long in the making. Said one participant, the solutions have been evident from the start: ensure liquidity in the banking system by re-capitalizing threatened banks; create a large firewall with government subsidized guarantees for sovereign debt; and begin the slow painful process of structural reform within the EU’s southern-
tier countries allowing them to become globally competitive. To get 27 independent EU states to agree on this solution, however, is another matter. At a time when populist nationalism is rising and “bailout fatigue” pervades Germany and northern EU members, while “Euro-zone fatigue” plagues southern countries, such as Greece, Spain, and Italy, it will not be easy to find a unified solution with all parties making the sacrifices required of them.

Those close to the situation warned that the next critical juncture would come quickly. This fall the European Central Bank (ECB) and key governments will have to decide how far they are prepared to go to prop up deeply stressed banking sectors in countries like Spain. One participant with deep insight into the political dynamics within the EU judged it likely that enough would be done to ease the Euro through this moment of peril—not least because even the strongest among them would recognize the costs to themselves were the currency to fail. This, however, represented at best more muddling through, not the bold, decisive action needed to rescue the Euro and guarantee its future. As for a grimmer outcome, he attached a 30 percent probability to a full-blown crisis—either a liquidity crisis over which governments lose control, producing devastating bank runs in Greece and Spain, or a descent into “unknown territory” if northern EU members decide that they are no longer willing to subsidize the southern countries.

On a brighter note, one expert characterized the US-EU relationship as “in a pretty good place,” with no notable frictions, other than some tension over EU aircraft emission standards and potential differences over a likely resolution on recognizing Palestinian statehood in the fall UN session. On the large issues of Somalia, Libya, Iran sanctions, and the war in Afghanistan, the United States and its EU partners stand shoulder-to-shoulder. Moreover, there is a good prospect that the two sides will soon resolve tariff and non-tariff disagreements, including over phytosanitary regulations and the handling of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). A high-level working group on job creation is underway and so too the “most ambitious talks” on trade advancement in recent memory. This, he suggested, opens the way to serious consideration of a free-trade agreement between them, which would have vast trade benefits for both sides.

Congressional participants were interested not only in how developments within the EU would affect the United States, but how the economic picture in the two areas compared. Some on the congressional side argued that in the US case the core problem was a private-sector (i.e., banking) failure while, in contrast, Europe’s was a government (i.e., sovereign debt) crisis, and logically that suggested that the way forward must also be different. In response, an expert argued that the more essential difference resided in the capacity of the United States to act with speed and decisiveness at the outset of the crisis, an ability missing within the EU. To this he added two other EU disadvantages: the EU’s burdensome regulatory framework that impedes the translation of Europe’s great potential for technological innovation into market reality, and, more relevant to the immediate problem, too few of the EU officials struggling with the current crisis have had firsthand experience with capital markets and, therefore, a deep understanding of their complexity.

When the subject turned to Russia, the primary focus was on the significance of Russia’s entry into the World Trade Organization and, more narrowly, on the likely Russian response to the passage of the Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act. On the first score, a Russian expert ventured that WTO membership would be unlikely to have much direct economic effect, because the “discriminatory burden” Russian exports currently face is marginal and the increase in competitive pressure is already largely offset by a ten percent devaluation of the ruble. But the intangible effect is likely to be great, because it will drive home the reality that “monopolistic rent-seeking behavior” must stop, if Russia is to prosper in a global economy.

On the Magnitsky legislation, the response from
several Russian participants was straightforward: the Duma would, without much question, pass a similar blacklist applied to US officials accused of complicity—in all likelihood—in the Guantanamo story.

Day two broadened the focus. Attention shifted to the merit and feasibility of trying to weld these three critical areas—the United States, Europe, and Russia—into a more integral and cooperative security space. On the one side, a Russian participant argued that the environment had changed too much for the 1990s dream of Euro-Atlantic solidarity to still have relevance. As the center of gravity in international politics shifts to the Asia-Pacific, the Euro-Atlantic region is losing its centrality. The Arab spring constitutes a further distraction, and its unpredictable future course, including the implications of its arrival in, say, Saudi Arabia, will likely leave a still heavier imprint on international politics.

Russia not only has a huge stake in its relationship with Europe, it is at a most fundamental level “in Europe” historically, culturally, and psychologically. Within the European context, he noted, Russia and the EU are also different from what they were a decade earlier. If Russia’s aspirations in the post-Soviet neighborhood once focused on “strategic positioning”—with the implicit concerns this raised elsewhere in the Euro-Atlantic region—that era has passed. No longer is Russia preoccupied with how dominant or not it is among its new neighbors; instead it now pays more attention to a straightforward cost-benefit calculation, as was evident during the 2010 Kyrgyz crisis, when Russian leaders concluded that they had neither the resources nor the reasons to get involved. As for grand thinking about the larger picture, one hears very little these days of President Medvedev’s 2009 proposal for a new European Security Treaty. Instead Russian policymakers concentrate on narrower practical matters, such as removing visa barriers in travel to EU countries. And the EU? The EU, he said, also has a different agenda, because for the moment the major challenges that its members face are primarily internal, and “no one from the outside can help.”

In response a US expert contended that the increased prominence of the Asia-Pacific, the concern over violent extremism, and the uncertainties surrounding the evolution of the Arab spring make Europe and cooperation within the Euro-Atlantic region more, not less, important. Neither the United States nor Russia could, even if they wished to, “pivot” away from Europe. Russia not only has a huge stake in its relationship with Europe, it is at a most fundamental level “in Europe” historically, culturally, and psychologically. Hence, the problem is not that Russia no longer needs Europe, but that its leadership has “taken Russia out of the game of operating in a global Europe.” Much of Russia’s business community, a rising urban middle class, and a young liberal generation are ready to be part of a greater Europe with a growing global role. Only Russian leaders hesitate, treating issues such as the ongoing Syrian tragedy as a test of the United States’ and Europe’s misguided aims rather than an imperative to join hands.

Russia, this expert added, has much to contribute and to gain were its leaders to look for ways of adding NATO’s resources to those of its own, rather than betting against NATO’s continuing viability—a bad bet in any case. As for the US-Russian part of the equation, this participant continued, while Russia no longer figures as a security challenge for the United States, its cooperation is critical in a number of areas. And it could be far greater yet were its leaders more open to it—and were the US side to entertain a larger vision of what might be possible, even conceivably Russian membership in NATO.

A second Russian participant dissented from the view that Europe was for Russia “last win-
ter’s snow “—that, because the opportunities are now in Asia and Europe poses left-over troubles, Russia is better off turning away from Europe and toward the Asian region. However, to insist that Russia can only engage a “global Europe” by remaking its foreign policy is equally impractical. Russia, he underscored, is and will remain committed to “strategic independence” as the bedrock of its foreign policy. Hence, to achieve real progress toward a more inclusive and effective Euro-Atlantic security community will require equal efforts from all parties. To deal with Russia’s worry about US intentions in Europe, both Russia and NATO must go the extra length to ensure that missile defense cooperation becomes the “game changer” that it can be. To reduce the mistrust that Russia’s East European neighbors have of it, much more needs to be done to duplicate the steps taken by Poland and Russia toward “historical reconciliation.” And to ease US misgivings over political developments within Russia, the slow but inevitable evolution of Russian society toward more modern and liberal forms must be given time.

What are the prospects of change within Russia that would make it a more attractive partner for the United States?

Much of the discussion that followed focused on three themes: the potential disjuncture between US and European priorities and the resources each is willing to bring to a common agenda; how feasible partnership with Russia is; and the lingering impact of Cold War stereotypes and the mistrust accompanying them.

A member of Congress noted the Europeans’ unwillingness to spend on defense at a time when US resources are also shrinking, but also the ambiguity introduced in the United States’ defense agenda as administrations move beyond national security to pursue “humanitarian objectives,” including the “overthrow of dictators.” Others added that, “indispensable” as the European allies may be to the United States, security and economics are inherently connected, making the road ahead anything but easy. In response another participant stressed that the Europeans do share many of the same security concerns as the United States; are prepared to act, as was evident in the Libyan case; and do spend on security, if not always in the form of military budgets. Funding for defense will, indeed, decline in all quarters, but this makes cooperation among these countries all the more important.

On Russia, members of Congress had many questions: what drove Russian obstruction on Syrian sanctions? How would Russia respond to a military attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities? At a more basic level, what role does Russia see for itself in international politics? What are the prospects of change within Russia that would make it a more attractive partner for the United States? Syria, one Russian said, concerns Putin and his team at several levels: who intervenes with force and on what authority; the wisdom of trying to engineer regime change; how the Syrian events will play out in the context of the ongoing Arab spring; and protecting narrow Russian material interests. In the case of a military confrontation with Iran the Russian leadership worries about its destabilizing impact in the Caucasus, but, while it would surely condemn an assault on Iran’s facilities, it is unlikely to do more. Another Russian, characterizing the winds blowing at a more fundamental level, argued that the way Russia eventually integrates itself into its external environment will depend on how conducive the evolving external environment is to its integration. For now, it sees itself as a regional, not a global power, but it seeks to have a global impact in ways enhancing the reach of its regional influence.

Many of the participants put special emphasis on the impediment that the residue of Cold War thinking and mistrust creates for closer cooperation between Russia and the West. They were reminded by one scholar, however,
that the existing level of mistrust reflects not merely the past, but also the impact of more recent events, such as for Russia the 1999 Kosovo war and for the West the 2008 Georgian war. All the more reason, suggested a member of Congress, that practical steps be taken that not only address concrete problems, but that demonstrate mutual respect. He offered as an urgent example the need for the United States and Russia to coordinate contingency planning to secure Syria’s chemical weapons should the violence threaten the government’s control over them.

On day three attention shifted to the wider global setting, and, in particular, to how the rise of China should factor in relations among the United States, Europe and Russia as well as how a dynamic and more assertive Turkey adds complexity to the vision of a larger and more cohesive Euro-Atlantic security community. Enlarging the focus to include emerging global challenges had already been anticipated the previous day, when members of Congress pointed, first, to the looming danger of large-scale food scarcity generating instability in the poorer countries of the south. For the United States—where demographic change will give greater prominence to the Hispanic portions of its population—the pull to the south will be particularly strong. They also, second, stressed the related threat to global stability posed by potential resource conflicts produced by climate change and the more imminent security concerns raised by new technological spheres such as cyber warfare.

The discussion began with an assessment of the key relationship—that between the United States and China. Dismissing the assumption in some quarters that an intense strategic rivalry between the two is inevitable, an expert described the current US approach as a measured effort to guide the relationship along a peaceful path. The growing power of China and, at times, the aggressiveness of its actions in its neighborhood have reinforced the desire of a wide range of Asian countries to keep the United States involved and, therefore, make it easier for the United States to pursue a soft-balancing strategy. Europe is a different case. The European states and the EU are “intrigued” by China and eager to benefit from its economic dynamism, but incapable of formulating a common approach. China, in turn, finds it easy to play one off against the other. Still, the relationship is one of “guarded optimism,” strengthened by the European emphasis on cooperating with China over the “global commons,” including protecting the environment.

The Russian-Chinese relationship he characterized as one of tactical rather than strategic cooperation. Both, he said, share an aversion to Western intervention in third countries and a common desire to contain US influence in areas of national concern, but these and other parallel positions do not amount to a fundamental strategic alignment. Russian participants agreed. Said one, Russia and China are at once partners and rivals on various levels. In regions where they interact—such as Central Asia and South Asia—they both cooperate and compete. In short, Sino-Russian cooperation is “à la carte.” Another Russian scholar put it more emphatically: there can be no Russian-Chinese strategic alliance, because throughout its history China has abjured strategic alliances with other countries. The first Russian speaker then added that the emerging bipolarity between the United States and China would confront Russia with difficult choices if it required taking sides.

This Russian perspective had a larger echo in the recognition among many participants that managing China’s constructive integration into the global order makes cooperation among the United States, Europe, and Russia all the more imperative. At one level, suggested one expert, the challenge is to discourage China from “picking and choosing” which international norms it decides to observe, as reflected, for example, in its approach to naval traffic within its economic zone in the South China Sea, while, at the same time, exploiting China’s growing stake in inter-
national cooperation, such as in countering piracy, because China now has the world’s largest merchant fleet. At a more basic level, a congressional participant argued that the challenge is for the United States, Europe, and Russia to come to terms with a transformed global setting in which once secondary players want a more prominent role with real influence, a world in which major powers are emerging in all of its key regions, countries whose aspirations cannot be dictated and grievances dismissed by outsiders. As another member of Congress phrased it, with China very much in mind, the better part of wisdom is not merely to act to avoid the things we fear but to avoid actions that bring about the things we fear.

Turkey poses a different challenge. As one scholar stressed, “keeping Turkey at the side” of Europe and NATO is more important than ever, given the dynamism and growing weight of its economy, its location at the center of the turbulent regions to Europe’s south, and its potential impact on the course of the “Arab spring” and the wider world of Islam. But doing so will not be easy. In relations between Turkey and its western allies there has been a noticeable “grinding of the gears,” as both sides struggle to adjust to a more assertive Turkey, one determined to articulate an independent Turkish view and act on it. This is a transformed country, more urban than rural, but with the countryside, including women, Kurds, and the young, brought to the city, more solidified politically under a “big-tent” dominant party, still semi-authoritarian, but with popular support for the foreign policy activism practiced by the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan government.

This produced a lively discussion focused on a number of issues that troubled congressional participants: Turkey’s seemingly intentional efforts to provoke Israel; its questionable objectives in Central Asia; its resurgent Islamic identity; and its refusal to come to terms with the 1915 Armenian genocide, abetted by US administrations that regularly fend off congressional initiatives with the claim, “Now is not the time.” In response, one of the scholars doubted that the frictions with Israel had been consciously instigated rather than the result of missteps on Ankara’s part. In Central Asia, Turkey originally saw the region as an area of opportunity, but its rather patronizing approach soon alienated local elites and, more recently, they have put Erdoğan’s government at arm’s length for fear that it may become a “pathway for the Arab spring to infect them.” Turkey, however, remains a crucial corridor for the export of Central Asian energy. As for the growing influence of Islam, this he said reflects the rise of a rural middle class with Islamic—not Islamist—values, which, in fact, should make Turkey a higher value partner for the United States and Europe when dealing with the Middle East and the Islamic world beyond. And on the Armenian genocide issue, he argued that rather than pillory Turkey, more progress would be achieved if the United States supported the ripples in Turkish society ready to open the question.

The EU has a population of 502 million, a GDP of $18 trillion, twice that of China, nine times that of Russia, and $636 billion in trade with the United States, triple US trade with China.

At the close of the discussion members of Congress offered a wider set of reflections. When thinking about the challenge of welding the United States, Europe, and Russia into a more effective security partnership, one member suggested that, if its foundation for the moment could not be common democratic values, it certainly could and should be controlling weapons of mass destruction. Another member argued that, if their priorities are properly ordered, the United States, Europe, and Russia should recognize that the new global challenges of climate change, tensions over resources, bio-
and nuclear-terrorism, and health pandemics should provide a powerful impulse to cooperate, because in the face of these challenges “we are all in the same boat,” and none of them is “burdened by the old bases for mistrust.”

On the final day, the group enlarged the compass of the discussion, probing more deeply the larger stakes involved. One of the scholars began by placing in a fundamentally different context the underlying issue that had threaded its way through the previous discussions—whether Euro-Atlantic security cooperation is a necessary point of departure or a left-over point from the past. The profound changes taking place in international politics, he said, require more than a rethinking of grand strategy. They demand a restructuring of mentality. The challenges that face our countries cannot be successfully addressed by the means embedded in old mind-sets. Deterrence thinking—the dominant approach during the Cold War—will not work against the new global threats, such as climate change or nuclear terrorism, threats that cannot be deterred, least of all by nuclear weapons. Yet, the nuclear weapons states are gearing up to spend $1 trillion over the next decade to modernize and refine these weapons systems.

He continued that in a world more radi-cally changed than our minds, a world where we have been slower to heal the wounds from a Cold War that ended peacefully than earlier at the end of a bloody World War, the time has come to treat seriously the new reality—a multipolar world that requires multilateral approaches dependent on cooperation. It is a world in which many of our old mechanisms, including some features of NATO, are “cultur-ally insensitive” to the imperatives of this new environment. In this new environment Europe is not less relevant to the United States, triple US trade with China. If that Europe is diverse and at times divided, its diversity should be “appreciated,” not for-saken, and even less should others “pick and choose which state or states they deem to be the European voice.”

A Russian participant, however, cast doubt on how ready his country was to buy into a Euro-Atlantic security community imagined as a way to deal with a new multipolar world. He said that the idea of a “common European home” first introduced in Mikhail Gorbachev’s day had died long ago, buried when the West treated Russia at the end of the Cold War as a defeated state. (“To Russians,” he said, “both sides won with the end of the Cold War.”) NATO’s enlargement then followed by leaving Russia out, and its paltry compensation, the NATO-Russian Council, failed at the first test, the 2008 Georgian war. Now with Russia back on its feet, the Americans and Europeans see it as both a “growing challenge and an emerging opportunity.” Does Russia, he asked, want greater integration with the West, particularly, a West that is in economic decline? Yes, in prin-ciple, he answered, but on its terms and not with major concessions.

That said, he came back to the ten proposals in Vyacheslav Nikonov’s paper included in this report as a path forward, including the achievement of missile defense cooperation, the salvaging of a conventional arms control regime in Europe, further nuclear disarmament, and agreement on the “global principles of cyber security.” To this he added the importance of enhancing cooperation among the many existing institutions in the Euro-Atlantic region, helping to make it “common space.” This will not be by bringing Russia into NATO—Russia being “too big and too Russian”—but by strengthening the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, especially its for-gotten “first basket” dealing with security issues.

A second Russian scholar went further: the challenge is not to create new institutions in the Euro-Atlantic region, but to reform those in place permitting them to take on new 21st-
century missions. In doing this, Russia can be a constructive and effective partner. The difficult conceptual challenge is in finding ways to integrate Russia with Western institutions when it cannot be integrated into them.

For others, however, doubts persisted. One member of Congress questioned how realistic it is to expect Russia and many of its neighbors to engage this new vision, when in the vexed relationships between Russia and Georgia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States zero-sum thinking remains so prevalent on both sides. Some wondered what it meant, if as one Russian contended, “Putin is more liberal than 80 percent of the Russian people.” Another congressional participant looked beyond the questions concerning Russia’s commitment to a closer relationship with the United States and Europe to lament the failure of institutions at many levels in many countries. She argued that at a time when warp-speed technological advances are transforming the lives of ordinary people and creating the opportunities and challenges that preoccupy citizens, particularly the younger among them, governments are out of step—focused on a dated agenda and unable to deliver even on it.

Her indictment flowed into a larger, somber reflection on the state of the foreign policy dialogue in the United States and the role of the Congress. Several congressional participants underscored how difficult it is to frame the discussion on foreign policy issues in ways that do justice to their complexity, how little interested their constituents are in understanding this complexity, and how unhelpful the media is in raising the level of discourse. But they also stressed the degree to which Congress has ceded its responsibilities or allowed the executive branch to marginalize it on important decisions, such as in the Libyan intervention, even if one recognizes that congressional members are not policymakers—they are supporters, critics, and funders of policy. In the end, said one member of Congress, these four days had reminded him again that the basis of his actions must not be for or against an administration’s foreign policies and not dictated by the agendas of various expert communities, but on behalf of the 780,000 citizens who had elected him and, whether they realized it or not, who needed his informed counsel.

It remained for the scholar who had begun the day to remind the parliamentarians around the table that it is “our responsibility” to face up to the complexities of this new world, that this responsibility “should not be handed to our children.” And, when it comes to the critical question of managing a still dangerous nuclear world, the two countries possessing 95 percent of the nuclear weapons have a special leadership responsibility.
To Create a New US-Russian Agenda Through Marginalizing Euro-Atlantic Security

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Euro-Atlantic security remains a serious problem between Moscow and Washington, but in a very different sense than we used to view it in previous decades. Actually, the problem is that this subject still influences the atmosphere and the paradigm of Russian-American relations but, at the same time, it is becoming increasingly minor in world affairs. When we speak of the Cold War spirit, which Russia and the United States are still unable to overcome, we mean the legacy of European politics of the second half of the 20th century. In the 1940s-1980s, the division of Europe between two warring camps—the Soviet and the American one—was the main content and the core of international relations in general; everything else was derived from this reference point. Meanwhile all major tasks we see ahead of us from the Middle East to Central Eurasia and East Asia are defined by a completely different logic than the Cold War one.

Over the 20-plus years since the breakup of the communist bloc and the Soviet Union, the geopolitical environment has changed beyond recognition. The new situation requires quite different and ever-changing, flexible approaches. Meanwhile, the inertia of the mentality of those times has proved much more enduring than could be expected.

It took the 1990s to “close the dossier.” The party that won the Cold War was busy rebuilding Europe in its own image and likeness; European and Euro-Atlantic institutions were preparing for enlargement and later enlarged. There was no more ideological competition—the winning model was believed to be “omnipotent because it is true.” Vladimir Lenin once applied this formula to Marxism, but this approach also became the moral and political leitmotif of the West since the late 1980s.

But the efforts to finally “close the dossier” failed as the post-Soviet space (except for the Baltics which had never fully belonged to it) proved to be a much more difficult subject to assimilate than was originally expected. In addition, the preservation by Russia of its great-power status (which it never lost—even in the 1990s, the period of its greatest weakness—due to its nuclear weapons, natural resources and geographical location) prevented the West from pursuing the policy that it thought to be right in the other post-Soviet states.

It has become widely believed in recent years that the present clinch in relations between the US and Russia was caused by a strategic mistake of the West in the 1990s, when no efforts were made towards Russia’s structural integration into Western institutions. America and Europe confined themselves to humanitarian and economic aid and the creation of surrogate organizations, but they never seri-
ously thought of Russia’s full-fledged inclusion in the Euro-Atlantic system. Theoretically, this is true, as any attempt to decide the issue of geopolitical orientation of countries such as Ukraine or Georgia, before resolving the fundamental issue of the nature of relations with Russia, would be doomed to failure. As an independent force, Russia would inevitably resist the expansion of structures to which it does not belong into territories that it considers strategically and culturally important to it. However, integrating Russia even at the lowest point of its self-perception required a project of a truly historic scale that would exceed the Marshall Plan and the European integration of the mid-20th century in complexity and ambitions. No one could do that in the 1990s, so objectively there was no such opportunity then. Moreover, translating such plans into life would most likely have required not Russia’s virtual defeat in the Cold War but its real defeat in a “hot” war. Fortunately, such a war did not occur. Russia was not strong enough to negotiate terms for a new Europe with the West on an equal footing, yet not weak enough for others to ignore its opinion.

This is why relations between the parties have not taken final form and have stuck in an intermediate state. They are neither enemies nor allies, but occasional partners viewing each other with distrust for geopolitical and historical reasons. The dossier is only partially, not fully, closed. And although excesses, such as the Russian-Georgian War in 2008, fortunately were exceptions to relatively peaceful forms of competition, the parties have never reached mutual understanding.

The parties’ mutual perception of each other as “incorrigibles” was the main negative result of the two post-Soviet decades in relations between the US and Russia. Washington was deeply disappointed by the course of reforms in Russia and the failure of its democratic transition. Moscow came to the conclusion that America was interested only in strengthening its own position as the global leader. These perceptions were rooted in events in the Euro-Atlantic Theater, but they also affected all aspects of relations between the two countries.

Russia was not strong enough to negotiate terms for a new Europe with the West on an equal footing, yet not weak enough for others to ignore its opinion.

Although these events belong to the recent past, the problems in relations between the parties are an anachronism. The Euro-Atlantic space has lost its strategic importance and does not deserve the attention that Russia and the United States still pay to it in their mutual relations.

There are no more sources of major conflicts in Europe, especially those that may involve great powers. Threats to European security—in all senses of the word—are almost entirely linked to the future of the common European currency, and actually everything depends on the outcome of the crisis of the Euro. However, this is the kind of crisis that external forces can do nothing about—Europe created this crisis with its own hands, as it launched the ill-conceived Euro project, and now it can only rely on itself to pull through the crisis. The future of the continent depends on the way it does it. In any case, Europe will be busy addressing its own problems during a long period of time, so it will have other things on its mind than making strategic plans or paying much attention to the outside world and even neighboring territories.

Europe’s ability to participate in major military-political and even diplomatic actions causes doubt for the same reason. NATO, despite its attempts to adapt to the fundamental changes in the world and its twice-revised strategic concept, has never found a new mission for itself that would be comparable to the one the alli-
ance had in the Cold War years. The Libyan campaign, which the NATO leaders officially proclaimed a great victory, has demonstrated that the organization is undergoing transformation even without formulating its concept. There simply cannot be a common task, so the point is, on what strategic basis NATO will act in the future. Real burden-sharing (the latest NATO summit discussed the “Smart Defense” initiative which implies very close interaction) is possible, if there is a common understanding of threats and operations required to counter them. Formally, there are no differences in NATO on this point, but things are different in practice.

Even the war in Afghanistan, which has always been viewed as an indisputably right campaign, has become a burdensome duty for the Europeans. The purpose and meaning of their presence there has long been lost; and whereas for the United States it is more a matter of prestige, it is becoming simply impossible to explain to European voters the need for the stay in the foothills of the Hindu Kush.

The Libyan campaign has also demonstrated that there are different views on the use of force within the alliance. France and Britain were active for their own reasons; some of the allies provided logistical support but refrained from direct involvement; while others, for example Germany, simply remained aloof.

When the strategic concept was still in the making, it was already clear that there were three different views among NATO members on the organization’s tasks. The US is looking for ways to adapt the North Atlantic Alliance to address global issues that are within the world leader’s competence, including not only the Middle East but also the Far East. Western Europe recognizes the need for Atlantic solidarity—in acknowledgement of the decades of peace during the Cold War—but it has no desire to participate in Washington’s remote campaigns; there is simply no point for it to do that. From its point of view, much more important are “soft security” issues, ranging from pirates to climate change, or terrorism at the most. Central and Eastern European countries that joined NATO last decade lay emphasis on Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which provides for collective defense in case of aggression. Clearly, it is Russia that is implied.

Today, this situation is only getting worse. The United States, for example, has chosen its main strategic vector, which has already begun to be formulated in doctrinal documents—this vector is the Asia-Pacific region, with emphasis on China. Clearly, for the United States, as the only superpower, freedom of navigation in the South China Sea is an issue of utmost importance and a matter of status and reputation among its Asian partners. But what should Germany, for example—whose economic ties with China are gradually taking the form of a deep and long-term partnership—think of it? Or take the Middle East, which can become an arena of competition even between some NATO allies. Thus, at the height of the Syrian events, it was hard not to notice the jealousy that Turkey felt towards the activity of France which, inspired by its Libyan success, would not mind becoming the main Western manager of the “Arab Spring.”

For Eastern Europe, the prospect of “Smart Defense” means that it may fall into greater military-political dependence on Western Europe, which it does not trust as it believes that the “Old Europeans” underestimate “the Russian threat” and that, if something happens, they would not take the risk of quarreling with Moscow over small countries. Eastern Europeans basically trust only the United States. So, it turns out that former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s principle that “the mission defines the coalition” has prevailed even within NATO, an alliance that was originally built on shared goals and values.

When it comes to discussions about Russia’s rapprochement with the West, the idea about Russian hypothetical membership in NATO emerges. The peak of this was in 2010, Dmitri Medvedev’s most successful year as president,
when a lot of speculation about whether Russia would ultimately join NATO was heard. Prominent analysts and former politicians took to the pages of Western publications to voice their opinion on the desirability of Russian membership. The NATO Strategic Concept Expert Group, chaired by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, held a lively discussion on the issue, but the conclusions of the “wise men,” as the group is often called, were not included in the draft of the alliance’s new strategy.

In Russia, pro-Western liberals from the Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR) and even high-ranking officials were mulling the possibility. After the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, where the atmosphere was quite friendly toward Russia, two high-ranking Russian officials acknowledged that it is possible that Russia could join NATO in the future. These were then-deputy chief of the Kremlin staff, Vladislav Surkov, and then-director of the Foreign Ministry’s policy planning department, Alexander Kramarenko. The positive spirit didn’t last long, but anyway.

Russia is gradually and with back-drops overcoming a perception of NATO as the main threat to its security. Of course, old habits die hard, and the NATO menace is an easy-to-use instrument to manipulate with public opinion. But the current tenor of its relations with the alliance is just an echo from the past. However, it’s not clear when the echo will die out, and it is becoming more and more dissonant compared to other sounds in the world, especially in Asia. The all deeper fault line runs between the United States and China, which the development logic is pushing into confrontation with each other. The outcome is unclear, but such a rivalry is becoming increasingly probable. The results of such confrontation will be vitally important to Russia since it does not want to be used as a bargaining chip in US-Chinese relations. Also, it must not allow itself to be pushed to the frontline of their confrontation on either side.

Against this backdrop, an institutional rapprochement between Russia and NATO would signify Russia’s movement toward an organization and a part of the world whose global importance is shrinking. Moreover, this could affect its relations with China, which will certainly suspect NATO and Russia of plotting against it, no matter what arguments Moscow may use to prove otherwise.

It is impossible to imagine NATO pledging to guarantee Russia’s security in either the east or the south. If Russia joins NATO, it will be the one providing security, not receiving it, just as the United States currently provides security to its NATO allies.

Actually, China would feel like Russia did when it learned of Ukraine’s intention to join NATO—all the more so given that the joint ballistic missile shield discussed at the Lisbon summit could be directed against China. Only the prospect of significant gains could justify risking a major deterioration in political relations with a huge neighbor, which everyone expects to become even more influential in the world. But it is impossible to imagine NATO pledging to guarantee Russia’s security in either the east or the south. If Russia joins NATO, it will be the one providing security, not receiving it, just as the United States currently provides security to its NATO allies.

The underlying principle of military-political alliances in the 21st century will most likely differ from the 20th century, when they were based on shared ideology or values. In the coming decades, alliances will probably be formed to achieve a concrete objective. As Donald Rumsfeld once said, “The mission determines the coalition—the coalition must not determine the mission.” This phrase proved to be more lasting than his political career. Events in Libya, where NATO was formally involved, the
fact that a coalition of the willing has been created rather confirms that he was right.

Should Russia take on additional commitments by becoming a formal member of an alliance, this would only constrain its ability to respond to surprise developments, which are certain to occur. Had the possibility of Russia joining NATO been raised 10 or 15 years ago, the atmosphere would have been quite different. At that time, the alliance seemed to have no alternative in the sphere of security. Russia was ready to show restraint, and China was not a decisive factor. But it did not happen then, and now there are too many new circumstances to consider the possibility seriously. Now, when NATO is in a severe financial crisis, the necessity to join and to contribute massively to the alliance’s current accounts seems to be even less reasonable. A split between Europe and the US in terms of the mission of the organization and its main goals is also increasing doubts in NATO’s effectiveness.

The largely virtual NATO-Russia rivalry must be laid to rest, primarily so that the sides can stop spending time and effort on conflicts rooted in the past. This would facilitate economic progress, as it would rid commercial relations of undue suspicion. But having Russia as a NATO member would do nothing to address the real security problems of the 21st century, which should be addressed in a new format, ideally a trilateral format involving Russia, China and the United States. Although they have different interests and approaches, they have the strategic weight necessary to deal with problems in Central Eurasia, Russia’s Far East and the Pacific region.

America’s European allies are unlikely to get involved in events so far from the Old World after extricating themselves from the Afghan quagmire. Russia may find it difficult to determine its role in such a format, but one thing is for sure: NATO, with its 20th-century guidelines and limited effectiveness, would only make things harder for Russia. And Russian integration with the West, if it happens, will not go through NATO’s door. NATO ceases to be a backbone of the Western-centric system, although no one is ready to acknowledge it now.

All discussions about the relationship between Russia and the West used to get stuck in the rivalry on the post-Soviet area. But now the competition for influence, which marked the first 20 post-Soviet years, is losing importance. Actually all post-Soviet countries—both in the European part of the former Soviet Union and in its Asian part—are going through a serious developmental crisis. Almost none of them have a stable and promising model of state, and none has made a long-term choice in the form of membership in one or another international institution. The legitimacy of the authorities is contested everywhere, or can be contested in case of change. Major foreign players that have to interact with post-Soviet countries on various issues usually face many problems due to poor governance and high corruption there and the unpredictability of their partners. And since all countries that can potentially lay claim to influence over the post-Soviet space are now facing problems of their own, their desire to play an active role there has significantly decreased. Europe is dealing with deep internal crisis; the United States is reorienting itself towards Asia; and even Russia, which has long struggled to be viewed as a natural leader in this region, is adjusting its position.

The 2008 war drew a line under the period when the main content of Russia’s policy was a desire to prove to itself and the rest of the world that Russia had not disappeared from the world arena as a great power after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Or rather, the goal of maintaining the status has remained unchanged (as seen from Russia’s position on Syria), but other tasks are now brought to the fore. As Vladimir Putin wrote in one of his pre-election articles, the post-Soviet era is over and its agenda has been exhausted. This also applies to relations with neighboring countries. The desire for “domination in general” is gradually giving way to common sense: what is beneficial and what is not, or what countries can give something in return and what countries will be a burden.
* * *

Discussion around Euro-Atlantic security should be premised with a broader one—about the future of the West in the 21st century. The West began to vanish as a single political entity, as an ideological and moral hallmark, and as an economic model worth emulating. And now we might as well ask not only if the West is ready to accept Russia with all its imperfections but also whether Russia really needs to join this community of nations, which has failed to carry the burden of its historic victory in the Cold War.

The answers to both questions should naturally be positive, as Russia has no alternatives. Culturally, psychologically and historically, it is part of the Western world, albeit a peculiar part with many unique features. No one in Asia views Russia as an Asian power (and never will). Although three-fourths of Russia’s territory is situated in Asia, three-fourths of the country’s population lives in its European part. The vitally important development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, which is impossible without the integration of those regions into the space of rapid Asian economic growth, can be successful only if Russia maintains and builds up its European identity. This country will not create an Asian identity for itself; and even if it tries to, it will lose a clash with the mighty Chinese civilization and other Asian cultures. On the other hand, a proliferation of Asian ways to Russian politics, which Russian anti-liberals are calling for, would push the nation to the brink of disaster, since the national mentality will reject attempts to establish a ‘controllable democracy’ Singapore- or Malaysian-style anyway. However, Russia’s European or Western identity would not mean its transformation into an outpost of the West in a possible confrontation with China. Russia simply cannot afford it, especially as its hypothetical partners in the Western alliance will hardly come to its rescue.

On the other hand, the West has few opportunities for expansion and for increasing its resource base and political influence. Russia is the most probable of these opportunities, although difficult for realization. Despite cultural differences and specificities, there is no other significant country whose roots are in the same historical and civilizational soil as those of Europe and the US.

Obstacles to integration, which existed in the past twenty years, are vanishing on their own. The EU, whose strict rules and criteria made a rapprochement with Russia impossible, is bursting at the seams. It will have to change anyway and revise the principles of coexistence and the very model of integration. This will open a possibility to work out new rules in cooperation with Russia, as opposed to the previous situation, where Russia was simply offered to accept a huge code of rules that were unacceptable to a country that had enjoyed the status of a great power.

Relations in the security sphere with the US and NATO will change as well. As the focus of strategic attention shifts to Asia and the Pacific, the inertia of the Cold War confrontation, which Russia and NATO have been unable to overcome in Europe, will give way to a sober assessment of mutual threats and interests. The ideological crisis of NATO, which has failed so far to find a modus vivendi for itself in the 21st century and which will likely transform into a more diversified alliance with various goals and interests, will help Russia to overcome its incessant phobias regarding the bloc.

For example, a new agenda between Russia and the US is only possible when they stop looking at each other through a Euro-Atlantic prism and do it in an Asia-Pacific context. Then parts will suddenly find much more commonalities due to the fact that neither of them yet knows how to deal with China’s rise in case it continues with the same dynamism. Angles are different, but the problem is similar. And inertia of the rivalry in that area is much less than in the Euro-Atlantic. This mutual interest is not there yet, but it must come in the foreseeable future, unless Russia and the US want to lose additional leverage on the situation in a region that will shape global development.
Russia, Europe, and American Security

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Twenty years after the end of the Cold War and peaceful passing of the Soviet Union, the United States still struggles with Russia’s role and place in global and European security. Is Russia an inevitable partner, an immovable object, an inveterate spoiler? Must the US keep working at cooperation and reassurance because it has not done enough to address Russia’s interests and has done too much in reinforcing its fears? Or does the US need to build firewalls against Russia’s negative influence and reinforce capacities against its counterproductive actions?

For the United States, the Sisyphean challenge of Russia is made more complex by the fact that Russia is no longer at the center of US national security challenges or interests. Although elites in Moscow may not believe it, the primary focus of US defense concerns has shifted to regions (primarily in South Asia and the Middle East) where extremist groups use ungoverned areas to establish operations for terrorist attacks against the US and its allies. For the longer term, the primary focus of US defense policy has re-balanced to the Western Pacific and East Asia. In the Department of Defense’s January 2012 strategy review, the word “Russia” appears precisely once, at the end of a long paragraph on Europe/Eurasia that is focused primarily on other countries.

Yet the US will find it difficult to achieve the goals set out in this defense strategy unless it comes to grips with Russia’s role and the choices Russia makes on global and European security. The US strategy counts on a Europe whole, free, at peace, and on European allies and partners ready and able to contribute to resolving security challenges in the Middle East and Asia. The US can and should aspire to a Russia that is a partner in that endeavor, but even if that is not realized, the US will find it difficult to succeed if Russia undermines European security.

Europe and the NATO Core

Europe is key to US global security strategy as a region that is a net contributor to global security and solutions to global challenges, in two ways: (1) as a region of stability and prosperity where conflicts are rare, where disputes are resolved by political means, and from which threats to the US do not emerge, and (2) as the home of America’s most reliable and capable allies and partners in building global security.

Europe’s stability and prosperity make it a partner security provider, rather than a security concern. The primary mechanism for this achievement has been NATO, supplemented by political, economic, and military institutions including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European
Union (EU), the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE), the Vienna Document (VDOC), and the Open Skies Treaty (OST), among others.¹

These institutions have enabled European countries to work together and achieve more together by coordinating and pooling resources than individual countries can achieve alone. They are stable foundations for transparency and confidence-building. In Europe, security is built on trust among countries and nations uncommon in international relations. European states are secure not because they are armed to the teeth against one another, but because they trust that their neighbors do not intend violence or military attack. There may be disputes and disagreements among European countries, but the foundational assumption is that they will be worked out through negotiation. Furthermore, European countries share substantial common interests because they share common values which inform their definitions of national interests, creating a large common space where the presumption is cooperation and mutual support. Democracy, human rights, and rule of law are not merely domestic values, but part of the common commitments of European nations that create a robust set of common interests among European neighbors.

Supported by NATO and other European security institutions, allies and partners have therefore been able to devote defense resources to capabilities that magnify the effectiveness and scope of contributing countries. In Afghanistan, ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) has achieved more complex and enduring security assistance operations with a greater degree of legitimacy than would have been possible by the US alone. Twenty-eight allies contribute over 120,000 forces and cover a full range of mission requirements ranging across combat, planning, logistics, site defense, mentoring, and training. No one country could do the mission alone.

It is not just Afghanistan. Europe is indispensable to the development of a capability to protect NATO countries (including US forces and personnel) against the increasing threat posed by Iran’s attempts to develop ballistic missiles. NATO allies have also agreed to focus defense efforts to meet other emerging threats to Euro-Atlantic defense, including defense against cyber attacks, joint air policing and ground surveillance, and pooling of capabilities for joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. At the 2012 Chicago Summit, NATO members made clear that NATO’s objective is not merely to provide defense capabilities for members themselves, but “forces equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment.”

Global security strategy in the 21st century depends increasingly on Europe, not less.

Europe would not be able to commit to global security missions and meeting new security challenges had it not put the armed conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries behind it. Military affairs within Europe are managed within NATO and in the construct of a conventional arms control regime that provides reliability, predictability, and reassurance. Issues that sparked regional and global wars for two centuries—border disputes, ethnic animosity, leadership transition—are proactively addressed through political institutions such as the OSCE and the EU. All this makes it possible for the US and European nations to play a leading role in contributing to security assistance and conflict prevention missions beyond Europe.

In sum, the US global security strategy in the 21st century depends increasingly on Europe, not less. And that is a Europe built on NATO allies and partners, European institutions, principles, values, and confidence.

Europe Beyond NATO

While NATO is the indispensable ally for US global defense and security strategy, Europe beyond NATO will either be a serious vulner-
ability or a net contributor to the European component of the strategy. If trust and stability back home are necessary for US-European common global leadership, and if partner capacity and contributions provide legitimacy so that missions are not solely in NATO ownership, Europe beyond NATO must be part of the US defense strategy.

Unfortunately, Europe beyond NATO is not (yet) part of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan all suffer occupation of their internationally recognized national territory by foreign military forces. Armenia endures isolation and tense relations with two of its neighbors, including a dispute with Azerbaijan with steady violence and frequent casualties where “armed to the teeth” is, sadly, an appropriate term.

At the same time, the mechanisms in the Euro-Atlantic toolkit for resolving disputes and building transparency and trust are not working precisely where they are most needed. Conventional arms control mechanisms have been weakened in the past five years with Russia’s suspension of the CFE treaty and with both Armenia and Azerbaijan exceeding their allowed treaty limits. The Open Skies Treaty is being eroded with Russia’s refusal to allow treaty flights over portions of its territory (notably on its border with Georgia) and Georgia’s reciprocal suspension of the treaty with respect to Russia. And while the OSCE had a major success in its facilitation of voting in northern Kosovo by ethnic Serbian citizens of Kosovo in Serbian national elections earlier this year, overall OSCE capacity for building trust and stability has been undermined in the past decade by disagreements among its members in empowering missions for election monitoring and dispute resolution.

Furthermore, it is unclear whether NATO’s “Open Door” is credible, and that puts at risk a primary Euro-Atlantic mechanism for trust and confidence among European countries. Georgia is the test case for whether NATO’s Open Door policy is more than a bumper sticker, and whether NATO is serious about the value of partners that bring real capability to multinational security operations outside Europe. This assumes, of course, that Georgia continues to meet the high standards required for NATO membership, with its upcoming October 2012 parliamentary elections a very serious test of the leadership’s commitment to European democratic standards. NATO membership is not an automated technocratic matter; it requires a deliberate political decision of its members that a candidate has met the standards and will be a reliable and trustworthy contributor to European security. However, with Georgia meeting and exceeding its annual partnership goals and set to become the largest non-NATO ISAF troop contributing nation with the deployment of a second combat battalion to Afghanistan in October 2012, it will become difficult to explain what NATO’s “Open Door” policy means if it does not mean a path for Georgia’s membership.

So US reliance on partnership with Europe for global leadership in meeting security challenges has a troubling vulnerability back in the region. Europe has not, in fact, fully transcended its past, and its security and stability are affected by unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus, Moldova, and the Balkans. Belarus remains Europe’s unrepentant last dictatorship, and Ukraine has slipped back from European democratic values and practices. This highlights why it remains in the US national security interest to advance conflict resolution, political negotiation, free-and-fair elections, and renewed conventional arms control for transparency and confidence building—all supported by European principles, values, and commitments under international law.

On a more positive note, Europe beyond NATO is making sustained and meaningful contributions to US global security leadership by contributing to NATO and UN security missions as partners. Georgia’s contribution to ISAF is but one example. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine contribute forces to ISAF as well. Azerbaijan and Georgia permit air and ground transit of US sustainment of ISAF forces as part of the Northern Distribution Network (as does
Russia), which is a vital contribution to the security mission in Afghanistan. Ukraine and Armenia contribute forces to NATO’s security mission in northern Kosovo (KFOR), with Armenia recently recommitting its peacekeeping unit to serve alongside US forces in this important security mission.

This is why one of the major themes of the Chicago Summit was Partnerships—extending NATO’s value beyond its core mission of collective defense of members to flexibility and interoperability with partner countries to enable support for international peace and security missions outside the NATO area-of-responsibility when the international community identifies such a requirement. For US bilateral defense priorities, this translates into the “building partner capacity” that has two-decade roots in Partnership for Peace and NATO interoperability programs led by the Defense Department. US defense programs devote substantial resources in defense institution building, education, training, multilateral exercises, and even equipment and sustainment for European countries beyond NATO. While NATO interoperability and contribution to NATO-led missions is an objective of the bilateral partner capacity strategy, the goal of membership in NATO is not required. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Ukraine do not hold NATO membership as a goal, but they have extensive defense cooperation programs with the US aimed at helping them achieve armed forces that meet modern European standards.

So while a source of vulnerability in US reliance on Europe as the pivotal global security partner, Europe beyond NATO holds promise for the US strategy nonetheless. Investment in these relationships and partner capabilities is the right thing to do for these countries, but even more importantly, it is an investment in US national security.

And Russia?

The bottom line is that today’s Russia is not quite with us in the US approach to Europe as a zone of trust, confidence, and leveraging security capability. Russian military doctrine identifies NATO enlargement as a potential threat to Russian security, Russia regularly protests US military training programs and activities in Europe beyond NATO, Russia has retreated from its early support for the OSCE and conventional arms control in Europe, and Russia continues to deploy substantial military forces on the territory of European countries (Moldova and Georgia) without the consent of their governments. At home, Russia’s political leadership has retreated from conditions that allow for political competition and contestation, placing onerous burdens on civil society and nongovernmental organizations and using administrative resources to shape election outcomes.

It should not be this way. The menu of how the US could work with Russia to cooperate to resolve global security challenges is long and meaningful. The 2010 National Security Strategy states that the United States has an interest in a strong, peaceful and prosperous Russia that respects international norms, and should work with Russia to achieve nonproliferation; reinforce continent-wide adherence to OSCE principles; negotiate political resolution of unresolved conflicts; contribute to international peace and humanitarian assistance operations; abide by and fully implement its arms control commitments; normalize its relations with Georgia; expand support for international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan; and maintain and expand US-Russian bilateral military and security cooperation in counterterrorism, fighting transnational crime, counternarcotics, countering WMD (weapons of mass destruction), and counter-piracy.

Indeed, in the last few years, the US, Russia, and Europe have partnered on a number of very important regional and global security challenges. Russia provides support for ISAF by allowing the NDN (Northern Distribution Network) to transit Russian territory, allowing transit of coalition personnel and material through Russian airspace, and providing coun-
ternarcotics training for Afghan border police and drug enforcement personnel. NATO and Russia cooperate on counter-piracy and counter-terrorism. Although NATO and Russia have not agreed to cooperate on European missile defense, NATO and Russia completed a theater missile defense exercise in March 2012 and leave open the possibility for cooperative missile defense architecture in Europe. The US, Russia, and leading European countries have cooperated effectively on policy to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, despite very different assessments and relationships with that country. The US-Russia defense and military relationship has become qualitatively and quantitatively better, with regular meetings, joint activities, and cooperative programs. The list could go on.

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**Georgia is the test case for whether NATO’s Open Door policy is more than a bumper sticker. . .**

But while the US, Russia, and Europe do partner, these positive activities do not add up to a strategic partnership, as Isabelle Francois concludes in a recent study from the National Defense University, largely because Russia’s approach to European security is premised on having the ability to limit what the US and its NATO allies and partners are able to do. The problem is not merely each issue on which there is disagreement, but the gulf between European and Russian values and the mistrust Russia’s separation creates.

In fact, for Russia to have a say in what NATO does and achieve the trust that is the root of European security it would have to be integrated in NATO. No one should be under any illusion that Russia is a realistic candidate for NATO membership right now given the current policies and priorities of its leadership. However, it is time to put the issue on the agenda for discussion to make clear what is required to build the trust, common interests, and common values to make Russia a net contributor to global security issues. And if it cannot be even imagined, the US and Europe must face squarely the implications for European and global security.

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1. The main activities of the Vienna-based OSCE include preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and crisis management and the reconstruction and consolidation of democratic structures in post-conflict societies. The OSCE consists of 56 Participating States.

The European Union, created in the aftermath of the Second World War, is an economic and political partnership between 27 European countries covering most of the continent.

The United States, the Soviet Union, and twenty other member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact signed the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty on November 19, 1990, to limit levels of conventional—that is, nonnuclear—weapons and equipment with the purpose of creating greater military stability in Europe.

The Vienna Document of 2011 (VDOC11) is composed of politically binding confidence- and security-building measures designed to promote mutual trust and security among the 56 Participating States of the OSCE.

The Treaty on Open Skies allows States Parties to fly over the entire territories of other States Parties in order to promote greater transparency and openness concerning the military affairs of the participating States of the OSCE. The Treaty was signed in 1992 and is intended to strengthen peace and security “from Vancouver to Vladivostok.” The Treaty entered into force on January 1, 2002.
The Asia-Pacific region is home to many economic and political success stories, but also to separate national histories and agendas. Region-wide political or security organizations have eluded the Asia-Pacific, even as economic globalization ties the region ever closer together, often across formerly hostile borders.

There is one region-wide forum, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) grouping of 23 nations, which meets annually to promote trade facilitation. A recent offshoot of APEC is the Trade Partnership in the Pacific (TPP). This group of seven APEC economies is negotiating a non-exclusive advanced free trade agreement designed to open markets beyond borders and deep into the economies of member states. President Obama signaled US intention to participate in 2011. The standards for membership are extremely high.

The core multilateral organization in the region is ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, composed of ten states at very different levels of economic and political development. Responding to a widely felt sense throughout Asia that there is a need for a greater form of security and political architecture, ASEAN’s leaders have sought to build on their core to address political issues through a new mechanism, the East Asian Summit (EAS).

In 2011, President Obama agreed to participate starting at its third meeting that year.

Separately, in response to North Korea’s nuclear threat, Six Party Talks (6PT) were convened by China in 2002, at US urging, bringing together the US, China, Russia, South and North Korea and Japan, essentially to find a political or economic price to buy out the North’s nuclear and missile programs. Early hopes for the 6PT included the prospect that if it was successful with North Korea, it might prove to be a mechanism with the right mix of heavyweights to handle other difficult issues. The dream tripped over failure to complete a denuclearization accord with Pyongyang.

A core impediment to a region-wide mechanism is the attitude of China, which is highly resistant to any efforts to limit its freedom of maneuver. Efforts to enmesh China in regional undertakings in recent years have taken many guises, including for a while to make China “a responsible stakeholder” in the international system, in Robert Zoellick’s phrase when he was Deputy Secretary of State. In short, China appreciates the international public goods it enjoys in open trade, safe transport, and regional stability, but Beijing is not prepared to pay any but the most minimal price for these benefits.
Moreover, Chinese thinking holds that it won its sovereignty through a difficult revolution and by throwing off would-be colonizers, and it is not ready to yield any of it to outsiders. It further insists, as in the case of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and other organizations, that if it is to make a contribution, it must have a greater say in writing the rules.

**Given “the rise of the rest,” the US is gradually losing its relevant share of global power, and therefore is in need of growing support from those countries that have most often averted their gaze or found it convenient to let Washington bear the burden of managing China.**

By comparison with the US, China has a weak alliance structure. North Korea is half burden and half buffer against the American allies in South Korea. Myanmar/Burma is trying to weaken China’s gravitational pull. Laos and Cambodia are near destitute and willing to do China’s bidding in international forums in exchange for munificent aid. These are generally weak reeds, yet they were enough to disrupt for the first time in 45 years ASEAN’s effort to publish a communiqué following July’s foreign ministers’ meeting, for fear it would draw attention to recent assertive Chinese behavior in the South China Sea.

Given the many territorial disputes between China and Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and India, the prospect for a regional political organization with teeth seems remote. Add a layer of Chinese suspicion about breaching its sovereignty, and the prospect is remoter still.

Finally, within the region excluding China, there are many impediments to effective cooperation. South Korea, which was brutally colonized by Japan for forty years, cannot forget, and Japan has reached its own level of fatigue with apologies to its neighbors, falling well short of Germany in relation to its former victims. To illustrate just a few dividing lines, Cambodia and Thailand have their dispute over a border temple complex. Singapore and Malaysia have a wary relationship that time has only partially healed.

**Europe** has its own multilateral forums with China, including as its largest the Asia Europe Meeting, known as ASEM, which includes the 27 members of the European Union, ASEAN, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, and their related regional secretariats. The annual meetings have been notably insubstantial. Given the weak underlying organization of the region, **United States** policy toward China and the region is most often conceived in bilateral terms, for the lack of alternatives. The US alliance system in East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand) gives Washington unique clout in the region, but has also made it difficult to operate as a unit, rather than as a collection of bilateral relations with the US. The other existing forums are conscientiously diluted by China to be as little binding on Beijing as possible.

Given “the rise of the rest,” the US is gradually losing its relevant share of global power, and therefore is in need of growing support from those countries that have most often averted their gaze or found it convenient to let Washington bear the burden of managing China.

**Issues for Greater Cooperation**

**North Korea.** Like its two predecessors, the Obama administration has thrice extended its hand to Pyongyang for a settlement of the nuclear issue, under the 6PT rubric. Each time it was emphatically rejected after a teasing interlude. Nonetheless, it is ironically the case that if events start to turn toward a renewed interest in a settlement by North Korea—a very big “if”—the Korean peninsula may be a relevant and relatively easy focal point for valuable coordination among the US, Russia, and the EU. Russia
and the US are already structurally engaged through the 6PT, but there could be room for the EU to offer facilitation, trade opportunities, third party verification, and possibly humanitarian aid and other resources. The payback will be reduced nuclear proliferation and a larger voice in Asian security, where growing economies and defense capabilities will have increasing potential to impinge on global security.

Strange things have been happening in North Korea under the new leader, Kim Jung Eun, and it is too early to say where he might be headed. Military leaders are being reshuffled in this “military first” state in an intriguing fashion. But if the suspicions of some that he sees a need for a new economic path come true, capitals should be ready to explore the possibilities of ending the dangerous nuclear proliferation occurring there and offering relief to the long suffering population. The dedicated 6PT negotiators would do well to step up coordination with European counterparts to seek means of engaging Europe in the process.

**South China Sea**

As noted above, disputes over specks of land and their associated exclusive economic zones (EEZs) in the South China Sea recently brought ASEAN a significant setback at its foreign ministers’ meeting as China pressed its case for dispute settlement through exclusively bilateral mechanisms with each of its much weaker neighbors. The latter have sought collective mechanisms to strengthen their hand. Europe and Russia have been onlookers for the most part.

Given that more than half of the world’s shipping tonnage passes through the South China Sea, Europe and even Russia, like the US, have at minimum a direct interest in freedom of navigation there. China takes a minority view of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and insists that activity by military ships in EEZs must receive the permission of the sovereign. China claims about 70% of the Sea under that formula, which if allowed to stand, could change the basic underpinnings of UNCLOS rules for major maritime powers.

It is arguable, therefore, that Europe and Russia could usefully and self-interestedly add their voices to ASEAN’s call for a binding code of conduct in the Sea, pending settlement of disputes under UNCLOS rules, which would balance China’s claims with the interests of other claimants and outside parties in the public good of free navigation in the South China Sea.

In this regard, much of the world’s interest in the South China Sea stems from unprecedented pressure on existing fisheries and the hunt for energy. China is throwing massive resources into building a fishing fleet that will meet its rapidly rising appetite for proteins from the ocean as its own fisheries suffer from severe pollution and over fishing. As illustrated by the failed efforts to protect the Atlantic blue fin tuna, cod and haddock, lack of international agreement is threatening whole species. Americans, Europeans and Russians have at least as much stake in managing fisheries for sustainability as the bordering states of the South China Sea. It seems to be growing almost too late but nonetheless necessary to conceive of new fisheries regimes on an oceanic scale if not globally. If successful, these will have the additional benefit of channeling what is now dangerous fisheries competition in the South China Sea into more tractable mechanisms.

So, too, with energy; new techniques of drilling at great depths and laterally over many kilometers make sharp territorial delineations at sea dubious at best and subject to continuous dispute. There are Chinese and other commentators who write about developing energy production-sharing arrangements that might precede or supersede territorial dispute resolution. As potential major consumers of energy from the Sea, and certainly as price takers if disputes interrupt supply, the US, Europe and Russia have a common interest in successful resolution of the energy disputes through territorial compromise or production-sharing arrangements. These include disputes between China and Japan, as well as Southeast Asia.
The Middle East and Persian Gulf

As the US rapidly approaches energy independence, though not freedom from global energy prices, China is a rapidly growing consumer of Middle East-origin oil and gas. China may soon depend on the region for 50% of its consumption and more. Beijing’s intentions are murky, but for reasons of price or policy or both, it has reduced its consumption of Iranian oil and correspondingly increased its take of Saudi product. So far, China has been a balky participant in the efforts to negotiate away Iran’s nuclear weapons program, and it has accumulated a large store of investment in Iran at roughly $10 billion per year, as it cannot monetize and withdraw its trade surplus from the Iranian economy.

The challenge is to find a way to reinforce Chinese instincts for energy security and get them to prevail over the attractions of ready access and price giving that Beijing enjoys with Tehran. Here, the European, Japanese and South Korean roles have been established, as they have steadily reduced their dependence of long standing on Iranian crude. But Russia, which has many issues to pursue with Iran, could do more, alone or under the cover of a global collective effort, to induce Iranian cooperation with the Perm Five + One (five permanent members of the UN Security Council—China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US—plus Germany) on its nuclear weapons capability.

Arms Control and Missile Defense

China has long excused itself from arms control, arguing that its “no first use” policy and undefined “minimum deterrent posture” of limited strategic weapons (officially estimated at 180-240, but recently subjected to private criticism that this range is too low) exempt it from arms control negotiations among the “whales” of the US and Russia, who have agreed under New START to limit respective warheads to 1,550. With an eye on the long term, the US, Europe and Russia should seek mechanisms to draw China into the arms control dialogue. They should not expect early results, but as China’s inventory grows (it is building four new submarines with missile launching capability), it is approaching the point at which it cannot be excluded from meaningful arms control talks.

The US, Europe and Russia should seek mechanisms to draw China into the arms control dialogue.

Directly relevant is missile defense, which is also a source of friction in the Euro-Russian environment. US missile defense in Alaska and California is officially justified in terms of North Korea’s growing combined missile and nuclear potential, but is seen by China as threatening its minimal deterrent. At some point in the near- to mid-term, China needs to be brought into a serious discussion about necessary and desirable levels of strategic capability in light of missile defense, lest a new arms race opens up in the Far East. Japan and South Korea need to be part of the negotiation, and it would have obvious ramifications for Russia, and indirect ones for Europe, as capabilities in one direction imply capabilities in the other.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

In 2001, Beijing saw new opportunities to seek security, energy, and markets in Central Asia and led formation of the SCO. Members consist of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Observer states include India, Pakistan, Iran, and Mongolia. And dialogue partners are Belarus and Sri Lanka. Thus far, the SCO has focused on mutually supporting efforts to combat terrorism from radical Islam. It is likely to increase attention to Afghanistan as NATO withdraws through 2014. During a period of Russian relative economic weakness, China has used the cover of the SCO to deepen energy and trans-
portation investments in Central Asia, in many cases edging out the influence of Moscow in the former Soviet republics.

Europe and the US have so far maintained distance from the SCO and not sought the status of observer or dialogue partner. Given the continuing construction of new “silk roads” across Asia to Europe for rail and highway traffic, and the tremendous gas potential there, it behooves Brussels and Washington to become more involved in the SCO’s activities.

**Afghanistan and Pakistan**

The US, Russia, and Europe are already involved in large donor collectives to provide stabilization funds for Kabul. China has been a modest participant and largely kept its counsel to itself. But it does have a large copper mining investment and sees other opportunities to extract commodities. Like-minded countries have an interest in drawing China in more tightly to plans for continuing assistance and especially for regional arrangements not to support internal Afghan rivals to power. Given Afghanistan’s ethnic diversity and close connections to its neighbors, this will be a major challenge.

China has long treated its relationship with Pakistan as a strategic partnership in their common long-term rivalry with India. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has more influence than China’s foreign ministry. Yet, Beijing is increasingly aware of Islamabad’s growing problem with radical Islam and terrorism. There is ample scope for discreet information sharing and quiet cooperation to reduce the risks emerging from Pakistan.

**Cyber and Space**

China, Russia, and Ukraine reportedly are home to large numbers of cyber pirates and state-sponsored cyber threats. The American approach to internet policy has emphasized the empowering element of internet access and the social media, as in the Arab Spring. This is viewed warily in Moscow, Kiev, and Beijing and elsewhere. A new emphasis on common crime fighting and infrastructure protection should be attempted.

In 2007, China successfully tested a kinetic kill of a disused Chinese weather satellite, hazarding satellites in the space commons. This reportedly followed other efforts to use laser and other techniques to test the capacity to disable American satellites. A treaty controlling the military use of space deserves deep consideration.
Turkey, the United States and Europe

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In the space of a generation, Turkey has transformed itself, its relationships with the United States, Europe, and Russia, and its role in the region around it and the world. The country remains difficult and often contradictory, but also sits very much on the front lines—not of the edge of the Cold War as in the past, but affront the most compelling foreign policy, defense, and security challenges before the United States and Europe today. These and other factors give Ankara a pivotal role in shaping the future of the region and the Euro-Atlantic community. The challenge for policymakers will be properly prioritizing Turkey, determining the extent to which cooperation with it can work even when goals or tactics differ, and managing differences as they arise—in sum, accommodating this rising power, with both its assets and its baggage, into the evolving Euro-Atlantic and global systems.

Internal Transformation

A poor and insular country, old Turkey played only marginally on most of the big issues of Europe and the Middle East. Its effectiveness was limited by economic mismanagement, a fractured political system that repeatedly fathered ineffective governance, a reputation for authoritarianism and military intervention, a client-state relationship with the United States, incomplete ties with Europe and Russia, and estrangement from most of the rest of its neighbors. Hobbled by obsessions on Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia, Ankara seemed consistently to punch below its weight in international affairs. More often than not, it was regarded in Western capitals as a complication, not a problem solver.

Today a richer, more inclusively democratic, and more outward-looking country is redefining its place in the world. In little more than a generation, migration has changed its demographics from three-quarters rural and one-quarter urban to just the opposite, unleashing momentous social change that continues today. Turkey’s economy has emerged from a protected backwater to become the world’s 16th largest, driven by competition that followed the lowering of tariff barriers in the 1980s, new export markets created when the Turkey-European Union Customs Union took effect in 1996, and the establishment of macroeconomic stability after a terrible financial crash in 2001.

Out of this change has emerged a new middle class and political elite that find reflection in Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the country’s most successful and dominant political leader since Ataturk and one of the longest-serving heads of government in Europe. His Justice and Development Party (AKP), a coali-
tion of nationalists, liberals, and Islamists, won 50 percent of the vote in June 2011 and is the country’s first to form three consecutive single-party governments. Determined to remake his country, Erdoğan broke taboos, upended decades-long military domination of civilian authority, initiated EU accession negotiations, and reduced state control over the economy through privatization and by other means. To be sure, authoritarianism, crony and state capitalism, and other features of old Turkey continue to endure.

Change at the top is coming. AKP policies that limit members to three consecutive terms bar Erdoğan and many of his lieutenants from another run for parliament, which must hold new elections no later than 2015. Most think that Erdoğan wants to move up to the presidency, but that office’s limited powers have ill-suited predecessors who tried to remain dominant figures from it. He is widely expected to insist that a new constitution now under discussion produce a stronger presidency, perhaps along French or even American lines, and then to seek the office himself. Separately, colon surgery in November 2011, possibly cancer related, raised questions about Erdoğan’s personal longevity. Whatever else happens, Erdoğan seems destined not to be his country’s prime minister after 2015, and it will be a challenge for him as president or for another individual as prime minister/party leader to hold the AKP together and to stay ahead of the socio-political changes that its policies have wrought.

Unprecedented Turkish Activism Abroad

Turkey’s economic and political success has produced a kind of international confidence and assertiveness not seen from it in 200 or more years. Turks want their government to have, articulate, and act on a national position regarding the challenges around the country and elsewhere. Egos drive Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, of course, but so do popular ambition and vital interests that are at stake in Syria, Iraq, Iran, and elsewhere. For Ankara, these hot global issues are, among other things, a way to leverage a new Turkish role in the region and the world, even if the pursuit of that role is seen elsewhere as Turkish obduracy.

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**Turkey’s economic and political success has produced a kind of international confidence and assertiveness not seen from it in 200 or more years.**

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And the new role involves risks. It has at times stirred misgivings in allied capitals—e.g., the May-June 2010 blowup with the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France over Iran. Ankara’s ability to influence events has shown itself to be limited, as demonstrated by Syria and a fruitless confrontation with Israel. Here and elsewhere, nouveaux Turkish activism has not brought consistent or unalloyed successes. Commentators have pointed at seemingly failed relationships with Israel, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, and the European Union to lampoon the “zero problems with neighbors” foreign policy strategy that Davutoğlu articulated a decade ago and wonder whether “zero neighbors without problems” might be a more apt characterization of what his policies have produced.

The Arab Awakening has presented challenges for Ankara, as for others. Turkey had cultivated relations with Arab autocrats, stood to lose trade and investments if they fell, and saw political and security risks in regional instability. In early 2011, Erdoğan was among the first to call for Mubarak’s ouster, but rejected the idea of outside intervention in Libya or Syria until changing course on both. The realization that Qaddafi and Assad would lose and that presumed soul mates in the Muslim Brotherhood would win may have helped produce this shift. However, Ankara also saw an opportunity to fundamentally reduce Iranian influence throughout the broader Middle East, wanted to promote its regional power bona fides in European capitals and Washington and
influence their policies by joining with its allies rather than standing apart, and concluded that backing Arab democracy movements was more consistent with its domestic aims and constituencies than sticking with military despots.

With Syria, Turkey shares a 550 mile border and a rocky past. Syria’s military constitutes a security threat, as the June 22 downing of a Turkish jet fighter demonstrated. Damascus is again supporting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist movement, whose anti-Turkish violence has claimed 45,000 lives since the early 1990s. Over 50,000 Syrians have fled to safety across the border, and hundreds of thousands more may follow. Faced with this, Ankara has sought to coalesce the Syrian National Council into a government-in-waiting (without great success so far), acted as a conduit for supplies to the Free Syrian Army and other resistance groups, and tried to galvanize international action to force Assad from office.

In Iraq, as in Syria, Ankara hopes that sectarian violence can be contained, the presence of anti-Turkish and anti-Western terrorists prevented, and government actions and policies unfriendly to Turkey and its interests thwarted. Increasingly authoritarian and antagonistic policies in Baghdad have soured the Erdoğan government on Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and led to an embrace, inconceivable four years ago, of the Kurdistan Region and its leaders. This has served Turkey’s trade and investment interests there, but it also constitutes an effort to counter Iranian influence in Baghdad, moderate Maliki’s malicious actions toward leaders and groups friendly to Ankara, play the Kurdish angles better in Syria, and get help with Turkey’s own domestic Kurdish issue. Erdoğan will tread carefully in post-American Iraq, but is determined to be a player and protect Turkish interests there. Although it has found Turkey’s actions sometimes brash, the United States is no longer engaged enough on Iraq to temper this and perhaps does not care.

Turkey’s thinking about Iran is complex. The two countries are historical rivals in the region and remain so today—in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and elsewhere. Some of this may be Sunnis versus Shia, but competing national interests and differing views about the region’s future are more important dividers. On the nuclear issue, Ankara has given exclusive priority to negotiations, even allowing this to haywire US-Turkish relations in May-June 2010 (though since then it has eschewed mediation and stayed in sync with the United States and the other permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany). Government leaders understand the security and political threats that an Iranian bomb would represent, but focus less on that potential problem (they remember Iraqi weapons of mass destruction that could not be found) than on what seem to be certain cataclysmic consequences and risks for Turkey associated with military confrontation. Turkey appears to abide by UN Security Council-approved sanctions against Iran, but has not supported US or EU measures that go farther, and it only reluctantly curbed its purchases of Iranian crude oil this spring so as to secure an administration waiver from sanctions under the 2011 US National Defense Authorization Act.

In the Caucasus, Turkish policy is both ambitious (Azerbaijan and energy) and paralytic (Armenia), but its economic, political, and security stake in this volatile region is substantial. Resumed fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan or between Russia and Georgia would compromise vitally needed energy supplies, complicate business and other interests in Central Asia and Russia, and put additional violent problems at Turkey’s doorstep. A window opened after the Georgia-Russia war in August 2008 to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia and to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations, but the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Minsk Group and Turkish diplomacy failed to close the respective deals. Ankara has recently concluded agreements with Azerbaijan that will provide Turkey much needed natural gas, bring about the construction of new pipeline infrastructure connecting the Caspian...
and Europe, and generally bolster European energy security; and it is working along similar lines in northern Iraq, despite opposition from Baghdad.

Turkey figures in every aspect of efforts to develop a more stable and cooperative defense and security environment in the Euro-Atlantic region given its interests in a renegotiated Adapted Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement, European missile defense, the Black Sea, and issues related to non-strategic nuclear weapons. Ankara has given essential support to the United States and others against al-Qaeda. It is active in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and even Africa. Cultivation of Serbia has enabled Turkish leaders to mediate effectively among the Serbs and Bosnians at a time when US and EU attention has shifted away from the Balkans. Turkey is a member of the G-20 and will reportedly gain a seat on the board of the International Monetary Fund, quite a change from its 1980s and 1990s status as a “best customer” of IMF help and funding. Soft power has projected itself regionally through Turkish traders and investors, increasing viewership of Turkish television, and the example of a successful, prosperous, stable and free society that Middle Easterners see when they visit, as increasingly they do.

**Turkey-United States-EU-Russia**

Turkey’s relations with the United States are the best they have ever been. President Barak Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have cultivated relationships with their counterparts, emphasized common interests, and minimized differences. Contacts among other cabinet members and at lower levels have proliferated to an unprecedented degree. Syria, Iraq, and Iran all pull in one direction for now in the US-Turkey relationship. This could change over the coming 18 months depending on how Syria or the Israel-Palestinian conflict unfolds or in the event of US or Israeli military action against Iran. Old problems like the Armenia genocide issue and Cyprus, as well as the newer matter of Turkish-Israeli enmity, could explode this good picture, as well.

Relations with the European Union, by contrast, are difficult. Barely a year after their historic October 2005 decision to open accession talks with Ankara, EU leaders were maneuvered into circumscribing those negotiations by Cyprus and Turkey’s other European antagonists. Far more negotiating chapters are off limits than can be negotiated, and, since no chapters can be closed, the negotiations lack an obvious end point. Few Europeans talk about how and why Turkey should be part of the European Union. Ditto in Turkey; on the contrary, constant carping about EU attitudes and policies has halved public support for accession. So few Turks expect the country will ever get into the European Union that possible failure of the effort is barely a political issue there. The results are that Brussels and some European capitals keep Ankara at arm’s length, rather than viewing it as a source of insight on and help in Arab and other largely Muslim countries and communities with which their own relations have foundered; and Turkey deprives itself of ways to influence European thinking and actions in areas where Ankara has vital interests.

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**Turkey’s relations with the United States are the best they have ever been. . . . Relations with the European Union, by contrast, are difficult.**

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Relations between Russia and Turkey have improved since the confrontational Cold War years. This finds reflection in lively trade and investment flows in both directions. Russia supplies about 60 percent of the natural gas Turkey consumes, it has agreed to build Turkey’s first nuclear power plant, and Turkish construction and other firms operate all over the Russian Federation. The countries have disagreed (e.g., over Georgia in 2008, Syria in 2012, CFE adapta-
tion, etc.), but occasions of seeming deference to Moscow have jarred Western officials. At a practical level, Ankara and Moscow cooperate little on regional matters and also compete—for example in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and even Abkhazia where Turks would like to see their ethnic kinsman develop options other than reliance on the Kremlin. Aspirations that each has to be the region’s principal trading hub complicate the plans of the other, whether the issue is Russia’s promotion of a customs union and a Eurasian Economic Community or Turkey’s work to establish free trade agreements with Georgia and others.

Conclusion

In a world marked by such changes as the rise of China, Arab upheaval, and European economic crisis, new relationships and new institutions are developing. A Turkey that seems remarkably transformed from the sick man of Europe it may have been will play in these transitions as a pivotal, middle-size Euro-Atlantic actor. Ankara seems tethered to the United States and Europe through NATO and a relationship, albeit problematic, with the European Union, but is also changing internally and diversifying its interests and ways of doing business with Russia, other states of the former USSR, the Balkan countries, the broader Middle East, and elsewhere.

One issue for policymakers is whether and how it will be possible to sustain the alliance with Turkey and to relate to the assets and experience that it can bring to the table as the Euro-Atlantic community grapples with unfolding and potentially dangerous changes in the broader Middle East. Another is to be conscious of Turkey’s limitations and/or the reality that Ankara’s new ambitions exceed its ability to affect events, especially on matters outside of the trade and investment or other soft power realms. Policymakers also need to consider the right balance in juggling areas of common interest (Syria) and disagreement (Israel); the extent to which Turkish views should guide or at least inform Washington’s own diplomacy (i.e., whether Turkey is to be a junior or senior partner); and whether and how further to draw Turkey to the top table in Euro-Atlantic institutions, what that might mean in practice, and what to expect of Turkey in the bargain.
Toward a More Stable and Tranquil Euro-Atlantic Region and Its Relevance for the US

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Repeatedly, during the second half of the 1980s and in various venues in Europe, Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed and described his vision of a “Common, European Home.” Indeed, in June 1989 in Bonn, in the context of signing a joint declaration with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, they both declared support for this concept, a concept in which both Canada and the US had a role. Theirs was a vision of European Peace, a home in which every European country had a place, free from the threat of force, where “a doctrine of restraint could take the place of the doctrine of deterrence.” After German reunification, the construction of this post-Cold War, post-nuclear European Security Community began but, while much has been achieved in two decades since, much remains to be done.

Undoubtedly, the Russian Federation has faltered on the journey to full democracy and its internal repression of criticism and minorities rightly causes concern, as does its behaviour towards its neighbours. Nevertheless, we in the West are not blameless for the failure to see this Common European Home constructed, particularly, one with a room for Russia. Writing in 2012, German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger wrote: “All too often, the West has neglected to take Russian concerns seriously. This has fuelled the popular opinion amongst the Russian elite that the West is only interested in cooperation if the Russian leadership is prepared to accept the conditions imposed by the West. It requires a real diplomatic effort to cooperate with a partner that feels it is not taken seriously or that it is even being demeaned, and until Russia’s desire for respect and partnership on a level playing field is accepted, this situation is unlikely to change.”

If we are to move towards a more stable and tranquil Euro-Atlantic region, we must first consider where we are today and, in particular, how we have coped with the legacy of that Cold War, particularly in our relationship with Russia.

It seems clear to me that one of the driving forces of the landscape is the persistence of deterrence thinking on both sides of the relationship. Almost two decades after the Cold War has ended, deterrence remains the primary security concept in this relationship. Moreover, the US and Russia possess 95 per cent of all the nuclear weapons on earth. The capabilities they have developed and continue to develop, both offensive and defensive, to secure themselves against each other have become important sources of potential strategic vulnerability—not only for themselves but for others—and help, consequently, to stimulate wider investments in global nuclear and conventional stockpiles and delivery systems.
The relationship, I know, is a reflection of a lack of trust on both sides. In Russia, there is concern over the eastward expansion of NATO and over what is seen as the widespread use of NATO military power around the world, sometimes without a UN mandate. In NATO, the scars of history run deep. The pain and suffering that many people in the east of Europe suffered at the hands of the Soviet Union cannot and should not be forgotten. And the concerns go beyond history. There are worries about the real character of the current Russian state: the Russian military action in Georgia being just one example of the behaviour that worries many, and the recent speech by Russian General Makarov warning the Finns not to join NATO is another example. There are many more.

Europe will remain hopelessly ill-equipped to take more responsibility for its own security at just the point when the US is preoccupied elsewhere.

What of Europe? How well equipped is Europe to contribute to the change necessary to disturb this status quo? The economic crisis in Europe cannot be ignored. If the Euro collapses, what kind of economics and politics will there likely be in Europe in that eventuality?

Post collapse, EU efforts to preserve the single market would come under immense domestic political pressure from southern European countries perceiving the least benefit from it. It must be highly questionable whether the single market could survive. More likely is a series of competitive currency devaluations among states seeking relief from depression-era levels of unemployment. Free movement of labour would probably go, given the intensity of debate on immigration already visible across the continent. And a further erosion of support for mainstream political parties is likely, since many of these introduced and have supported the Euro. Italy’s Five Star Movement and the French National Front will find fertile ground alongside Greece’s Golden Dawn, as part of a fundamental shift to more extreme politics.

The idea that all or some of this could happen while leaving European defence and security structures unaffected is improbable. There is little chance of Europe’s many political systems sustaining European defence collaboration in this political climate. The continent that could not deliver this in the good times will not deliver it in the bad. As a result, Europe will remain hopelessly ill-equipped to take more responsibility for its own security at just the point when the US is preoccupied elsewhere. Trans-Atlantic burden-sharing arrangements, already creaking, will be further and potentially fatally undermined by this continued European failure to deliver.

Europe would also be finished as a serious geopolitical actor on the world stage in this scenario; and the individual countries of Europe, including Germany, largely, would be bystanders as the major powers elsewhere carved up the political, economic and cultural landscape of the 21st century.

And we should expect consequences for NATO membership too. SYRIZA, the opposition grouping which came close to winning power in Athens earlier this summer—and which may still come to power—has made clear its preference for pulling Greece out of NATO. Other new and growing political forces across Europe can be expected to make similar noises.

Does this sound like a Euro-Atlantic region capable of summoning up the will to pursue a shared security community with some real common purpose? Or is it a region fragmenting?

It seems like the latter to me but we cannot just accept that. Whether a common security community is realistic right now is debatable, but one thing is true for sure. If we don’t make the case for it, we won’t get it, and so it is to that case that I want briefly to turn next.

The 21st century is the century in which we will have to address the global challenge of climate change. It is the century of transna-
tional and technologically facilitated threats from global terror networks and transnational organised crime, and of the vulnerabilities that come with growing financial and energy interdependence.

There is also no more powerful a reminder that we are in a new century, with new opportunities and challenges, than the ongoing turmoil in the Arab world. Whatever the history that we must cherish and honour, a new world is upon us and it won’t wait.

All of these new challenges and changes are real and none of them can effectively be handled through the prism of deterrence. All need cooperative endeavour among the world’s major countries. In all of them, it is more likely that we will be successful if the US and NATO Europe cooperate with Russia rather than compete with it.

Moreover, my sense is that if we persist in approaching the NATO-Russia relationship through the prism of deterrence, we will perpetuate the status quo and the nuclear weapons that are associated with it. Also, we will spend vast amounts of money we don’t have and undermine our own long-term interests in cooperating on the wider global and regional challenges that face us. In the name of safety and security, we will pin our hopes on a concept that cannot deliver safety and security in the new century.

And just in case I am accused of being a wishful thinker, let me put the case for NATO-Russia cooperation in terms closer to those associated with traditional balance-of-power thinking.

Russia has an interest in building cooperation with NATO today because this will largely determine the nature of the Russian relationship with the West, and in turn will impact on Russia’s choices in relation to other powers, such as China.

The US has an interest in this cooperation because without the whole US-Russia relationship re-set sought by the Obama administration, the US cannot free itself of the legacy of the Cold War and move to address new challenges to its power overseas while simultaneously addressing its fiscal crisis at home.

The European states have an interest in getting beyond deterrence thinking in the relationship with Russia because if we do not, we face the perpetual risk of a breakdown in security on our own continent and we know, from bitter 20th century experience, how catastrophic that can be.

Whether couched in the language of 21st century global cooperation or of 19th and 20th century balance-of-power politics, the case for NATO-EU-Russia cooperation is strong.

European peoples and their political leaders have a crucial role to play in moving this relationship on. Too often, we approach this as though the only important driver is the US-Russian bilateral dialogue. This underestimates our own role and influence as Europeans.

On the one hand, through the EU, Europeans have an opportunity to build a genuinely cooperative and influential relationship with Russia in their own right. Less obviously, it is important to note that in the east of European NATO, we have the countries that are the most apprehensive and fearful of Russia and in the west of Europe we have some of the US’s closest and most influential friends.

What the European member states of NATO say and do in relation to Russia can either empower the United States to be bold in building cooperation with Russia or be a major constraint on what progress can be achieved. The European members of NATO matter enormously; we can and do play a role in shaping the wider relationship with Russia and my argument is that we should seek to play it to speed up, not slow down, cooperation.

The question is how to go about it, and what, in practical terms, now needs to be done.

On a conference panel with Russian President Medvedev in Moscow on March 23, 2012, I called for a number of measures to improve NATO-Russian relations. Briefly, I shall reiterate the course that I think is necessary here.
First, on missile defence, the immediate practical priority as the recent Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative (EASI) Working Group on missile defence argued, is to create joint NATO-Russia cooperation centres for pooling and sharing data from satellites and radar, in real-time, to build confidence and provide common notification about any missile attack. Joint command-staff exercises should also be resumed and expanded to include defence against medium- and intermediate-range missiles. This cooperation should be built on the principle of national sovereignty and each party, while cooperating, should protect its own territory.

To break the logjam and get this cooperation moving, however, the United States and its NATO allies should be willing to specify the maximum number of interceptors that are to be deployed in Phase IV of the Phased Adaptive approach of NATO’s planned Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Such a number would have to be subject to four or five yearly strategic reviews against the changing missile threat environment but giving a number now ought to be possible, and it would be a valuable trust-building measure. If the positions in this debate were reversed, NATO would request such a number from Russia and it ought therefore to provide one itself.

Whether couched in the language of 21st century global cooperation or of 19th and 20th century balance-of-power politics, the case for NATO-EU-Russia cooperation is strong.

Second, the US and Russian presidents should task each of their military leaderships to find ways to increase transparency, and warning and decision times for political and military leaders, so that no nation fears a short warning nuclear or conventional attack or perceives the need to deter or defend against such an attack with non-strategic nuclear weapons. Two decades after the Cold War ended, this remains crucial for European security as a whole.

Third, NATO leaders should announce an immediate reduction of 50 percent in the total number of US non-strategic nuclear weapons stationed in Europe, implemented as a 50-percent cut in the number of weapons held in each individual country currently hosting them. This step would be a concrete contribution to nuclear risk reduction in Europe while doing nothing to undermine the principle of nuclear burden or risk sharing among alliance members.

Fourth, beyond the 50% cut, leaders should express a desire to see a further reduction and consolidation of NATO non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, leading to their eventual elimination or full consolidation to the United States within five years. This should be done through a process of reciprocal steps taken by both NATO and Russia, with the final timing and pace of this action being determined by broad political and security developments between NATO and Russia, including but not limited to developments in Russia’s tactical nuclear posture.

Fifth, we need to protect and continue to ensure full implementation of the New START Treaty, the verification regime which builds confidence and stability in an important area of the US-Russian relationship at an important time. This agreement is the nearest thing we have to a security anchor for the relationship and we should ensure its continued existence and well-being. Any breakdown in implementation or withdrawal from the Treaty by either side would immediately replace hard information about nuclear deployments with a vacuum that could only add to mistrust.

Sixth, I urge everyone also to balance the areas of controversy between NATO and Russia with growing cooperation across a wider front of issues such as trade, energy, sustainable exploitation of the Arctic, counter-terrorism, stabilising Afghanistan, and more. We have many interests in common and many future opportunities that we can work together to exploit. Although most of my comments in this piece have focused on military issues, it is also
on this wider terrain of cooperation that a prosperous and peaceful future for all of us in the Euro-Atlantic area will be built.

The latest wave of European military spending cuts is swelling the ranks of those in the US who believe that Europeans are not contributing enough to either their own or to global security. Bending the will of the European leadership to the development of a Euro-Atlantic Security community could well rehabilitate Europeans in the eyes of their US allies.

Toward a More Stable Euro-Atlantic Region: Back to the Future

Vyacheslav Nikonov, Ph.D.
Member, Russian Duma
President, Polity Foundation

“The path to an inclusive, effective Euro-Atlantic security community—the goal espoused by all the governments in the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe]...”? That is what the Roundtable Discussion on August 16th is about?

Déjà vu. It feels like returning again to the early 1990s, when issues concerning Euro-Atlantic security architecture following the end of the Cold War were discussed at dozens of forums and other platforms. Gorbachev’s Soviet Union and then the newly independent Russia strived for a new and indivisible Euro-Atlantic community. Moscow was certain that the world should be grateful for the fact that Russia put an end to the nonsense of the Cold War, creating an opportunity to bring to life the idea of a common security space from Vancouver to Vladivostok. US Secretary of State James Baker recalled how in 1991 President Boris Yeltsin enthusiastically discussed with him the possibility of merging the military structures of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and NATO. Membership in the European Union was seen as a real possibility: the last time Yeltsin brought this up was in 1995 and then Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin noted this as late as 1997. The West however preferred to consolidate the results of its “victory in the Cold War,” treating Russia as a defeated state, which it never considered itself to be. Russia’s plan to bring OSCE forward as the centerpiece for the Euro-Atlantic security structure was decisively rejected as a conspiracy aimed at undermining NATO. In Western capitals the governments preferred to simply expand existing institutions, leaving Russia out in the cold, offering only the rather insignificant negotiation platforms of the NATO-Russia Council and the EU-Russia summits. The Northern Atlantic alliance in essence became the Euro-Atlantic security system.

And now, out of the blue, over the past couple of years books and articles have been published putting forth the idea of including Russia in the Euro-Atlantic security space, even considering the possibility of Russia’s membership in NATO in the distant future. Such ideas are clearly articulated, for example, in the last book by former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, who sees great potential for involving Russia in the Western club as a means of preserving its dominant global position.

So what happened? Why is Russia now regarded by some as a potential partner? Why have the problems of Euro-Atlantic security once again become so pressing, when Europe (which truly is the world record holder for the number of lives lost in war) has become one of the most peaceful places on the planet? And when for the first time in the past five centuries control over Europe has ceased to be the principle prize of global politics. How does Russia
relate to all of this? And how can it be integrated into the Western club, if this is at all possible?

It seems that the answer to the question of why is more or less clear. The world is changing. It is more complicated and dynamic than during the period of bipolar confrontation or even just 20 years ago. The West still being the predominant force is experiencing a relative weakening, now accounting for less than 50% of the global GDP, although not too long ago it claimed an 80% share. The center of balance in global development is shifting toward the East—from developed to developing countries. China will most likely pass the United States in terms of GDP volume in less than 5 years. Meanwhile China is outpacing Russia by 50% of the latter’s GDP each year. The challenge posed by China is coming to the forefront for all and primarily for the United States, which is increasingly shifting its diplomacy, economic and military policy to the Asia-Pacific region.

There is reason to believe that the slow economic growth and debt problems of the West are here to stay, and the Western model is losing its appeal if not in Russia, where it still has many proponents, then in the world at large. It is quite commonplace to hear that certain successfully developing countries are achieving results because they are following their own path of development and not the Western model.

The United States, where there is increasing talk of a crisis in governance, is for the first time encountering the practical need to limit its politico-military ambitions due to economic restraints, and this is amplified by the country’s continued large-scale military presence in the Middle East. The European Union, which is in the midst of economic, institutional and legitimacy crises, is primarily distracted by the search for solutions to financial problems, paying ever less attention to issues of security, transatlantic solidarity or maintaining the agreed level of defense expenditures. Russia, which was written off in the 1990s as irrelevant, to the contrary is demonstrating solid macroeconomic indicators—6th-7th largest economy in the world (though only 3% of the global GDP), growth of 4.5%, a balanced budget, external debt at an enviable 9% of GDP, 3rd largest foreign exchange reserves—and it intends to strengthen its defense potential, which was undermined over the past two decades. This reemerging Russia, seen as an authoritarian country, adhering to its own view on all international issues and often contradicting the position of the West, is perceived simultaneously as a growing challenge and as an emerging opportunity. It could become a more dangerous competitor or a more valuable partner, depending on how relations develop. Active discussion has begun on the question of what to do with Russia: to contain or to engage. A Euro-Atlantic partnership has once again been placed on the table as an option.

This reemerging Russia, seen as an authoritarian country, adhering to its own view on all international issues and often contradicting the position of the West, is perceived simultaneously as a growing challenge and as an emerging opportunity.

But does everyone have the same understanding with regard to the strengthening of Euro-Atlantic security?

Who Wants What and Why?

In 1975, when preparations for the Helsinki Accords were concluded, there were de facto only two parties to the agreement—the USSR and the Western alliance. Now the number of players has substantially increased, and internal unity within NATO and the EU is notably weaker. The European Union is trying to put an emphasis on soft power, and national boundaries and national sovereignty are becoming blurred. The United States, to the contrary, is placing an emphasis on the use of force and the sanctity of its own sovereignty. Russia is somewhere in the middle. So if, as Robert Kagan,
a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, once said, America is planet Mars and Europe is Venus, then Russia represents planet Earth. The European Union consists of “Old Europe,” which is more apt to seek partnership with Russia, and the “New Europe,” which is less interested in that. Furthermore, Old Europe is divided into Great Britain, which is more likely to side with the United States and oppose Russia, on the one hand, and France, Germany and Italy, which are more independent in their position and prepared for greater cooperation with Moscow. There are also many faces to the New Europe: on the one hand, the Baltic States; and, on the other, Cyprus, Greece or Slovakia, where Russia does not provoke antipathy. There is also a broad spectrum of views within Russia itself—from those striving to become part of the West to those hoping to see Russia lead the world’s anti-Western forces.

From Washington’s perspective, the main strategic objectives in Europe were achieved back in 1991, when the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist. Following the first wave of NATO’s expansion, the issue of European security no longer stood at the forefront, having been crowded out by the problems of the Middle East—Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Israel, etc.—and the rise of China.

Barack Obama’s administration engaged in efforts aimed at strengthening unity in the West following its weakening under George W. Bush, creating for this purpose an expert group led by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The main conclusions of the group can be summarized as follows:

- NATO, as the alliance which won the Cold War, should continue to play a key role in the consolidation of the Euro-Atlantic and provision of security; although the capacity of the US to play a leading role as it had previously is diminishing.

- An agreed bloc approach should be developed in relations with key countries outside the alliance: in Europe this is Russia, Serbia and the nonaligned countries; in the Middle East it is the Arabic states; and in South Asia it is India, Iran and Afghanistan.

In the National Security Doctrine of 2010, the defense of allies was equated with the protection of the territory of the United States itself. On the other hand, in Washington there is growing disappointment with European allies over their lack of desire and lack of ability to come to the aid of one another, opposition to both increasing defense expenditures and increasing military obligations. America is reducing its military presence in Europe, shifting the focus to the Asia-Pacific region. In the near future the total number of American troops in Europe will be reduced to 30,000 from the current 80,000. The creation of a modified missile defense system with a focus on its marine-based components continues: parts of the system will be situated in Poland and Romania with a radar system in Turkey and Aegis warships ballistic missile defense capabilities based in Spain.

Russia is a rather high priority on President Obama’s foreign policy agenda as one of the major rising centers of power, a major energy market player, the only country capable of creating an existential threat to the United States and a possible partner in facing security challenges arising in Eurasia. In terms of American interests, cooperation with Russia is important for arms control, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, providing transit for operations in Afghanistan, receiving UN Security Council approval for military intervention, (to a lesser degree) stabilizing the situation in the Middle East, providing energy security, and in the long-term perspective to control the rise of China and Russia itself.

At the same time, the United States “will continue to engage with Russia’s neighbors as fully independent and sovereign states,” which reflects a complete rejection of the idea of Russia’s sphere of influence. The Obama administration put the brakes on plans to speed the membership of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO while maintaining practical cooperation on a level necessary to prepare for membership.
Following the war in South Ossetia in 2008, conventional military planning with regard to Russia was reinstituted. The list of dangers presented by Moscow includes the supply of arms to “wrong” states. The de facto ban on access by Russian companies to American and other Western technologies of a military or dual-purpose nature remains in place. In terms of strategic relations with Russia, attention is given to the theme of supporting efforts toward its transformation as a post-imperial country and developing democracy.

For the European Union, in contrast to the US, the Russian Federation is a major trade partner—third following China and the United States. Over the past decade trade has tripled. Russia supplies 30% of oil and 23% of natural gas consumed in Europe, and these commodities are the major drivers of Russia’s $70 billion trade surplus with Europe. At the same time, cooperation cannot be described as particularly dynamic. The myriad of working groups and consultative bodies which have been created have not produced any ambitious decisions. The main document governing relations with the EU is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. This is a standard non-preferential agreement—the lowest level of EU cooperation with any other party (for example, in comparison with Latin America or Israel). The agreement expired in 2008, and new talks were held up for a long time by Poland, which was unhappy with the Russian ban on meat from Poland that had been imported from India and then repackaged by EU standards. The negotiations have gone 12 rounds now. They say Russia’s accession to the WTO (World Trade Organization) may speed up the process. But then the agreement must be ratified by the parliaments of all EU member states...

Other cooperation platforms for Russia and the EU are the strategic partnership concept proposed by the EU and supported by Russia in 1999 and the four Russia-EU Common Spaces (Economics; Freedom, Security and Justice; External Security; and, Research and Education) adopted at the EU-Russia Summit in St. Petersburg in 2003. The EU’s Eastern Partnership program was completely ignored by Russia, perceived as a means for driving a wedge between Moscow and other newly independent states. The semi-annual Russia-EU summits do not generate much interest, even in the media.

The European Union, like the United States, is not against having Russia as a partner for helping resolve the painful conflicts in Afghanistan, in the Middle East with Iran and Syria, and to provide Europe with raw materials. At the same time, one cannot help but see the tendency to view Russia as the country that “lost the Cold War.” From this arises the lack of desire to admit that Russia has its own national interests, and pretensions to the right to influence the development of the domestic political situation within Russia. The usual European list of claims toward Russia includes energy supply guarantees, easier access to Russian markets for European companies, progress in human rights and the fight against corruption, and non-interference in the affairs of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Even Russia’s aid to the Euro-zone via a $10 billion tranche to the IMF gave rise to concerns. “With Europe already heavily dependent on Russian energy imports, there are concerns that Moscow is looking for commercial and political advantages in an EU weakened by the debt crisis,” warned an editorial commentary in the magazine Europe’s World.

Russia is concerned over the heightened level of American military and political activity across the entire perimeter of Russia’s borders (from Korea to Poland), particularly with the deployment of the missile defense system.

Now what does Russia want? Is it interested in closer integration with the West? I think the answer is yes. This interest arises from the need to modernize Russia along with the associated
opportunities to attract investment and new technologies. It is understood that the West, even with all the problems it is currently facing, remains the most developed and influential part of the planet.

But is Russia prepared to make serious sacrifices in the name of Euro-Atlantic integration? Probably not. Moscow does not have any complexes with regard to the fact that it is not part of some alliances and not anyone’s junior partner. The Kremlin believes that Russia is one of the few countries in the world which is capable of acting as an independent center of power, preserving its sovereignty in domestic and international affairs. The potential is there: a permanent seat on the UN Security Council; Russia is one of the two Euro-Pacific powers (the United States being the second); an energy, nuclear, space and natural resource superpower; a substantial contributor to the development of global civilization throughout the past millennium. But one’s resources to act as an independent center of power must be continually augmented. And this is what determines foreign policy priorities. The polycentric nature of the modern world implies a need for a multi-vector foreign policy, a positive agenda with regard to all centers of power.

The United States is seen as the only global superpower, albeit in a period of stagnation, and as an indispensable partner. It is a natural partner in energy and security, in nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in the fight against international terrorism. The “reset” preserved arms control but Moscow would like to see this go beyond these bounds, to begin to initiate full-scale economic cooperation, including in high-tech industries. Russia is concerned over the heightened level of American military and political activity across the entire perimeter of Russia’s borders (from Korea to Poland), particularly with the deployment of the missile defense system.

As far as the EU is concerned, Russia is interested in stability of demand for energy resources and raw materials (it was the dramatic decline in demand in Europe that caused the Russian economy to steeply dive during the crisis), and opportunities for Russian companies to work in the European market, where conditions are noticeably worse than for Western countries working in Russia. In terms of the political situation, Moscow is highly interested in the Partnership for Modernization agreement, which should allow mutual sharing of technologies, harmonization of technical norms and regulations, cooperation within the WTO, simplification of the visa regime with the prospect for its complete abolishment, and expansion of professional and academic exchanges. At the same time, the current crisis of the Euro Zone highlights the viability of pursuing bilateral dialogue with key EU countries, which it seems have more clout than the official EU position coming out of Brussels.

Russia is just as prepared to engage with Western countries as those countries are willing to engage with it. For now the level of willingness on the part of the West does not seem, to say the least, to be high. Thus, based on the latest foreign policy documents, a cornerstone of which is the order signed by President Putin on inauguration day (May 7), relations with the West are not at the very top of the list of priorities.

In terms of the main priorities, Putin pointed to the strengthening of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, and the creation of a common economic space for joint development—the Eurasian Union. It is no surprise that Russia sees its closest allies in post-Soviet space. But, as we have seen, the strengthening of Russia’s position there has considered Western countries as an unacceptable development and is met with countermeasures, which naturally creates grounds for misunderstanding.

Now, as Russia is being asked to take a closer look at the West, its policy outlook is turning more toward the East with an eye on engagement with the rapidly developing economy of Asia. Russia, which earlier sold its energy resources only to Europe, has begun to rapidly enter the energy markets of the Asia-Pacific region. This turn toward the East will be aided
in part by Russia’s chairmanship of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) in 2012, the activation of its role in such formats as ASEAN+Russia (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summits (which is becoming a central structure in the Asia Pacific region, and with the joining of Russia and the US in 2011 will operate in the ASEAN+8 format). Incidentally, Russia-US contacts are now more often made at Pacific events than Atlantic events. Furthermore, with Russia joining the Asia–Europe Meeting, a Pacific element has been added to Russia’s dialogue with Europe.

Moscow will do everything to not wind up in a situation in which it must make a choice between the West and China, which whom Russia is fated to have good relations. The unprecedented high level of bilateral cooperation (since 2010 China has been Russia’s top trading partner, surpassing Germany) is also expressed in multilateral partnerships, particularly within the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), which account for the majority of humankind and which Russia has no intention of abandoning.

There is one other important aspect that should not be skipped over. From the language of invitations to Russia to engage in closer partnership with the West, one gets the impression that such integration is possible only with another Russia, not today's Russia, and preferably without Vladimir Putin—a Russia that is democratic, open to foreign capital, and adheres to positions in solidarity with the West on key international issues. However, neither Putin nor Medvedev, nor members of their team believe Russia to be an authoritarian state. It is not ideal but it is a democracy—elections are held, the results exactly reflect the structure of the electorate’s preferences, and the opposition dominates most media and the Internet. This is not China and not Saudi Arabia. “Naive notions of the infallible and happy West and the eternally underdeveloped Russia are unacceptable, offensive and dangerous,” once noted not Vladimir Putin but Dmitry Medvedev. The more often the Kremlin is accused of installing a “bloody dictatorship” the less eager it may be to cooperate.

I assume that Putin did not share Vice President Joseph Biden’s opinion when the latter, speaking at Moscow State University last year, tried to prove that Putin’s reelection would be harmful for both Putin and the country. And there is no understanding of why, when getting rid of the Jackson-Vanik amendment, it must be replaced by the Magnitsky list law (named after the “lawyer” and “human rights advocate” who tragically died in jail, but who in reality was neither a lawyer nor a human rights advocate). The response to this will be a “Guantanamo list” and a Russian version of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Clearly the invitation to cooperation is not aimed at the Russian elite currently in power but rather at some other elite which should come to power after Putin.

But where does this confidence come from that the people who replace him will turn out to be more pro-Western in their views? The pro-Putin parliamentary faction of United Russia was the only one of the four parliamentary factions to support Russia’s accession into the WTO. It is the only parliamentary faction to support cooperation with NATO on Afghan transit. Putin is more liberal than 80% of Russians, as the renowned writer Viktor Erofeyev wrote recently. The anti-West and anti-market opposition to Putin is really much stronger and larger in number than the pro-West, market-oriented opposition. Much time will pass before those white-ribbon-wearing protesters so beloved by Western media (although these protesters are dominated by ultra-left communists and nationalists who are dissatisfied with Putin’s “pro-Western policies”) manage to attract the 7% of the vote necessary to win representation in the State Duma. Putin’s team remains popular, and this is the team that will have to be reckoned with; it should not just be considered an evil for Russia or a target for regime change.
How to Institutionalize or Promote Partnership

But let us suppose that the sides reach an agreement to make efforts to strengthen the common security space. What’s next? The modern Euro-Atlantic space is a space of institutions. Integration of security systems is possible, it seems, through these institutions—NATO, the EU and OSCE.

The main drawback of a situation in which NATO is the basis for the European security system, from the Moscow perspective, is quite clear: Russia is not part of it. The initial mission of the alliance—America-in, Germany-down, Russia-out—has not changed much. NATO is not a threat to Russia, but in principle it would be perverse to have good feelings for a military bloc to which one does not belong. Particularly if this bloc is the strongest in the world and is approaching the borders of Russia despite adamant objections, and with Russia remaining on the short list of potential nuclear or cyber-attack targets. The founding documents of the NATO-Russia Council do not make Russia a part of the Euro-Atlantic security system, as its role is limited to that of unbinding consultations. August 2008 provided a good illustration: this mechanism created to resolve crisis situations was frozen precisely during a crisis situation by the Western side (and only restored a year later at the initiative of Barack Obama). Incidentally, the NATO-centric model for European security does not fully satisfy the European Union, as it seeks to develop its own security and defense policy.

Russia in NATO is one of the possible models for a Euro-Atlantic security system. However, membership is very unlikely in the foreseeable future due to the understandable fear of the Russian veto. Furthermore, certain countries of New Europe have consolidated an anti-Russian lobby within the alliance. I would venture to say that it would have been much easier to build bold plans with NATO at 15 members than with today’s NATO at 27. And Russia, understanding others’ attitude, prefers to retain its free hand in security issues. Even less likely is Russia’s membership in the European Union. Imagining Russia with the largest vote in EU structures or as the recipient of EU funds for development—thanks to its large population—is not a prospect that generates enthusiasm among European politicians.

It seems that Russia is “unintegrable” into NATO or the European Union. Russia is too big and too Russian. And is Moscow really being invited by anyone into these structures? But Russia faces another question as well: why join? To attack Syria or Iran, to deploy or redeploy troops to and from Iraq and Afghanistan? Or perhaps to save the economies of Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and further on down the list?

So perhaps the only road to a full-fledged Euro-Atlantic security system is the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is now suddenly being remembered? Initially OSCE was intended to have three baskets: security, economics and humanitarian issues. Security was assumed by NATO; economics, by the EU; and the humanitarian aspect (cultural diversity, minorities, and languages) for the most part simply disappeared. What remains are election observation missions to countries on the eastern borders of the EU and NATO. OSCE has for all these past years been a platform for inevitable conflict between Russia and the West. But it is not hopeless if efforts were made to try to resuscitate OSCE in its initially intended form and again fill these baskets with something real. OSCE has a clear advantage over all the other institutions: its membership is universal. But to what extent might NATO want to share with OSCE the functions of ensuring Euro-Atlantic security? In all likelihood, not very much.

Russia came forward with its own initiative—a European Security Treaty. This initiative is based on the equal cooperation among Russia, the European Union and North America—the three branches of European civilization, as Medvedev put it. Moscow proposed engaging in the negotiation process all European states and the non-European NATO members as well as existing multilateral organizations specializing
in security. This initiative is clearly dissonant with the West’s customary format for looking at security issues: within the framework of existing structures without imparting to the legally binding agreements. Similarly, no broad support has been found in the West for Moscow’s proposal to consider the essence of the proposed Treaty in the format of Helsinki-2. As it turns out, even the Helsinki Plus (European Security Treaty) format, which would mainly be aimed at improving the OSCE charter, is not supported by the United States and Great Britain, in particular.

However, the idea of holding an ordinary OSCE summit during which this topic might be on the agenda has not been ruled out. For now the only progress worth mentioning is the so-called Corfu Process (an OSCE effort to restore confidence and take forward dialogue on wider European security), which began at the behest of Greece in June 2009 with an informal meeting of foreign ministers of OSCE member countries. But soon Greece got something else to do.

It looks like the institutionalization of a long-term partnership could take a long time. But we do have time, considering the fact that there are no urgent problems in Euro-Atlantic security, apart from the issue of missile defense. So there is reason to give some thought to a practical agenda, which could also be constructive. It could consist of several items. I will mention only ten, as even God thought this number to be sufficient:

- Resuscitate the first basket of OSCE—Back to the Future!
- Hold an OSCE summit on security
- Continue efforts to build a common European missile defense system, which truly would be a game changer (the alternative for the next decade was described by Medvedev—either an agreement is reached on missile defense and a mechanism for cooperation created or Russia will take measures to deploy new offensive weapons systems)
- Identify further steps toward nuclear disarmament with all official and de facto nuclear-armed states involved
- Go to the negotiating table to deal with conventional forces and prepare for a new CFE treaty
- Create an ongoing consultation regime for the most pressing problems—nonproliferation, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Somalia, North Korea, etc.
- Begin high-level consultations to confirm global principles of cyber security and the non-use of cyber weapons
- Cancel visa regimes to allow for free movement of citizens
- Respect the principle of rule of international law
- Respect one another

My wish to policymakers is simple—think big.

3. Now the question is Europe’s response to Putin’s return to the Russian Presidency. Europe’s World, Summer 2012, p. 70.
The United States, Europe, and Russia: 
The Road Ahead and the Impact on US Foreign Policy

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August 11-17, 2012
Brussels, Belgium

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The United States, Europe, and Russia: The Road Ahead and the Impact on US Foreign Policy

AGENDA

August 11-17, 2012
Brussels, Belgium

Roundtable Discussion

United States—European Union Relations, the Economic Crisis in the Euro-Zone and Its Impact on the US
William Kennard, US Ambassador to the European Union

Last year the value of two-way flow of goods, services and investment between the US and the EU totaled over $1.5 trillion. The US-EU relationship may account for 15 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic. The Greek debt crisis has exacerbated inequities within the Euro-zone, raising serious questions about the European economic structure.

• How profound are the Euro-zone debt crises and what are the odds of Greece leaving the Euro-zone and the consequences if it does?
• What bearing have the policy choices made by the European Central Bank, the EU and key European governments had on US efforts to deal with its own economic problems?
• If the EU emerges from the current crisis strengthened, rather than undermined, how is it likely to be transformed?
• What are the economic trends within the broader group of the G-20 members, and how are their decisions affecting US economic prospects?

Roundtable Discussion

A Russian Perspective on the Economic Turmoil and Its Global Implications
Alexander Dynkin, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow

Russia has a significant role in the global energy picture, and its upcoming inclusion in the World Trade Organization could enhance its economic status.

• What will be the impact of Russia’s upcoming inclusion in the World Trade Organization on August 22, after an 18-year accession process?
• What is likely to be the impact of the US granting permanent normal trading relations with Russia, particularly when combined with the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act?
• What would a Euro-Atlantic energy partnership that included Russia look like? What are its prospects?
• If a genuine Euro-Atlantic security community could be fashioned, what would be its key economic components?

Roundtable Discussion

The Place of Europe and Russia in US National Security Policy

Fyodor Lukyanov, Russia in Global Affairs, Moscow
Celeste Wallander, American University, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia/Ukraine/Eurasia
Commentator: Dmitri Trenin, Carnegie Moscow Center

The core security challenges facing the United States are quickly evolving. These challenges—the threat of cyber warfare, nuclear- and bio-terrorism, health pandemics, or resource conflicts—and the capacity of the United States, Europe, and Russia to act together rather than in competition will be critical. This cooperation grows all the more urgent during an era of shrinking defense resources.

• What will NATO’s role be post-Afghanistan? And what will that role require of the United States?
• What are the prospects and challenges in NATO’s relations with Russia and within the NATO-Russia Council?
• What should NATO’s relationship be with non-NATO European states (Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan)? How might developments within these countries or in their external relations create challenges for the United States?

US Policy Toward Europe and Russia: A German Perspective

Remarks by Klaus Mangold
Former Chair, Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations of German Industry, Stuttgart

Roundtable Discussion

Europe, Russia, and the World Beyond: The Roles of Turkey and China and the Impact on US Foreign Policy

Douglas Paal, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Ross Wilson, Atlantic Council
Commentator: Nadia Arbatova, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow

All eyes are on the “pivot” to the Asia-Pacific region, as power shifts eastward from a traditional European focus. But no region has more to contribute to managing global challenges and facilitating a constructive response to the rise of new great powers than the vast area stretching from “Vancouver to Vladivostok”—if it can overcome its divisions and pull together.
How should the EU and Russia figure in US policy toward China?

What role could the US-EU-Russian relationship play in influencing the unpredictable course of events in the Arab Middle East?

What needs to be done to strengthen the capacity of the United States, the EU/NATO, and Russia to deal with the threats of nuclear terrorism and bio-terrorism?

**Roundtable Discussion**

**Toward a More Stable and Tranquil Euro-Atlantic Region and Its Relevance for the US**

Desmond Browne, Member of the House of Lords, former Secretary of State for Defence, United Kingdom

Vyacheslav Nikonov, Member of the Duma; Polity Foundation, Moscow

The path to an inclusive, effective Euro-Atlantic security community—the goal espoused by all the governments in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)—will not be achieved by imagining some grand new architecture or fashioning new institutions. Solutions to the current security challenges will be advanced with more efficient working partnerships among existing institutions. That can only be a start. A process built around practical forms of cooperation with governments actively working together offers the best hope of breaking the inertia and moving toward the powerful Euro-Atlantic partnership that the United States needs in an evolving global setting.

- What realistic measures would create more effective working relationships among the European Union, NATO, and OSCE to deal with the threats likely to face the Euro-Atlantic region in coming years?
- Will the military dimension within the larger Euro-Atlantic region (the future of missile defense, dealing with tactical nuclear weapons, salvaging a collapsing Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty) be a source of tension or a new area of cooperation?
- Is the development of a genuine security community among the countries of the Euro-Atlantic region—affirmed by national leaders at the December 2011 OSCE heads-of-state summit—a realistic goal, and, if so, what are key governments doing to promote it?