

**Damage Limitation and Decline
in Institutional Powers: Russia's Percep-
tion of the EU as a Security Actor
1999–2002**

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1. Introduction

When speaking in the German Bundestag on September 25, 2001, President Vladimir Putin underlined that “Russia is a friendly European nation.”¹ Pursuant to this rather lackluster statement, Russia has chosen what has been termed a European vocation in foreign policies. Entering into a broad dialogue with the EU on political, economic and security issues and taking a pragmatic approach on NATO enlargement, Putin has during the course of 2000–2001 made a considerable reorientation towards Europe and – in the words of Russia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov – made the “course of integration with Europe one of the key directions in Russia’s foreign policy.”² Ivanov has never failed an opportunity to underline that the European direction will be “a priority in a long-term perspective.”³

This reorientation towards Europe coincides with a considerable interest in Russia for the EU as an emerging actor on the international scene. Whereas Russia in the later part of the 1990s was caught in a dichotomy between opposing so-called NATO centrism in Europe and calling for an upgrading of the OSCE,⁴ Russia has, under Putin, shown unveiled interest in the development of the EU’s security and defense dimension. European integration is considered a natural phenomenon – even in the sphere of defense and security – and Russia has sought to address this development *en face*.

How shall we understand this interest and Russia’s foreign policy behavior vis-à-vis the EU’s developing security identity? The aim of this report is to analyze the evolution of Russia’s perception of the EU as an actor in international affairs during the course of 1999–2002 in the light of two interpretive approaches for understanding Russia’s foreign policy behavior – *damage limitation* and *decline in institutional powers*. The period 1999–2002 is chosen for numerous reasons. In addition to marking the peak of Russia’s interest for the development of the EU’s security and defense dimension, this period involved a gradual resumption of the NATO–Russia dialogue after the Kosovo crisis. Russia’s attempt to sculpt a foreign policy on the basis of these developments will be highlighted, and questions will be asked to which degree Russia considered the EU to be an alternative to NATO and whether or not the Russian endorsement of the EU as a future security actor stood out as a viable alternative to a stagnating OSCE strategy.

Following from this, the report will discuss whether or not Russian interest and endorsement of the EU’s security and defense dimension repeated the overall strategic perspective of the Primakov doctrine, which aimed at counterbalancing US unipolarism by playing on the differences between the US and Europe in international affairs. I ask this question since analysts are not equivocal to this end. Some suggest that “Primakov’s fall from power has not undercut the importance of multipolarity in Russian foreign policy.

1 “Speech by President Vladimir Putin in the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany”, http://www.great-britain.mid.ru/GreatBritain/pr_rel/pres57.htm.

2 Igor Ivanov, *Novaya Rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, Olma Press, Moscow 2001, p. 131.

3 Ibid. p. 140.

4 Russia’s dual track policy vis-à-vis these institutions is the major focus of a recent study of Russia’s foreign and security policies. See Morten Jeppesen, *Partnership and Discord. Russia and the Construction of a Post Cold War Security Architecture in Europe 1991–2000*, NUPI Report no. 276, 2003.

President Vladimir Putin has generally supported the foreign policy prescriptions of Primakov.⁵ Others claim that “under Putin, Russian foreign policy has made a marked departure from the Primakov doctrine, not least in renouncing any challenge to the dominance of the US and any confrontational stance towards the West over issues such as the further enlargement of NATO or US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.”⁶

By analyzing perceptions, I seek to highlight the dominating trends in the discourse on the EU in Russia. This involves a broad orientation with regard to sources. Russia has engaged in a comprehensive debate on relating to the EU and NATO within the field of security, and the report draws on vast material from the security debate within research circles and official speeches and newspaper reports. Perceptions will be linked to the interpretive approaches of damage limitation or declining institutional powers. A definition of these two approaches will be given below.

1.1. Damage Limitation and Decline in Institutional Powers: Clarifying Some Concepts

The structuring argument in this report is based on two interpretative explanations of Russia’s foreign and security policies – *damage limitation* and *decline in institutional powers*. Russia’s perceptions of the EU as an actor in international affairs, and in part also Russia’s perceptions of NATO, will be analyzed as stemming from either one of these interpretive approaches.

These concepts are defined as interpretations of Russia’s foreign policy behavior in the latter part of the 1990s. Sergey Medvedev defines damage limitation as a conscious strategy based on realist assumptions that Russia will protect national interests while “remaining in the general framework of dialogue with the West on security issues and use all institutional mechanisms, first of all the OSCE.”⁷ Outlining the consolidation of Russia’s foreign policies around a realist position as one of Russia’s two competing cultures (liberal institutionalism versus realism), Medvedev defines damage limitation as based on four principle pillars: unsentimental cooperation with the West (without illusions on being part of the Western community of values); limitation of the effects of Western institutions’ enlargement; a better differentiation among Russia’s foreign policy partners and consolidation of Russia’s leadership position in the post-Soviet area/ CIS.

Damage limitation rests on a precondition that Russia does not seek to be a member of the Western security institutions, and will utilize foreign policy mechanisms to stall an unfavorable development of Western security institutions’ enlargement into larger Europe. Russia seeks to “prevent the fixation of an unfavorable status quo by any treaty, agreement, or security system.

5 Thomas Ambrosio, “Russia’s Quest for Multipolarity: A Response to US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era”, *European Security*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2001, p. 53. See also Hiski Haukkala, “A Problematic ‘strategic partnership’”, Dov Lynch (ed.), “EU–Russian security dimensions”, *ISS Occasional Papers* no. 46, p. 10, 2003, where Haukkala maintains that seeing the EU as a political ally “gels rather well with the importance of multipolarity in the international system that still hold sway in Russia even after the sea change in its foreign policy following the terrorist strikes on 11 September 2001.”

6 Clelia Rontoyanni, “So far, so good? Russia and the ESDP”, *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 4, 2002, p. 817.

7 Sergei Medvedev, “Power, Space and Russian Foreign Policy”, in Ted Hopf (ed.), *Understandings of Russian Foreign Policy*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

Russia is objectively interested in maintaining the current uncertain and unstructured security arrangement that took shape in the wake of the Cold War as long as possible – preferably until the economic upsurge in Russia expected by the middle of the next decade.”⁸

The second approach, decline in institutional powers, interprets Russia’s policies vis-à-vis the Western security system in a liberal institutionalism paradigm. In this perspective, Russia’s primary concern has been to avoid institutional isolation from Europe and to create a favorable institutional arrangement for integrating closer with the Western security system. Morten Jeppesen assumes that this argument has explanatory weight in understanding how Russia has engaged NATO in the NATO–Russia pact and in joining the PfP in 1994. While being unable to stall an unfavorable development of NATO enlargement and so-called NATO centrism in Europe, Russia joined hands with the Western security system in order to fixate an institutional approach to conflict resolution.

Moreover, Russia’s attempt to upgrade the OSCE to a pan-European security organization with a separate Security Council followed the same pattern of creating an institutional framework for conflict resolution. In Jeppesen’s phrase, “Russia’s policy should be interpreted more in terms of a relative decline in institutional powers and in the (perceived) possibility to influence overall political developments in Europe.” Jeppesen maintains that in so far as Russia’s behavior could be interpreted in a zero-sum game, this was a game of institutional powers and access to Western institutions, rather than a traditional realist power struggle.⁹

The differences between these two approaches are several. The damage limitation perspective represents a realist orientation and a *status quo* approach to European integration. The main objective is not integration, but partial cooperation within select issues, keeping in mind both the specific interests of Russia, a diverging value system, and the overall strategy to play on differences in the transatlantic community and the EU. It suggests that Russia’s interests may very well differ from those of the Western community, and that institutions will have limited leverage on Russian behavior. The issue of “power” is a relative one, in the sense that policy-making will be centered on making the Russian voice more visible in European affairs although not necessarily sustained by structural changes in the power balance. Influence stems from the ability to frame a coherent foreign policy on European affairs while working to consolidate Russia’s influence on the near abroad.

The decline in institutional powers perspective suggests that institutions will shape Russian policies, and that the overall perspective of integration

⁸ Ibid. p. 46.

⁹ Morten Jeppesen, *Partnership and Discord*, op.cit. p. 70–71. Although interrelated on the central assumption that Russia seeks to upgrade its position in the Western security system, these approaches attach variable explanatory weight to underlying motivations in Russia’s security and foreign policy behavior. Medvedev’s analysis rests on the presumption that Russian *derzhavnost’* motivations – e.g. the priority of being a considerable regional power in the CIS and a considerable European power – informs Russian priorities. Jeppesen does not underplay this motif, and assumes that Russia’s approach to the Western security system was that of a revisionist state, e.g. a state that is uncomfortable with the structure of interstate relations. Yet Jeppesen argues that Russia’s foreign policy behavior was more dictated by the logics of balancing institutions – e.g. securing access to institutions while signalling a clear preference for alternatives to NATO centrism.

with Western structures will be a prerogative in Russian foreign policies. It suggests that Russia will consider partaking in Western institutions to be of higher importance than national interests and sculpt these interests to be more in line with those of the EU and NATO.

1.2 Application of the Concepts: A First Note

The aim of this study is to apply these two readings of Russian foreign policy behavior to structure Russia's perceptions of the EU's emerging foreign policy and security identity. Some preliminary comments will be made to illustrate this. First, traditionally oriented towards the dichotomy between upgrading the OSCE and stalling NATO enlargement, the development of the ESDP within the EU has provided Russia with an alternative policy field with regard to the Western security system in the post-Kosovo period. The ESDP represented a policy opportunity for Russia, a way to leave the conundrum of being marginalized in the European security network and a way to enter the European foreign and security policy scene.

Secondly, although Russia had addressed developments within the WEU even before the Kosovo crisis,¹⁰ these efforts intensified after the Kosovo crisis and the ESDP emerged as a special policy field for Russia. This turn was based on the more general assumption that diverse and multiple relations between Russia and the EU within the field of security could soften Russia's skeptical attitude towards NATO and bring about a new turn in European–Russian relations. In the analysis of Vladimir Baranovsky, this policy reflected Russia's need for diversifying its foreign policies and to reinforce a European vector in Russia's foreign and security policies. Hence, “the international political identity of the EU becomes more prominent, while Russia experiences a growing need for political interaction with other actors on the international scene.” In this interaction “both processes represent independent variables; their intersection is not inevitable, but the chances for them to reinforce each other are by no means small.”¹¹

In this perspective, as will be discussed in this report, Russia sought to solve the problem of declining institutional powers in Europe by taking a head-on approach to developments within the EU. Faced with a lingering OSCE strategy and still in opposition to NATO centrism, the EU represented a shortcut to European security affairs for Russia. Access and close association to the ESDP process would make it possible for Russia to leave the backwater of the OSCE strategy – an organization that in Moscow shibboleth was turned into an organization for the democratization of the post-Soviet space more than the pan-European security organization Moscow wanted it to become. Moreover, closer security ties to the EU would enable Russia once again to flag the idea of a pan-European security system, this time under the auspices of a closer security relationship between the EU and Russia. Finally, addressing the ESDP would also – if conceived as a serious Russian

¹⁰ For a detailed account, see Dmitry Danilov and Stephan de Spiegeleire, “Ot razmezhivaniya k sbližheniyu. Novye otnosheniya Rossii i Zapadnoy Evropoy v sfere bezopasnosti?”, *Chaillot Paper* no. 31, April 1998.

¹¹ Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia's Attitudes Towards the EU: Political Aspects*, Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, Helsinki 2002, p. 30.

strategy – imply that Russia could secure access to institutions. Hence, the overall strategy of a zero-sum institutional power game could be achieved.

This offered, however, also a possibility to pursue the long-term strategy of damage limitation. Addressing the EU would imply – for Russia – to add another element to the overall strategy of keeping an open European security process and avoid the fixation of an unfavorable Western security system. Following this line of argument, several studies have suggested that Russia's preference for the ESDP has indeed been a balancing act through which a declining challenger seeks to alter the distribution of power and influence in the international system. Boosting an independent identity for the EU, Russia has sought to stall US unipolarism and NATO centrism in Europe, flagged various versions of a pan-European structure and a closer association between two of the poles in the warranted multipolar structure of international relations – Russia and the EU. Analyzing what he has termed the development from “hopeful curiosity” to an even more “warm embrace of the ESDP”¹², Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen argues that Russia uses support to the CFSP and the ESDP as tools for “breaking down cohesion within NATO and – as a consequence of this – to narrow the power gap separating it from the US.”¹³ This strategy is expressed among other things in the foreign policy concept of Russia, which explicitly states that Russia will pursue a multipolar strategy aiming at diminishing the effect of US unipolarism in world affairs.

Following the argument above, one should expect that Russian balancing behavior would imply a strategy to forge an alliance with the weaker part in transatlantic relations – largely by encouraging the formation of a European pillar within NATO under the leadership of the EU, or simply to flag and front independent security arrangements with the EU. Moving into position by addressing the ESDP as a favorable development would enable Russia to exercise influence on the perceived weaker part in the transatlantic axis, while achieving a strategic option of countering so-called NATO centrism in Europe.¹⁴

This strategy has not, however, implied any unconditional bandwagoning with the ESDP, nor that some institutional arrangement with NATO is excluded. Applying the perspective of damage limitation, even unsentimental cooperation with NATO may serve the aims of this strategy in so far as it helps to boost NATO as an open political process. Damage limitation does not contradict closer association to Western security processes. Dov Lynch has captured this by conceptualizing Russian alignment with Western security institutions after September 11 as meaning “strong hands at the helm to steer Russia towards association without moving so close as to become vulnerable to leverage.”¹⁵

12 Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, “Explaining the Russian Endorsement of the CFSP and the ESDP”, *Security Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2002, p. 443.

13 *Ibid.* p. 444.

14 Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen suggests as much by assuming that Russian attempts to forge some sort of security relationship with the EU may serve as a tool to generate resources and eliminate the power gap by means of improving the foreign and security policy position and “add weight to its own side of the power equation.” Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, “Past and Future Meet: Aleksandr Gorchakov and Russian Foreign Policy”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2002, pp. 377–78.

15 Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, *Chaillot Papers* no.60, Institute for Security Studies, Paris 2003, p. 14.

Moreover, Russian interest in the ESDP has not spurred any discussion on possible Russian membership in the EU. Russia's policies towards the ESDP have been dominated by a conditional approach. Prompting the EU to define a "zone of interest" for the ESDP, Russia has engaged in a zero-sum game with the EU, which does not necessarily fit into the pattern of an institutional zero-sum game of balancing institutions against one another. More likely, this approach seems more in line with Michael Emerson's assumption that "Russia would like to have a strategic partnership with the EU, agreeing in official communiques that this would be on the basis of common values. But it would also like to regain its dominant influence over the near abroad, playing by its own rules."¹⁶

I shall assume, as indicated above, that the concepts are interpretive – that is, *readings* of Russian foreign policy behavior. The perspectives will by and large be treated as complementary ones – that is, as having equal explanatory weight. By arguing that the decline in institutional powers was worrisome for Russia, it seems clear that Russia sought to find an *institutional* stronghold in the rapidly changing currents of European security affairs. NATO's campaign in Kosovo in 1999 provided a landmark that was not considered as especially favorable for Russia. Facing a NATO that took on new responsibilities and a EU that gradually developed a security and defense dimension, Russia was left without a voice in European security affairs, a fact that prompted a new approach to European security policies. In an institutional perspective, this policy could be understood as securing access to, and also leverage on European developments. Indeed, also Russia's policies towards NATO – such as refraining from voicing its protests against NATO enlargement and joining in the "NATO at 20" structure – contribute to securing a diversification of Russia's foreign and security policies by providing Russia with "what she needs the most, policy options."¹⁷

On the other hand, in the perspective of damage limitation, Russia's policy of pragmatically addressing and cooperating with Western security institutions has fallen into line with the overall perspective of keeping all options open, thereby boosting an open pan-European security process, through which no single security organization should achieve a monopoly on security in the European dimension. Also aligning with NATO could be read in this context, in so far as Russian policy analysts have called for avoiding a repetition of the failed strategy to hold NATO at arm's length while having to concede with enlargement. As it seems, Russia will utilize the opportunities provided for by a dialogue within the "NATO at 20" structure to flag central security preferences in Europe, such as preserving the current arms control regime, avoiding an unfavorable development with regard to the stationing of NATO forces on the territories of new members and flagging ideas pertaining to a "trilateral" security cooperation including Russia, EU and the US in strategically important questions for Russia. This entails one qualification with regard to the definition of damage limitation above – namely that also NATO may be part and parcel of such a strategy, and hence, that it is not confined solely to utilizing the OSCE as a primary tool.

¹⁶ Michael Emerson, *The Elephant and the Bear. The European Union, Russia and their Near Abroads*, CEPS Policy paper, 2001, p. 23.

¹⁷ Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, op.cit. p. 8.

Having made some preliminary qualifications with regard to the interpretive approaches sketched above, I will proceed to discuss the structure of this report in more detail.

1.3. The Structure of the Argument: From Doctrine to Policies and Perceptions

As suggested above, the two perspectives will be treated in a complementary manner. Variable emphasis will be put on the explanatory weight of these perspectives, however, depending on the context. The second chapter starts off by debating the perception of the EU as an actor as reflected in Russia's foreign and security doctrines and medium-term strategy (MTR) on relations with the European Union. In Henrikki Heikkas words, these texts represent the fundamental continuity in Russia's strategic political culture and "a consensus on the imperative to counterbalance Western power in order to promote a multipolar international system."¹⁸ Moreover, these doctrines are – according to Heikka – fundamental as a key to understanding Russia's foreign policies in so far as they shape a set of priorities that have the dominating political culture as a precondition. In this perspective "Russian grand strategy is not empty rhetoric, but a body of evidence with serious value for predicting and explaining Russian foreign and security policy."¹⁹

The relationship between doctrines and foreign policy actions and priorities is naturally a complex one, and I do not suggest that there is a causal relationship between doctrines and foreign policy actions. Yet, doctrines offer, as suggested by Heikka above, a key to understanding the foreign policy choices of Russia under Putin. The central claim in this report is that damage limitation was a predominant perspective in the security and foreign policy doctrines of Russia and that this perspective did not exclude a more positive view of European integration efforts. The EU was envisaged as an actor that could counterbalance NATO centrism in Europe and one that could offer Russia certain security dividends. Hence, pragmatic cooperation with EU institutions was viewed as a possible path for Russia in dealing with the unfavorable security situation after the Kosovo crisis.

The third chapter seeks to illustrate how this played out in terms of foreign policy choices at the beginning of Putin's tenure. It establishes that Russia, in pursuit of strategic dividends, conceptualized a perception of the EU not only as an economic actor, but one that also had a say in strategic disarmament and security. It offers insights into how Russian policy-makers interpreted these capacities vis-à-vis the US and goes more into detail on how Russia sculpted the relationship with the ESDP. In discussing Russia's policies on the Balkans, I suggest that Russia did not have a clear concept of how this would play out regionally. Russia expected the EU to attain a more clearly defined security role, but was simultaneously confronted with the tight coupling of Western institutions on the Balkans and a declining possibility to influence on Balkan events by means of traditional foreign policy

18 Henrikki Heikka, *Beyond the Cult of the Offensive. The Evolution of Soviet/Russian Strategic Culture and its Implications for the Nordic-Baltic Region*, Programme of the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, no. 10, 2000, p. 85.

19 Ibid. p. 13.

instruments. The central claim is that Russia sculpted foreign policies within a damage limitation perspective, seeking to make the “European” voice in strategic questions more salient and visible.

The fourth and fifth chapters deal more explicitly with the security debate in Russia within policy-making and research environments. The overarching perspective in this discussion is that of declining institutional powers – e.g. limited possibilities to affect the development in Europe by means of institutional arrangements. I claim that Russia had certain expectations to the EU that were not met by developments in the security dialogue between the EU and Russia. Moreover, by introducing September 11 as a watershed, I suggest that rosy expectations were substituted by a more tempered view on EU developments and a transfer of concerns towards developing a dialogue and some institutional arrangement with NATO. At the bottom line, these concerns were linked to both decline in institutional powers and damage limitation – e.g. the need to find a *modus vivendi* with Western institutions based on pragmatism and realism.

Chapter six summarizes the discussion in the preceding chapters and offers the conclusion that both damage limitation and decline in institutional powers may explain Russian priorities vis-à-vis the perceived role of the EU as a foreign policy and security actor. Yet, emphasis will be put on the fact that liberal-minded research circles have gone somewhat further in stressing the decline in institutional power perspective, whereas official policy statements have been more in line with damage limitation.

2. Europe as a Challenge: Russia's Foreign and Security Doctrines

When analyzing the perception of the EU in Russia's security outlook in the 1990s, it is hard to get around the frequent assertion that there has been a "lack of dynamism from the part of Moscow" in this period.²⁰ At least in the latter part of the 1990s, Russia's security outlook has been colored by the multipolar paradigm, where the EU explicitly has been conceptualized as a counterbalance to so-called NATO centrism in Europe and US dominance.²¹ These tendencies were especially dominant in what Russian foreign policy analysts termed the "Primakov doctrine", but spilled partly over to the new security and foreign policy doctrines adopted in early 2000. In fact, even Russia's Medium-Term Strategy on the EU has borrowed heavily from the multipolar concept.

This chapter seeks to establish the fundamental background parameters of Russia's conceptualization of the EU as an actor. It starts off by discussing Yeltsin's policies vis-à-vis the EU/WEU and the essential features of the Primakov doctrine as reflected in the security concepts of Russia. Finally, it also analyzes Russia's Medium-Term Strategy on the EU (MTS) and the implicit conditionality for a closer relationship that is outlined in the strategy.

2.1. The Primakovian Outlook

Before Primakov became minister of foreign affairs, Russia approached the Western security system with a mixture of caution and naivety. As observed by Igor Leshukov, the EU was perceived as one of many European institutions that Russia could enter into as soon as the Russian leadership decided, or simply as a process that mattered little for Russia's overall European foreign policy.²² Although Yeltsin at several instances flagged membership in the EU as an option, Russia's primary attitude in the 1990s was one of scepticism and concern that the enlarging security system of the West would leave Russia without a clearly defined place in the European security architecture. Hence, Andrey Kozyrev maintained in 1994 that the WEU should become a component of the OSCE, rather than being part and parcel of a security architecture to which Russia had no access.²³ Moreover, when addressing the Federal Assembly in June 1996, President Yeltsin stated that:

20 Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia's Attitudes Towards the EU: Political Aspects*, op.cit. p. 8.

21 For a definition of the multipolar paradigm, see Dmitri Trenin, "Nenadezhnaya strategiya", *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii 1991-2000, Pro et Contra*, 2001. Trenin sees the crux of the multipolar paradigm as being the formation of independent blocs or alliances that "counter US power and softens US hegemony." In the Russian case, this balancing act is explicitly directed towards launching Russia as a considerable global power in international affairs. For an analysis in the multipolar spirit, see Vitaliy Zhurkin et al. *Evropa v mnogopolyarnom mire*, Ekslibris press, Moscow 2000.

22 Igor Leshukov, "Rossiya i Evropeyskiy Soyuz: strategiya vzaimootnosheniya", in Dmitry Trenin (ed.), *Rossiya i osnovnye instituty bezopasnosti v Evrope: vstupaya v XXI vek*, Moskovskiy tsentr Karnegi, Moscow 2000.

23 See Andrei Zagorski, "Russia and European Institutions", in Vladimir Baranovsky (ed.), *Russia and Europe: the Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 519–40. In spite of limited access to WEU, Russia still entered into a formal dialogue with the WEU on several issues in October 1994. See Zagorski, p. 531. Russia also tried to compensate for lacking institutional access to the WEU by proposing that a permanent Council for Consultations be created. Kozyrev made the proposal in October 1995 in a letter to the then foreign minister of Spain, Javier Solana, who held the chairmanship of

Seeking to cooperate with NATO and the WEU, the Russian Federation cannot agree with the attempts to transfer the center of gravity in security questions on the continent to organizations where Russia is not represented. Russia vindicates the creation of a pan-European security mechanism where all countries participate, including the Russian Federation.²⁴

Fronting the OSCE as the only pan-European security organization where Russia was fully represented, Moscow addressed the Western security system in a dual manner, expressing clear preference for the OSCE as the leading security structure for Europe, while, on the other hand, opposing a European security complex based solely on NATO. This position was explicitly spelled out under Primakov. The Primakovian “multipolar” vision saw the tendency towards “Eurocentrism” through the looking glass of counterbalancing US dominance.²⁵ Eurocentrism was a process that would “gain the upper hand over the European countries’ transatlantic orientation,” Primakov suggested.²⁶ Moreover, Russia’s particular contribution to cement both “Eurocentrism” and avoid NATO centrism was an unspecified European Conference model for the whole continent.

The future model of European security should in one or another form support itself on all international organizations that are active in the sphere of European security – the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, NATO (including PfP), the EU and the WEU and the CIS.²⁷

The essence of this view was presented in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* as a non-paper from researchers connected to the military general staff. The article proposed to strengthen the efficiency of the OSCE by means of creating a “Security Council” (Executive Committee) for the OSCE that should include France, Russia, the US, Germany and Britain as permanent members. The Council should create joint military-political structures for the OSCE, simplify decision-making processes, strengthen the “responsibility of Russia” in European affairs and create a “strategic union” between Russia and central West-European states. Notably, this would lead to a “positive reception of the PfP by Russia”, and furthermore:

On the basis of this it will be possible to develop cooperation between Russian and NATO structures and WEU structures.²⁸

While preferring to upgrade the significance of the OSCE, Moscow did not seem to harbor any illusions on effectively utilizing the OSCE as an organization to counter NATO centrism in Europe. The OSCE was to serve first

the WEU. See Dmitry Danilov and Stephan de Spiegeleire, “Ot razmezhvaniya k sblizheniyu. Novye otnosheniya Rossii i Zapadnoy Evropy v sfere bezopasnosti?”, *Chaillot Paper* no. 31, April 1998, p. 17.

24 “O natsional’noy bezopasnosti”, *NeGa* June 14, 1996.

25 For a detailed treatment of the Primakov doctrine, see Clelia Rontonnyani, “So far, so good? Russia and the ESDP”, op.cit. pp. 814–16.

26 “Na gorizonte mnogopolyusny mir”, *NeGa* October 22, 1996.

27 Ibid.

28 “‘Silovoy karkas’ Evropy”, *Nezavisimoye voennoye obozrenie* no. 22, 1997.

and foremost as a preferred pan-European institution for Moscow, and a way to influence European affairs. This position was especially dominant as Moscow realized that it could not halt the first round of NATO enlargement. Primakov made an explicit point that the two organizations “do not exclude one another.” Moreover:

When we say that the OSCE should become the fundament for the European security system, this does not imply that NATO should cease to exist. [...] We’re not against NATO as such; we only exclude NATO as the only, or most important force in European security [...]. We cannot influence NATO through the OSCE, but we can influence on the situation in Europe as such. ²⁹

Such propositions pointed to the overall concern of Moscow to be left without a specified place in European security affairs, and also the perspective of a zero-sum institutional game. Clearly, Moscow did not assume that membership of the OSCE would imply that Russia had any direct institutional leverage on NATO. However, by upgrading the OSCE’s primary functions, Russia indirectly balanced the two institutions up against one another, not by banning NATO, but by suggesting that the OSCE should have a last say in European security affairs. In Jeppesen’s phrase, Russia sought henceforth to “outweigh NATO’s role” – or at least to pacify and commit NATO.³⁰

On the other hand, the very focus on the OSCE as the leading security organization in Europe echoed the priorities of damage limitation – to halt the enlargement of NATO and avoid “NATO centrism” in Europe. Conditionality vis-à-vis the EU was a case in point. Russia envisaged a closer cooperation with the WEU only in the light that it would be possible to enhance the role of the OSCE in Europe and create some sort of European Security Council within its framework.

Clearly, the OSCE did at any rate not meet Russia’s ambitions of being a significant European power. Hence, as a sidetrack, Russia vigorously pursued a cultivation of bilateral relations with central European states.³¹ Defining the OSCE as a security organization of primary importance for Russia, and also one through which Russia could have “an effect in European affairs”, Moscow simultaneously harbored ambitions to cement relations with Germany and France to the extent that Moscow launched the idea of a “big troika” in European affairs.³² Apparently, Moscow viewed this first of all as an opportunity to discuss serious concerns in a European setting and to give substance to its ambition to be a European power. In a larger perspective, however, Russia also saw the troika as a means of influencing on European integration. As argued by Splidsboel-Hansen, the troika was launched at the Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg in 1997 with the specific intention

²⁹ “Ya chuvstvuyu doverie prezidenta”, *NeGa*, December 30, 1997.

³⁰ Morten Jeppesen, *Partnership and Discord*, op.cit. p. 70.

³¹ Vladimir Baranovsky explicitly states that “Russia’s interest in developing a ‘pan-European architecture’ is accompanied by Moscow’s orientation towards promoting bilateral relations with a number of key players in Europe.” Vladimir Baranovsky, “Russia: a part of Europe or apart from Europe?”, op.cit. p. 454. See also Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia’s Attitudes Towards the EU*, op.cit. p. 46.

³² “Ya chuvstvuyu doverie prezidenta”, *NeGa*, December 30 1997.

of linking up to EU processes and to effectuate the larger strategy of playing on differences between Europe and the US.³³

Bilateral and multilateral relations with major European powers played an important role also for Russia's foreign policies on the Balkans. Allen C. Lynch has argued that Russia's European foreign policy was remarkably continuous in the 1990s and centered on carving out a space as a regional European power. Lynch forwards as an example that the unilateral Russian countering of NATO's ultimatum to Serbia in February 1994 served as a platform for a larger strategy to gain foothold in European affairs without having to choose between a strategic partnership with the West and its weight as a great power in European affairs.³⁴ The Russian demarche resulted in the establishment of the Contact Group as a framework for a group of five (France, US, Germany, Britain and Russia), which made it possible for Moscow to maneuver with regard to Serbia without jeopardizing ties to European powers.³⁵ Still, although Russia succeeded in adopting a policy that separated the Bosnian Serbs from those in Serbia and was tailored to suit the territorial integrity of Serbia proper, Russia did not have leverage on NATO actions on the Balkans.

Hence, Russia's cultivation of good relations with the major European countries and its place in the Contact Group did not provide Russia with a consolidated foothold in the European security system, let alone solve the decline in institutional powers. This became acutely clear during the Kosovo crisis, when Russia broke off emerging contacts with NATO in the PJC. *De facto*, the crisis implied for Russia that earlier doctrines and strategies had to be revised. As stated by Igor Ivanov in March 2000, the Kosovo crisis was instrumental in "forcing Russia to revise its national security concept."³⁶ On the other hand, this process made it possible for Russia also to reconsider relations with the EU. Vladimir Baranovsky observes that during the Kosovo crisis, Russia's indignation was directed "predominately and almost exclusively against the USA – as if the Europeans did not participate at all."³⁷ Although this may certainly be an object of more thorough discussions, it is clear that Russia still had an option as to revising a static perception of the

33 Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, "Explaining the Russian Endorsement of the CFSP and the ESDP", op.cit. pp. 447–48. For a different view that focuses on these statements as an option for a closer Russia–EU security relationship, see Dmitry Danilov and Stephan de Spiegeleire, "Ot razmezhivaniya k sblizheniyu. Novye otnosheniya Rossii i Zapadnoy Evropy v sfere bezopasnosti?", op.cit. pp. 2–3.

34 Allen C. Lynch, "The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2001, p. 15. Arguably, harsh internal opposition in the newly inaugurated State Duma against NATO's ultimatum shaped the Russian initiative. For a discussion of these internal debates, see Geir Flikke, "Party Organisation in Transitional Parliaments", *The Journal of Communist and Transition Politics*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2002.

35 Allen C. Lynch "The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy", op.cit. pp. 14–17.

36 Igor Ivanov, "Kosovskiy krizis: god spustya", *Dipkur'er-NG*, March 23, 2000. The deputy chairman of the State Duma, Vladimir Lukin, who stated that Russia corrected its military doctrine immediately after NATO's new strategic concept, voices similar assertions. Vladimir Lukin, "God posle Stambula", *Dipkur'er-NG*, November 9, 2000.

37 Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia's Attitudes Towards the EU*, op.cit. p. 75. Russian analyst Oleg Barabanov does not share this approach and suggests that the conceptualization of the EU as a more peaceful partner than NATO overlooks the fact that prominent EU countries were among those who favored a military campaign in Kosovo. See Oleg Barabanov, "Tendentsii razvitiya OVPB i ZES: nezhdannyy vyzov dlya Rossii?", in Dmitri Trenin (ed.), *Rossiia i osnovnye instituty bezopasnosti v Evrope*, Moscow Carnegie Endowment, 2000, p. 98.

EU and adjusting to European developments such as St. Malo in 1998 and the Maastricht Treaty.

2.2. Europe in Russia's Security Doctrine and Foreign Policy Concept

The Kosovo crisis implied a setback for the relationship between Russia and Europe and is – according to some estimates – still an event that colors Russia's foreign and security outlook.³⁸ Clearly, Russia's assessment of the NATO campaign was reflected in the new security and foreign policy doctrines adopted in the latter part of 1999 and the first half of 2000. As “national grand strategies” these doctrines reflected a total outlook on international relations, which served as an inventory list over Russia's primary concerns in the international system, but also over the consequences of being outside the core of the Western security system.³⁹

Following in this vein, the Security Doctrine of Russia, adopted in January 2000, took a rather gloomy outlook on international relations and Russia's place in the emerging world order. Earlier optimism on the possibility of engaging in a balancing act against unipolarism in a predominantly multipolar world was substituted by pessimism with regard to regional and global developments – especially the development of NATO as a regional collective defense and security organization, and the drift of the European security architecture towards what the doctrine termed “NATO centrism” in Europe.

More specifically, the Security Doctrine outlined “two incompatible trends” in the international system. First, the doctrine observed “a considerable number of states are highly integrated economically and politically.” In this perspective, “economic, political, technological, ecological and factors pertaining to create a common informational space are playing a readily more important role.” Russia should in this respect “facilitate the creation of a multipolar world.”⁴⁰ The other tendency was designed to:

[...] create international structures that are based on the dominance over the international system by Western developed countries under the leadership of the US. These structures are designed for unilateral, first and foremost military solutions to central issues in the international system, in violation of the fundamental principles of international law.⁴¹

Notably, the doctrine combined new security threats with a traditional state-centered view of Russia as economically weak, albeit among “the largest countries of the world”, and with a considerable military, economic and political potential in addition to holding a central strategic position in Eurasia.

38 Ibid. p. 74.

39 The significance of these doctrines as blueprints for Russia's foreign policy conducts is estimated differently. For a comprehensive approach, see Jakub M. Godzimirski, “Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis”, *European Security*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2000. For a more positive interpretation, see Vladimir Baranovsky, “Russia: a part of Europe or apart from Europe”, *International Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 3, 2000, p. 457. Baranovsky stresses that the concept underlines that Russia wants to be among the more developed states in the world, not against them.

40 “Kontseptsiya natsional'noy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii”, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, January 18, 2000.

41 Ibid.

Moreover, the doctrine anticipated new threats and risks, but preserved at the same time a traditional state-centric vision of these threats.

Several states are activating their efforts to weaken Russia's positions in the political, economic and military sphere. Attempts to ignore Russia's interests while solving international problems, also in conflict situations, may undermine international security and stability [...] In many countries, including in Russia, the problem of international terrorism has become more acute and threatens global stability. The international community should hence unite its efforts to effectively combat this threat and adopt urgent measures to neutralize it.⁴²

Russia's security doctrine addressed primarily Russia's place in the world order and did not explicitly spell out the European dimension of Russia's foreign policies. This was done with more precision in the Foreign Policy Concept of Russia adopted on June 28, 2000. The concept took off from acknowledging that many of the initially optimistic aspirations of the 1993 concept to engage in equal and mutually beneficial relations with the surrounding world had not been met. Moreover, regional and subregional integration in Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Asian-Pacific region harbored promises that regional units could become "substantial factors in regional and subregional security and peacekeeping."⁴³ In this aspect, Russia saw European integration as a key event in defining Russia's foreign policies vis-à-vis Europe.

The relations with the European Union are of key importance. The processes that take place in the EU will increasingly affect the internal dynamics in Europe. These processes are enlargement, the euro, institutional reforms, the establishment of the CFSP and the ESDP.⁴⁴

The concept did not refrain from suggesting that the most likely "channel" for Russian influence into these processes would still be bilateral ties to major European states. Indeed, the concept suggested that Russia should seek to defend its interest "as applied to the sphere of bilateral relations with EU member states."⁴⁵ Moreover, the foreign policy concept did not depart in substance from the general strategic orientation of the Security Doctrine. Russia's foreign policy priorities would still be oriented towards preserving a privileged position in the CIS space and developing the OSCE as a pan-European security organization. Yet, the singling out of the ESDP as a field of "special interest", and the fact that Russia in 1999 had adopted what was referred to as the Medium-Term Strategy of Russia on the EU, suggested that Moscow would at least pursue a policy in which the EU emerged as a regional priority for Russia. A fact illustrating this point is the emergence of a special medium-term strategy on Russia's relations with the EU.

42 Ibid.

43 "Kontseptsiya vneshney politiki Rossii", in Igor Ivanov, *Novaya rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, op.cit. p. 214.

44 Ibid. p. 225.

45 Ibid.

2.3. The “Europe” Strategy

Taking into account the pessimistic outlook of the security doctrine of Russia vis-à-vis the Western security system, the emergence of a specific European strategy in Russia may seem as somewhat surprising. Even more so since Putin – in the capacity of Prime Minister – came out on what Pavel Baev has termed a rather “unpromising start” with the Chechen campaign making headlines in all talks with European leaders.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the Putin administration must have seen relations with the EU as a necessity for Russia’s foreign and security outlook. By the fall of 1999, Moscow had at least started to elaborate a specific response strategy to the Common Strategy on Russia (CSR) adopted at Cologne 1999. Unlike any other part of the security concept, this paper was presented for a European audience and delivered at the summit between EU and Russia on October 22, 1999 in Helsinki in response to the Cologne strategy.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the document was in itself not elaborated in close coordination with the EU, a fact that has been pointed out many places.⁴⁸

Although the Medium-Term Strategy may be considered a response to the CSR, the document did not, however, deviate substantially from the outlook of the security doctrine.⁴⁹ Judging from the document itself and perceptions in the Russian press, Putin was looking for a “Russia first” attitude from the EU, which did not aim at reducing Russia’s role as the *interlocutor privilégié* in the former CIS space.⁵⁰ This position was explicitly highlighted in the strategy, which argued that Russia would, on the one hand, utilize the experience of the EU to strengthen integration processes in the CIS, and, on the other hand, adopt measures against attempts from the EU to open “special relations” with member states of the CIS.⁵¹ Moreover, the Russian party was also interested in being more than solely a recipient of assistance from the EU – Russia should be considered a trade partner on equal terms. The

46 Pavel Baev, “Putin’s Foreign Policy Agenda: Post-Soviet Challenges to the European Orientation”, in Arkady Moshes and Bertil Nygren (eds.), *A Slavic triangle? Present and Future relations Between Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, Swedish National Defense College, 2002.

47 See Pavel Baev, “Putin’s Foreign Policy agenda”, op.cit. and Isabella Falcon, “Putin’s Russia and Europe: a new start?”, in Yuri Fedorov and Bertil Nygren (eds.), *The Russian Presidential Election in 2000*, Forsvarshøgskolan 2000, pp. 199–227. The document was adopted on June 3 2000. In comparison the Security Strategy of Russia was adopted in April 2000.

48 Hiski Haukkala argues, for instance, that Russia deliberately did not consult with the EU in response to the fact that Russia had not been able to influence the CSR. See Hiski Haukkala, “The Making of the European Union’s Common Strategy on Russia”, *UPI Working Papers*, no. 28, 2000, p. 33. Yuri Borko argues—on the other hand—that the adoption of the CSR and Russia’s MTS was a parallel process and that the CSR “influenced on Russian researchers and diplomats even before it was completed and submitted to the European Council.” Yuri Borko, “The EU’s Common Strategy on Russia: a Russian View”, in Hiski Haukkala and Sergey Medvedev (eds.), *The EU Common Strategy on Russia: Learning the Grammar of the CFSP*, Programme of the Northern Dimension, no. 11, 2001.

49 Henrikki Heikka argues that the strategy is explicitly based on the multipolar paradigm and a reflection of Russian realist thinking and strategic culture. Hence, although there might be better prospects for cooperation between the EU and Russia in the economic sphere, environmental protection and law enforcement, “Russia’s policy remains creation of a ‘partnership’ based on ‘equality’ with the EU to counterbalance US influence in Europe.” Henrikki Heikka, *Beyond the Cult of the Offensive*, op.cit., p. 85.

50 “Evrosoyuz kritikoval Putina za Chechnyu”, *NeGa* October 23 1999.

51 “Strategiya razvitiya otnosheniy Rossiyskoy federatsii s Evropeyskim Soyuzom na srednesrochnuyu perspektivu (2000-2010 gody)”, quoted from Igor Ivanov *Novaya rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, op.cit. p. 281.

document established Russia's interests as a guiding principle, and linked the Europe strategy explicitly to the overall objective of "forming a multipolar world."⁵² Although references were made to the objective of securing a "compatibility of their economies", the focus on achieving a European security architecture that was more in line with Russia's national interests, topped the strategy.

The fundamental aim of this strategy is to secure the national interests of the Russian Federation, strengthen its role and authority in Europe and the world by creating a viable pan-European system of collective security. The strategy shall also aim at drawing on the economic and administrative experience of the European Union to facilitate the development of a socially oriented market economy in the Russian Federation, based on the principles of competition and the further development of a democratic rule-by-law state.⁵³

Notably, the strategy refrained from the vehemently critical rhetoric exercised by Moscow during the Kosovo crisis, and aimed at addressing possible future European developments. Without specifying how to institutionalize the relationship, the strategy voiced the creation of a "common European system of collective security based on the forces of the Europeans themselves, without isolating the US and NATO, but in avoidance of a NATO and US monopoly at the European continent."⁵⁴ To the latter extent, the strategy proposed to develop a specific position from Russia on issues pertaining to the ESDP and the future inclusion of the WEU in the EU. Hence, Russia would adopt a position with regard to:

[...] practical cooperation in the sphere of security (peacekeeping, conflict regulation, disarmament) that may serve as a counterweight to NATO centrism in Europe.⁵⁵

The strategy also responded to the EU strategy by presenting a list of soft security issues. Article 8 in the strategy makes an almost breath-taking point by listing several cooperative proposals aiming at "strengthening the common European positions in the world economy and in world politics." The list included everything from deliverances of energy to the internal European market, deepened scientific cooperation, also within military technology, unification of electricity networks, gas- and oil pipelines and transport lines and so forth. As observed by David Gowan, these propositions were "sweeping, but mostly imprecise", and tended to maximize Russian interests.⁵⁶ Moreover, rapprochement was again made conditional on Russia's exclusive role in the CIS, or what Clelia Rontonnyani has termed a "misperception of EU intentions" in this area.⁵⁷

52 Ibid. p. 277.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid. p. 280.

55 Ibid.

56 David Gowan, "How the EU can Help Russia", *Report to the CER Research Programme on Russia in Europe*, 2001, p. 12.

57 Clelia Rontonnyani, "So far, so good? Russia and the ESDP", p. 816.

In return, the development of the partnership with the European Union should facilitate the strengthening of the Russian Federation as the leading force in the formation of a new system of interstate political and economic relations in the CIS space.⁵⁸

Hence, Russia approached the EU through a series of various conditions, one of which was the insistence that Russia should still play first fiddle in the CIS space. Moreover, whereas the specific development of the ESDP was not an issue in the EU's CSR, Russia lifted the issue relatively high on the bilateral agenda in EU–Russia relations.

In sum, there were few indications that Russia had altered its basic security outlook in the post-Kosovo period. Indeed, according to David Gowan, the MTS offered “insights (often unguarded) into the tactical objectives in their [the Russians] dealing with the EU.”⁵⁹ Hiski Haukkala shares this view in asserting that “even here [in the MTR] the role of the EU is seen in rather instrumental terms, with NATO and the US seen as more relevant players. The main role of the developing cooperation with EU is seen as a counterbalance to ‘NATO centrism’ in Europe.”⁶⁰ Indeed, Russian media viewed Putin’s Helsinki-tour as a demonstration of Russia’s possibly enhanced role in European affairs. *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, the official government newspaper,⁶¹ presented the European strategy as “aiming at establishing and strengthening the partnership between the EU and Russia in world affairs” and centered on “joint conflict prevention and solutions to local conflicts in Europe, with an emphasis on the principle of non-violence and international law.”⁶²

Employing the interpretive approaches of damage limitation and decline in institutional powers, it seems clear that both the MTS and Russia’s foreign and security concept harbored an ambition of addressing the development of European institutions. From the perspective of damage limitation, this strategy would imply that Russia actively tried to engage Western institutions while recovering economically. Security pluralism in Europe would serve a long-term aim of keeping the European security process as open as possible, and encouraging the development of the ESDP would only contribute to this. Pursuant to the perspective of decline in institutional powers, Russia’s emerging perception of the EU as an independent actor could harbor a more distinct ambition to resolve the problem of lacking influence by linking up closely to emerging institutions. This includes a strategy of balancing institutional preferences against one another. The ESDP provided a new option for Russia to influence European affairs, and possibly to integrate institutionally with Europe.

58 “Strategiya razvitiya otnosheniy Rossiyskoy federatsii c Evropeyskim Soyuzom”, p. 282. This conditionality was reflected also in the Doctrine of Russia’s Foreign Policies, which held that Russia would give priority to the integration of the CIS space over relations with Europe, hopefully while achieving both.

59 David Gowan, “How the EU can Help Russia”, op.cit. p. 11.

60 Hiski Haukkala, “A Problematic ‘strategic partnership’”, op.cit. p. 15.

61 *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, October 27, 1999.

62 “Khel’sinskiy raund Vladimira Putina”, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, October 23, 1999. The newspaper quotation is a direct quote from the MTS. See “Strategiya razvitiya otnosheniy Rossiyskoy federatsii c Evropeyskim Soyuzom”, op.cit. p. 278.

At any rate, it is clear that although the strategy signaled a more proactive approach to Europe from part of Russia and the new president, the doctrines gave few concrete indications on how foreign policies would evolve under Putin. The strategy outlined a common denominator for the foreign and security outlook of Russia, and one that was adopted alongside with the gradual consolidation of presidential power.⁶³ Bringing Russia's new "European" policies into play implied first and foremost to sculpt a new foreign policy line vis-à-vis Europe. The next chapter deals more explicitly with the policy choices and the policy actions of the new Putin administration in the first and latter parts of 2000.

⁶³ Clearly, foreign policy elites did not want to repeat the perpetual turf battles under Yeltsin driven by the complete lack of a negotiated and realistic foreign policy outlook. As suggested in the report by the Council of Foreign and Defense Policies (SVOP), at the beginning of 2000 "there was a general impression that Russia's foreign policies were in a crisis", and that the image of Russia as a great power needed revision. *Strategiya dlya Rossii. Povestka dnya dlya prezidenta 2000*, Vagrius Moscow, 2000.

3. Inviting Europe: Russia's Initial European Policies

The foregoing chapter discussed the content and internal hierarchical structure of what has been termed the most important sources in defining Russia's primary attitudes towards Europe.⁶⁴ The operative modus of these doctrines is geared towards limiting the negative effect of an enlarged Western security system based on NATO. Addressing the EU within the security dimension falls in line with this priority. Damage limitation was the overriding strategy, although institutional balancing also played a part. Russia's receptive role of the EU was linked to the multipolar strategy of making the EU a more independent and visible actor, while the list of preferred organizations put the OSCE on the top, with the EU and NATO ranging below. When the EU was singled out as more attractive to NATO, this was clearly linked to preferences – Moscow wanted the EU to take on a security role to the detriment of NATO.

The following chapter seeks to analyze how these priorities played out in the internal debate on the EU and Russia's political initiatives vis-à-vis Europe. Perceptions are put in context, and linked to the first steps of sculpting a specific European foreign policy under Putin. Focus will be put on how Russia dealt with the primary preoccupation of avoiding isolation from Europe, developing a comprehensive dialogue with the EU – also in the sphere of security and predominantly within a multipolar worldview, and how Russia responded to possible EU sanctions due to the Chechen campaign.

3.1. Overcoming the Primakov Doctrine?

By the end of 1999 it became increasingly clear that Russia was prepared to address the issue of European security also within the EU dimension. Whether or not this implied a definite departure from the Primakov doctrine is – as suggested above – an open question.⁶⁵ Russian diplomacy was at any rate geared towards moulding a co-operative environment and tuning down possible ideational overlays from the Primakov period. Hence, according to Igor Ivanov, “when we in Russia talk about multipolarity, we anticipate the various poles not as competing with one another, but as fundamental building blocs of the new world order.”⁶⁶

Building a cooperative relationship with the EU became a fundamental priority in this approach, and Moscow had used bilateral contacts in order to voice these intentions. Addressing questions of European integration in a speech to the French Senate in October 1999, Ivanov argued that the pres-

64 See Bertil Nygren, “Russia and Europe, or Russia in Europe”, in Bertil Nygren and Yuri Fedorov (eds.), *Russia and Europe: Putin's Foreign Policy*, Swedish National Defense College, 2002, p. 17.

65 Clelia Rontoyanni argues that Putin made policy choices that went beyond the framework of the Primakov doctrine. Similar assertions are made by Yuri Fedorov, who argues that Russia's policies under Putin have taken a course that is not in line with the dominating strategic culture of Russia. Clelia Rontoyanni, “So far, so Good? Russia and the ESDP”, op.cit. pp. 814–17, and Yuri Fedorov, “Putin's Russia and the West”, in Bertil Nygren and Yuri Fedorov, *Russia and Europe: Putin's Foreign Policy*, Swedish National Defense College, 2002, p. 137.

66 Igor Ivanov, “Rossiya i Evropa na rubezhe stoletiy”, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, ROSSPEN, Moscow, 2001, p. 175.

ence of mutual strategies had opened up for a cooperative climate with long-term consequences:

We see the European Union as an important economic and also a political partner. As the Amsterdam Treaty enters into force there are no political taboos in our political dialogue. We are prepared for a confidential discussion on all heated questions; we understand the efforts of the EU memberstates to form a single security and defense policy and we are prepared for partnership relations in this sphere.⁶⁷

Acting President, Vladimir Putin, struck similar notes in a statement before the Coordination Group for Multilateral Negotiations on the Middle East in January 2000, where he claimed that “Russia stands for the formation of a stable and indivisible Europe. The conditions for this exist, among them in the Charter of European Security adopted in November last year at the summit of the OSCE in Istanbul”, and added that “Russia is a reliable, constructive and predictable partner in the building of greater Europe. Our policies will continue to be honest, open and transparent. This we also expect from our European partners.”⁶⁸

The cooperative stance of the new administration thus played on both innovative and traditional themes in the Russia security and foreign policy outlook. Most importantly, the foreign policy decision-makers seemed to accept the emerging status of the EU as an international actor. Addressing the issue of EU implied overcoming pending political differences between EU and Russia, however. At the end of 1999, this implied first and foremost to develop a political dialogue from what seemed to be a political deadlock over Russia’s Chechen campaign.

3.2. A First Obstacle: The Chechen Issue

When Prime Minister Putin met with European leaders in Helsinki in October 1999 and discussed the future relationship between the EU and Russia, European leaders had become increasingly concerned about the resumption of the Chechen campaign in September 1999. This particular situation proved a challenge, not only for the relationship between Russia and EU, but also for the coherence of EU foreign policies.⁶⁹ In fact, none of the EU ministers (with the exception of the Finnish) attended the conference of foreign ministers on the Finnish Northern Dimension initiative organized in November 1999 due to the Chechen conflict.⁷⁰

67 Igor Ivanov, “Vystuplenie v senate Frantsii”, in *ibid.* p. 171.

68 Bertil Nygren, “Russia and Europe, or Russia in Europe”, *op.cit.* p. 24.

69 According to Christer Pursiainen, the CFSP was put to a serious test in so far as Germany, France and Italy had expressed concerns “even before Finland had formulated or organized the Union’s joint stand on the issue.” Christer Pursiainen, “Finland’s Policy Towards Russia”, *Northern Dimensions, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Yearbook 2000*, pp. 63–84.

70 Lassi Heininen holds that this was partly also due to lack of interest, whereas Hiski Haukkala says that EU ministers “boycotted” the meeting. Lassi Heininen, “Ideas and Outcomes: Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative”, in Hanna Ojanen (ed.), *The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?*, Programme on the Northern Dimension of the CFSP, no. 12, 2001, p. 32. Hiski Haukkala, “The Making of the European Union’s Common Strategy on Russia”, *op.cit.* p. 112.

Initially, the EU had responded to the crisis in Dagestan in August 1999 by recognizing Russia's territorial integrity and giving "moral support" to Russia.⁷¹ By October 2000, however, EU reactions were more colored by the disproportionate use of military power in the Chechen republic. The General Affairs Council called for a political solution to the conflict and the EU-Russia summit in October 1999 was burdened by the event. In November 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council demanded a freeze in TACIS assistance to Russia over the Chechen war.

By the end of 1999, relations reached a low point. At the Helsinki summit in December 1999, the European Council issued a declaration in which Russia's military campaign was declared to be in violation of international human rights standards and OSCE and Council of Europe norms. The Council set out to consider measures to affect Russia's behavior, and called for a review of the implementation plan of the CSR and limitations of the TACIS program.⁷² In the upshot, the EU, in January 2000, while awaiting further reports from the PACE delegation to Ingushetiya in January 2000, proposed to revise the work plan for implementing the CSR, invited the European Commission to reconsider the TACIS 2000 program and prolonged the suspension of the agreement of scientific and technological cooperation.⁷³

The EU measures have been considered to be "mild" sanctions, and even "pseudo-sanctions."⁷⁴ Indeed, the working plan for the CSR was only delayed and presented by the Portuguese chairman on February 15, 2000. Furthermore, the European Council had, in spite of the harsh political condemnation of the Chechnya military campaign, also on December 17, 1999 adopted a first joint action under the CSR for non-proliferation and disarmament in Russia and thus actually implemented a first step in CFSP policies towards Russia.⁷⁵

Clearly, by proposing sanctions, the EU activated a certain inherent ambivalence that has been pinpointed by numerous analysts. Isabelle Falcon has analyzed the response in European capitals to that of the elections to the State Duma in 1999 and the preparations to the presidential elections in Russia. Her conclusion is that Chechnya presented the EU with a dilemma "how to express disapproval in order to answer the concerns of domestic public opinion without pressuring Moscow with using sanctions, which again would endanger the new start in relations with the Kremlin."⁷⁶ Others share this analysis. Hiski Haukkala argues that the "sensation of not being able to influence Russia's behavior was accompanied by a growing realization that the member states had a lot to lose in terms of focusing too acutely on the

71 Hiski Haukkala, "The Making of the European Union's Common Strategy on Russia", *op.cit.* p. 32.

72 Isabelle Falcon, "Putin's Russia and Europe. A new start?", *op.cit.* p. 236n.

73 *Ibid.* p. 236.

74 *Ibid.*

75 Hiski Haukkala, "The Making of the European Union's Common Strategy on Russia", *op.cit.* p.35.

76 Isabelle Falcon, "Putin's Russia and Europe. A new start?", *op.cit.* p. 234. This problem has been debated many places. Hiski Haukkala refers to the adoption of the first EU strategy on Russia by the General Affairs Council (GAC) in November 1995 and the fact that the EU adopted an interim treaty for the PCA that made the trade clauses go into effect before the PCA treaty as "cynical realpolitik." This was not the first time the EU was facing the dilemma of "finding the right balance between condemning the Russian actions in Chechnya and supporting economic and political reforms in Russia." Hiski Haukkala, "The Making of the European Union's Common Strategy on Russia", *op.cit.* p. 10.

Chechen problem alone, as the member states risked politically alienating Moscow from the ‘strategic partnership’ with the EU.”⁷⁷

Hence, by March 2000, the EU seemed set on not letting the Chechen issue make the headline in EU–Russia relations. Javier Solana expressed in an interview in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that the “partnership between Russia and the EU is attaining a strategic character.”⁷⁸ The EU did not dispute Russia’s territorial integrity, Solana stated, nor did it dispute the “right to fight terrorism.” But “each action designed to facilitate this should be in accordance with fundamental human rights.”⁷⁹ Although this did not freeze the political stalemate over Chechnya, it did at least sidetrack the debate from being an essential part of the emerging relationship between EU and Russia.

How did Russian decision-makers perceive the EU as an actor at this specific point? Were European institutions in any way effective in altering Russia’s political priorities?

3.2.1. Perceptions of EU Actions: The Internal Dimension

Two aspects need to be singled out as important for the subsequent rapprochement between the EU and Russia in the first half of 2000. First, the EU leaders used the prospects of exclusion from the PACE as a constant reminder that Russia had to develop in accordance with democratic principles. The Chechen issue was discussed both bilaterally (Germany and Italy) and at the Lisbon summit (Portugal). Secondly, the issue of being excluded from the PACE clearly spurred the internal debate on Russian–European relations in Russia. To be sure, the Russian State Duma, in the absence of any other candidate, and due to the fact that the newly elected Duma had not yet been in session, sent the notorious Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as head of the delegation to the PACE on January 27.⁸⁰ This most certainly implied that the issue of isolating Russia from Europe would receive an utmost extravagant expression and did not contribute to a softening of positions.

On the other hand, the standoff opened a debate through which the EU emerged as a policy option for the Russian presidency. On January 14, 2000, *Nezavisimaya gazeta* recommended the acting president to “take the offensive in foreign policies.”⁸¹ The Helsinki meeting of the European Union had ended in indications from the Union that it would “reconsider the specter of relations with Russia due to Chechnya”, the article read. Moreover, referring to the stream of concerned European politicians who visited Moscow in January due to the Chechen conflict (Lord Russel-Johnson from the PACE, Ireland’s minister of foreign affairs, David Andrews, also chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe), the newspaper maintained that the EU needed a signal from the Russian leader in order to climb down from former “hard” positions on Chechnya.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 38.

⁷⁸ Javier Solana, “Otnosheniya mezhdru Evrosoyuzom i Rossiey priobretayut strategicheskoe znachenie”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, March 23, 2000.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Drugikh liberal-demokratov u nas net”, *Izvestiya*, January 25, 2000.

⁸¹ “Rossii pora pereyti v nastuplenie na vneshnepoliticheskom fronte”, *NeGa*, January 14, 2000.

For Vladimir Putin the situation is identical [to that of the EU]: a static and ‘firm’ defensive position in talks with Europe and the West, although it has been effective to this point in time, will not give any dividends. A more offensive position would not only alter the situation, but also lead to a break-through [in relations with the EU].⁸²

During the first months of 2000, the Kremlin made substantial efforts to convince the PACE delegation and also European leaders that the Chechen campaign was in fact what Russian authorities claimed it to be – an anti-terror operation. One well-documented fact thereto is the oft-quoted fact that President Putin spent some three hours in convincing the leader of the PACE delegation, Lord Russel-Johnson, what the campaign was really all about.⁸³ More so, the Chechen issue clearly also put in question the more intricate problem of Russia’s “Europeanness.” This was clearly demonstrated in Russia’s responses in the PACE. Although Russia did not openly fear the exclusion from the PACE, the official Kremlin line with regard to Russia’s place in Europe was to underline that Russian membership of European institutions was a *sine qua non* for the continued dialogue between Russia and Europe.⁸⁴ Hence, at the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe in 1999, Igor Ivanov stressed that the “integration of Russia in the Council of Europe has had one important aspect.”

Russia is an integral part of the European continent and its civilization. There cannot be any Russia without Europe as there cannot be any Europe without Russia. In this sense, our entrance into the Council of Europe is only natural.⁸⁵

Clearly, this argument worked as to underlining the continued path of Russia towards democratic ideals and a democratic development. According to Ivanov, Russia moved consciously to adopt commonly accepted European juridical norms, had joined 28 European conventions before 1999 and planned to mark the 50th anniversary by adopting ten new ones.⁸⁶

Yet, Russia read “Europe” in terms of its overarching security priorities with regard to a common pan-European security structure. Supporting a Europe without dividing lines, Russia’s minister blamed the Council of Europe for not being able to take a stance against NATO action in Kosovo, referring to this disability as “an exception.”⁸⁷ Moreover, Russia saw the emerging security space in Europe as one stemming from what it repeatedly proposed as a closer interaction between the Council of Europe and the OSCE. These organizations should together form “a partnership for democ-

82 Ibid.

83 See Pavel Baev, “Putin’s foreign policy agenda: post-Soviet challenges to the European orientation”, op.cit. p. 12 and Vladimir Baranovsky, “Russia a part of Europe or apart from Europe?”, op.cit. p. 457.

84 Dmitri Trenin argues that “it is obvious that in 2000 Russian authorities seriously feared exclusion from the PACE and the Council of Europe and were forced to put an effort into softening criticism.” See Dmitri Trenin and Aleskei Malakashenko, *Vremya Yuga*, Carnegie Endowment, Moscow 2002, p. 215.

85 Igor Ivanov, “Za Bol’shoyu Evropu be razdelitel’nykh linii”, in Igor Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, op.cit. p. 185.

86 Ibid. p. 186. Ivanov claimed that by January 2000, Russia had joined 37 conventions.

87 Ibid. p. 188.

racy”, Russia’s minister proposed, meaning tighter institutionalized connections between the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The outline of Russia’s place in a Europe consisting of normative juridical acts was coupled with a reading of the Chechen conflict as one of Russia paying its service to the European community by defending the European space against a “barbarian onslaught” from the east. Speaking to the PACE in January 2000, Igor Ivanov stressed that the Chechen conflict should be well known through the work of the OSCE support group that had been working on the ground there since 1995. He continued:

Russia is in reality defending the borders of Europe from a barbarian onslaught of international terrorism, which effectively and insistently builds an axis of influence: Afghanistan–Central-Asia–Caucasus–the Balkans. All these conflict regions are today penetrated by the activities of international terrorism. In contrast to the international society, international terrorists are today united and in action.⁸⁸

Various politicians activated this self-interpretation in what seemed to be a consolidated political position in the emerging elite. Hence, secretary of the presidential Security Council, Sergey Ivanov, when commenting on the new Security Doctrine adopted in January 2000, acknowledged not only that “Russia’s primary security challenges are internal by nature”, but that Russia was indeed making its worth as a European state by struggling to fence off the emerging threat from international terrorism.

[...] we have seen an unprecedented increased activity by international terrorist organizations, which have chosen Russia as a place for testing out its far-reaching intentions. Unfortunately, not all states understand that by starting an anti-terror operation in Chechnya, Russia has engaged in a struggle against terrorism on its own territory, which is in the interests of the whole world, including the Western countries.⁸⁹

What the Russian elite seemed to fear the most was the “Balkanization” of Russia. As acting Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin had put the argument into effect thereby signaling that Russia would not cave in on the issue.

If we do not stall the extremists, a future Yugoslavia will develop on the territory of the Russian Federation. A Yugoslavization of Russia will threaten us. If we had let the crisis spark in Dagestan, things would have taken off. We would have lost the Caucasus–Dagestan and Ingushetiya – and then the crisis would have spread along the Volga, to Bashkortostan and Tatarstan.⁹⁰

The argument did not stall the PACE process on excluding Russia. Although on January 27 the vote went against exclusion with a majority of 12 votes, the Assembly agreed on a new vote to be held in April in anticipation of the Council of Europe delegation’s report to the PACE succeeding the January

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.195.

⁸⁹ “Glavnye ugrozy bezopasnosti–vnutrennie”, *NeGa*, March 31, 2000.

⁹⁰ Quoted in Dmitry Trenin and Aleksey Malakashenko, *Vremya Yuga*, op.cit., p. 131.

2000 meeting. Yet, Russian officials took a clear stand with regard to warning the EU and central EU members against going too far on the Chechen issue. Germany's minister of foreign affairs, Joschka Fischer, travelled to Moscow on January 20–21 for talks with Igor Ivanov, during which he stressed both the intentions of Germany to pursue a foreign policy line aiming at strengthening the strategic partnership with Russia and concerns over the Chechen campaign. Fischer also had talks with Putin, during which the acting president gave a detailed account of the federal authorities' intentions in Chechnya, while pointing to the counter-productive policy of the EU to "cut down on cooperation in order to exercise pressure on Russia."⁹¹

In sum, Russia landed on addressing the EU directly on the issue, while at the same time opening for a dialogue with the Union on equal terms. Denouncing the PACE decision in January as biased, Russian authorities maintained that "decisions and recommendations are made on the basis of unilateral assessments which, if implemented, may have a negative affect on the state of relations between Russia and the EU."⁹² Moreover:

By consistently speaking in favor of enhanced mutually advantageous and equal cooperation with the European Union, we proceed from the assumption that this is not only a strategic goal that we have chosen, but also an objective tendency in the development of the modern world [...] The Russian side believes that it is improper to link differences over political issues to trade and economic relations. This mode of action is fraught for the European Union with damage, which would be no smaller than that sustained by Russia, the latter having to respond in kind.⁹³

3.2.2. *Relating to the EU: The Lisbon Meeting*

In sum, EU diplomacy did not effectively alter Russia's priorities in combating terrorism, nor did it seem to affect Russia's OSCE strategy. Moscow disputed the linkage of trade issues with human rights and the suggestion that the Council of Europe should be linked institutionally to the OSCE reflected the proposal of making the OSCE the central forum for security issues.

Moreover, the EU was not perceived as an actor that should have a say in internal security issues in Russia. The clear-cut refusal of linking economic trade issues to "political issues" suggested that Moscow would respond to any shift of policies within the EU. On the other hand, it also revealed that Moscow saw the EU as an important economic actor. Around the Lisbon meeting between the EU troika, the US and Russia in March 2000 these priorities were made explicitly by Russian diplomatic officials. First, Russia saw the EU as a separate actor in the sense that the Union might represent an interesting *interlocuter*. Hence, the Russian part clearly attached certain hopes to the trilateral US-Russia-EU meeting in Lisbon on March 2–3. Russian press outlets suggested that the triangle meeting should become a regu-

⁹¹ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, February 2000.

⁹² Russia's reaction to the European Union's decision of January 24, 2000 (Press statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry), http://www.great-britain.mid.ru/GreatBritain/pr_rel/pr03.htm.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

lar affair, and stressed the Portuguese chairmanship's messages that Russia was to be considered an important discussant in European affairs.

Secondly, Russian diplomats continued to stress the seeds of economic interdependence they found between Russia and the Union and the importance of using the full specter of the PCA for Russian business circles. Hence, the EU constituted an option for Russian business circles that was considered important by Russian policy-makers, not least since Putin had stressed the economic revival of Russia as the primary aim for the future presidency.⁹⁴

The leader of the Russian delegation to the EU, Vasiliy Likhachev, elaborated extensively on these issues in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. According to him, exclusion from the PACE would imply a setback in promising relations and yet – reconsidering the CSR and TACIS could not be interpreted as sanctions, the diplomat maintained. Russia was more concerned about the more serious measures that were considered in the Commission – such as a 12 percent tax barrier on Russian scrap metal.⁹⁵ On the other hand, the diplomat maintained that the EU would not introduce sanctions on energy and gas deliveries, since most agreements were made for a 3–5-year period, and since the EU was too dependent on Russian imports to consider sanctions.

In the upshot, the diplomat focused on two major areas for future EU–Russia cooperation: economy and global security and disarmament.⁹⁶ First, the diplomat stated that the institutionalized cooperation with the EU was useful as a means to overcome trade differences through negotiations. Secondly, the partnership had a larger component – as the Lisbon meeting had established a new “diplomatic configuration” – Russia, the EU and US. Following in this vein, the diplomat suggested that the EU–Russia relationship should be centered on the following issues:

Among the more concrete examples is the cooperation between Russia and the EU within the field of destruction of WMD and disarmament. The EU adopted a special program on this December 17, 1999.[...] Another interesting project is cooperation in space. Moreover, in the political field it is of importance to prolong the Common Strategy on Russia.⁹⁷

Hence, Russian diplomats did not see possible EU sanctions as outlined above as any significant punitive measure with regard to Russia. Moreover, the pronounced interest in activating the PCA was also stressed in an internal political dimension. Deputy minister of foreign affairs, Ivan Ivanov, stressed in March 2000 that Russia's foreign policies had to become more focused on economic relations. Fusing foreign policy interests with business interests, among other things by bringing out information on Russia's international trade agreements to business circles, should be a central focus.

⁹⁴ See “Rossiya na rubezhe tysyachletiya”, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, December 31, 1999.

⁹⁵ “Rossiya i Evropeyskiy Soyuz: Sotrudnichestvo i perspektivy”, *Dipkur'er-NG*, April 6, 2000.

⁹⁶ The issue of destructing chemical weapons had been touched on bilaterally with Italy in January 2000, when Italy and Russia signed a preliminary agreement on destruction of chemical weapons. See “Rossiya-Italiya: Rabochii vizit L. DINI v Rossiyu”, *Diplomati-cheskiy vestnik*, February 2000.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Trade in the European direction serves as a locomotive in this respect. This is why the EU refrained from adopting sanctions against us with regard to Chechnya. Also the Union of Russian businessmen and entrepreneurs, the Congress of national producers and the European business congress, which unites European companies that work on the Russian market, spoke against sanctions.⁹⁸

Did this imply that Russia in any way would support the EU as an independent actor to counter what increasingly had been considered in military circles as US unilateralism in disarmament issues and also European security?⁹⁹ Clearly, Russia's security and foreign policy doctrines had repeated the fact that Russia opposed NATO centrism in Europe and that Russia was curious about the development of the ESDP. On the other hand, the new administration had de-frozen relations with NATO in February 2000 and hence returned to the pre-Kosovo period in NATO–Russia relations and also linked up to the transatlantic dimension. During the visit of Secretary-General Robertson, Russia and NATO had agreed to resume contacts bilaterally within the framework of the Founding Act and the PJC.¹⁰⁰ The joint declaration from the meeting reflected the common dedication of the parties to the UN Charter and the OSCE Charter, which by and large met Russian concerns.

Moreover, at a bilateral visit to Britain, Putin had similarly made a remark that membership in NATO was not excluded. Speaking to BBC, Putin answered the question of whether he considered NATO an enemy with: “Russia is part of the European culture. And I cannot imagine my own country in isolation from Europe and what we often call the civilized world. So it is hard for me to visualize NATO as an enemy. I think even posing the question this way will not do any good to Russia or the world.” In the upshot, Putin answered the question of possible Russian membership of NATO with: “I don't see why not. I would not rule out such a possibility – but I repeat – if and when Russia's views are taken into account as those of an equal partner.”¹⁰¹

Still, conservatives were opposed to an unconditional rapprochement between NATO and Russia. Head of the section for foreign relations in the MOD, Leonid Ivashov wrote in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* that “a possible de-freezing of NATO–Russia relations seems imminent, and Moscow has a keen interest in a constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation in Europe, but not in an unconditional surrender into the arms of the alliance.”¹⁰² Similarly, when speaking about Russia's new foreign policy concept, Igor Ivanov suggested that although a de-freezing of relations with NATO was under way, Russia still would “continue to convince our partners in NATO that the course of further enlargement is non-productive.” In Moscow parlance, this was synonymous with the creation of “new security

98 “Diplomatiya bez ekonomicheskogo fundamenta nenadezhna”, *Dipkur'er-NG*, March 2, 2000.

99 Leonid Ivashov, “Rossiya ne priemlet silovogo diktata SShA”, *NeGa*, March 11, 2000.

100 “Kreml' i NATO pomirilis”, *NeGa*, February 17, 2000.

101 Full text at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/audio_video/programmes/breakfast_with_frost/transcripts/putin5_mar.txt

102 Leonid Ivashov, “Rossiya ne priemlet silovogo diktata SshA”, op.cit.

zones and cannot be conceived as anything but directed against Russia's interests."¹⁰³

Conditionality seemed to be at play also in the issue of the Balkans. Commenting on the Kosovo crisis one year after the campaign started, Igor Ivanov argued that Russia had altered its security concept as a consequence of NATO's actions, and that future peace could only be built on "multipolarity and the strict observance of international norms."¹⁰⁴ Echoing what Allen C. Lynch has analyzed as a core priority for Russia on the Balkans – to preserve contacts with the major European powers through the Contact Group – Ivanov stated that NATO action had "cancelled the efforts of the Contact Group to find a political solution to the crisis."¹⁰⁵

The latter comment is indicative as to understanding Russia's continued ambivalence vis-à-vis the Western security system. As argued above, Russia's preference for the OSCE was by and large dictated by the fact that Russia was an equal member. Moreover, by spring 2000 the Contact Group was the single most important forum for Russia on the Balkans, and Russia had no effective security dialogue with the EU. Yet, the extensive focus on the ESDP certainly harbored a more defined interest in how the EU would develop its policies in the region. By March 2000, however, the "NATO-centrist" approach and the issue of avoiding this on the European continent shaped Russian concerns over the situation in the Balkans. The Russian position boiled down to stating that NATO action had created a regional conflict, which overlapped with Russian concerns on the southern brim of Russia.

Russia was hence actively lobbying the concern that extensive focus on NATO would undermine possible cooperative relations with the EU. Moreover, Russian concerns seemed to tally with the overriding perspective of declining institutional powers. By resuming the dialogue with NATO and voicing a positive interest in the development of the ESDP, Russia sought to define a European vector in foreign policies that aimed at gaining access to European and transatlantic institutions.

Yet, the perspective of damage limitation was also present in the conditional approach to NATO and the more unconditional cooperative, open and transparent policy vis-à-vis Europe. Although the normalization of relations with NATO worked strongly in the direction of repairing the relationship to Europe and the West in the post-Kosovo situation, Russia balanced European and transatlantic institutions against one another by signaling preference for the EU's security dimension and some reluctance vis-à-vis NATO. Voicing Russian membership in NATO did not necessarily contradict this policy, but could be interpreted as a move to open up a dialogue with Europe on security issues with the aim of strengthening the European pillar in NATO. Signaling a cooperative stance with NATO was at any rate closely linked to the overriding priority of committing NATO to the OSCE framework, thereby avoiding another Kosovo.

In sum, Russia addressed several aspects of the EU's foreign and security capacities and recognized that the EU was an emerging and important

103 Igor Ivanov, "Obnovlennaya kontseptsia vneshnei politiki Rossii", *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, Olma Press, Moscow 2002, p. 130.

104 Igor Ivanov, "Kosovskiy krizis: god sputsa", *Dipkur'er-NG*, March 23, 2000.

105 Ibid.

arena. The Russian president had still to shape his foreign policy in Europe. This policy was conducted at two levels, first and foremost bilaterally, and, after that, in multilateral frameworks.

3.3. Inviting Europe: Putin on the Fore

After the inauguration ceremony in May 2000, Putin assumed the role as full-fledged foreign policy-maker in the European context in late May and early June 2000. The schedule was exhausting. According to the official announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EU–Russia summit would take place on May 29, the bilateral meeting between US and Russia on June 3–4 and Putin planned to visit Italy as the first country after a bilateral meeting with the US on June 4–5.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, Igor Ivanov was scheduled to meet with NATO officials in Florence within the framework of PJC on May 25, 2000, immediately succeeding the meeting of Heads of State of CIS in Minsk.¹⁰⁷ Putin would visit Spain on June 13–14, and Germany on June 15–16.¹⁰⁸

If assuming that Russia approached the European arena from the position of a challenger, it seems clear that the timing of Putin’s European tour provided the newly elected president with an opportunity to voice concerns with US plans to continue on the NMD in abrogation of the ABM Treaty. The MFA’s official position with regard to the issue was that it was not on the bilateral agenda, and hence it had to be raised by the US unilaterally.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, Russia’s official position on the specific issue had been shaped by the ratification of the START II agreement, which included a clause on preservation of the ABM Treaty as the cornerstone in strategic stability.

On the other hand, Putin had a realistic approach to strategic issues and did not seek to maximize Russia’s profits internationally.¹¹⁰ According to Yuri Fedorov, Russia’s president told members of the Duma on April 14 that Russia would risk a devastating new arms race if denying ratification. If Russia embarked on this policy, it would imply:

[...] the destruction of the whole system of arms control agreements and initiate a new arms race that will be excessive and – I would like to emphasize that – absolutely superfluous for Russia.¹¹¹

106 “Putin posetit Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, Italiyu i FRG”, *NeGa*, May 12, 2000. The summit between the EU and Russia on May 29 was not mentioned explicitly.

107 The sole fact that these measures were adopted before Ivanov’s meeting within the framework of the PJC in Florence May 25 reverberated in the Russian press as an indication of the fact that Russia wanted a head start on the Alliance and to go slowly on re-establishing the ties to NATO. There is little evidence on any specific linkage between Russia’s priorities in the CIS structures and Russia’s intentions in NATO, however. See “Moskva ne speshit mirit’sya s NATO”, *NeGa*, May 25, 2000.

108 “Diplomaticheskoe leto prezidenta” *NeGa*, June 3, 2000.

109 “Ivanov i Albrait soglasovali temy sammita”, *NeGa*, May 26, 2000.

110 According to Fedorov, “the new Russian President appears to understand the basic necessity for Russia to build a sufficiently cooperative and constructive relationship with the West, at least in order to avoid confrontation and a new arms race that would be fraught with total economic collapse”, Yuriy Fedorov, “Putin’s Russia and the West”, *op.cit.* p. 137.

111 *Ibid.* p. 136.

The central point was that Moscow seemed to be interested in how disarmament issues were voiced in the European context. Hence, the Florence meeting on May 25, 2000 reverberated in the Russian press as one where “European concerns” had been voiced out. Russian press outlets quoted Joshka Fischer’s as to having stated that NATO allies could accept NMD only if an agreement on amending the ABM Treaty was reached with Russia, and there was made an explicit link between amending the ABM and continuing on opening the START III, and that both the US and Russia would go further down on reducing the nuclear stock as a “common European position.”¹¹²

The timing of the EU–Russia meeting was also given a certain effect. Clearly, the EU had stepped down from the critical posture on Chechnya and greeted the emergence of a new relationship between Russia and the EU. Chairman of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, promoted this view in an article, which was published in Russian in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on May 26.¹¹³ Prodi considered the EU–Russia event as significant, not only as a logic consequence of the Russian president’s obligation to continue reforms, but also his “adherence to European ideals.”¹¹⁴ As for the timing of the event, before that of the bilateral US–Russia meeting, Prodi claimed: “we should grab this unique possibility with both hands and create a comprehensive dialogue between Russia and the European Union.”¹¹⁵

The bilateral EU–Russia talks on May 29 proceeded in the vein that the EU had become an important interlocutor for Russia. Putin repeated that Russia would stay a European country “geographically, culturally and concerning the level of economic integration.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, the meeting reportedly took place in an atmosphere of relief, since the Chechen issue no longer dominated the agenda. The Russian press suggested as much, in claiming that “talks were not about Chechnya, but on investments.”¹¹⁷ Although the Chechen issue had been raised at the summit, it had clearly been overshadowed by other priorities and issues.

The bilateral meeting with the US on June 4, 2000 proceeded on talks on disarmament and non-proliferation. On the eve of the summit, Russia’s position was clear: Russia would not accept a unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty. The Russian side had in this respect not given “the slightest of reasons to doubt that this position was a tough one” to the extent that Russia would not even accept an adaptation of the ABM Treaty.¹¹⁸ Russia was, according to press reports, offering the US cooperation on missile defense.

112 Ibid.

113 Romano Prodi, “Na puti k dialogu”, *NeGa*, May 26, 2000.

114 Ibid.

115 Prodi promoted a well-known EU agenda covering the major points outlined in the Cologne Strategy on Russia, such as securing an EU–Russia business dialogue, continuation of economic and judicial reforms in Russia, secure human rights in Chechnya and support of Russia’s future membership in the WTO. The meeting also touched the issue of non-proliferation.

116 “Budem zhit’ v bezopasnom mire”, *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, May 30, 2000.

117 “Putin sumel ponravits’ya Evrope”, *Izvestiya*, May 30, 2000. Other reports on the Feira meeting went even further in interpreting the EU’s reception of Putin. The EU’s intention on cooperating with Russia to secure an undivided Europe was taken as a sign that the EU had gone from “criticism [of Chechnya] to praise.” “ES perestal kritikovat’ Moskvu”, *NeGa*, June 21, 2000.

118 “Berlin fakticheski podderzhal Moskvu v ee spore s Vashingtonom”, *NeGa*, June 3, 2000.

Moreover, in the event of a unilateral abrogation, Russia would consider leaving existing treaties on nuclear disarmament.

The visit produced little in terms of agreements on the future of the ABM Treaty, but resulted still in a Joint Memorandum, in which both parties declared their common concern for preserving “strategic stability in the nuclear field” and continue the talks on START III in accordance with the Joint Memorandum of the presidents in Moscow 1998 and Cologne 1999. Moreover, the Joint Memorandum offered a rather detailed point on non-proliferation, according to which the parties:

[...] agree that the international community faces a dangerous and growing threat from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of deliverance, including missiles and missile technology, and underline their efforts to reverse this process, among other things by means of utilizing existing and new international legal mechanisms. They agree that this new threat potentially implies considerable changes in the strategic situation in the field of international security.¹¹⁹

The summit also resulted in a bilateral agreement between the US and Russia on the creation of a Joint Center for early Warning in Moscow. The parties agreed to utilize the period from June 2000 to June 2001 to prepare for the establishment of this center. According to preliminary plans, the US should send 16 civilians and military staff, while Russia provided 81. Its main function should be to secure exchange of information about ballistic missile launches and cosmic missile launchers.¹²⁰

The bilateral meeting between the US and Russian presidents was immediately succeeded by Putin’s visit to Rome for bilateral talks with the Italian government. Although announced in the Russian press as a working visit, Russia’s president made what was referred to as a surprising announcement that Russia, the EU and NATO should join forces to create a joint anti-missile defense for Europe.¹²¹ According to press reports, Putin apparently wanted Italy to serve as an intermediary for this idea and consult with other European capitals. Moreover, the president took the offensive on the issue of preserving the ABM Treaty by declaring that he was aware of the European concerns about the future of the ABM Treaty. He declared officially:

We know that many in Europe and Northern America and the world are concerned about the preservation of the ABM Treaty from 1972. We share this concern [...] I have proposed for the chairman of the Italian government that he consider and discuss with other colleagues the Russian proposal to establish, together with Europe and NATO, a joint anti-missile system for Europe. Of course also with the participation of our American partners.¹²²

Press reports made timing an issue in itself. Putin’s entrance onto the arena of European politics was made an event by the fact that the new president of

119 “Sovmestnoe zayavlenie prezidentov Rossiyskoy Federatsii i Soedinennykh Shtatov Ameriki o printsipakh strategicheskoy stabil’nosti”, *NeGa*, June 6, 2000.

120 “Blizhe k Vashingtonu – dal’she ot Pekina?”, *NeGa*, June 7, 2000.

121 “Putin predlozhit sozdat’ obshcheevropeyskuyu sistemu PRO”, *NeGa*, June 7, 2000.

122 Ibid.

Russia had consulted with the EU at the summit of EU–Russia on May 29 before meeting bilaterally with the US. The Italian follow-up was hence able to “transcend the field of bilateral relations.”¹²³ Indeed, the return visit to Italy gave Putin a possibility to combine Russian policy priorities in a “European” setting. By inviting the US to participate in a European missile defense, to which Russia took the initiative, Moscow could hope to gain certain dividends.

The objective of addressing European concerns was repeated on the succeeding visit to Germany. Indeed, Russia’s minister of foreign affairs, Ivanov, had announced in anticipation of the meeting that “Germany is for Russia the largest window to the European Union.”¹²⁴ Putin repeated this priority during the press conference summarizing the outcome of the visit. According to Russia’s president, “Germany is the single most important economic partner of Russia in Europe. We relate to Germany as to the core of European integration.”¹²⁵ Among the concerns voiced in the press in anticipation of the meeting, was the fact that Germany and France had met bilaterally before the meeting and coordinated their positions with regard to the future of the EU and the production of a European military transport aircraft, which would bury Russian hopes on the joint Russian-Ukrainian proposal to produce the AN-70 military transport carrier for Germany and other NATO countries.¹²⁶

During the meeting Putin re-launched the issue of strategic stability. During the consultations in which Gerhard Schroeder voiced the opinion that consultations should continue within the PJC and bilaterally, Putin made a reverse proposal by inviting Germany as a third party in the proposed bilateral US-Russian Early-Warning Center in Moscow. “I proposed to the German Chancellor that he consult with his European partners, and that Russia would like to see United Europe as a third party in this agreement.” Moreover:

After our proposal to NATO that it consider the creation of a joint MD for Europe, we have heard positive response from the US on this during my recent meeting with US Minister of defense William Cohen, and also from other European leaders.¹²⁷

Putin’s tour in Europe offered little in terms of institutional dividends for Russia. Yet, the repeated efforts to make the European voice in strategic issues more salient served at least the purpose of making the EU more important as an actor, and hence it fitted neatly with the overriding “multipolar” vision of Russia’s foreign and security policies. By proposing consultations on a European missile defense and voicing concerns over the ABM Treaty Putin addressed Europe as a separate entity to the extent that he wanted to see a “pan-European” presence in a trilateral construction involving the US, Russia and the EU. From the perspective of decline in institutional powers this could offer some long-term dividends and compensate for Russia’s lim-

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 “Peregovory po shirokoy programme”, *NeGa*, June 16, 2000.

126 “Na ocheredi – Germaniya”, *NeGa*, June 14, 2000.

127 “Udachnoe zavershenie vizita Putina”, *NeGa*, June 17, 2000.

ited possibilities of influencing European security policies. Moreover, in the damage limitation perspective, a trilateral configuration of the EU, US and Russia would imply that the European security process was preserved as an open-ended one.

This is in itself not sufficient, however, to support the notion that Russia approached Europe as a challenger. In order to find support for this argument, we should examine two aspects. First, we should look into the proposals made in NATO and the defense minister's interpretation of Putin's proposal. Secondly, we should consider domestic interpretations of Putin's European policies.

3.3.1. Russia's EuroMD proposal and Transatlanticism

At the PJC meeting on June 8, 2000, Minister of Defense Igor Sergeev specified Putin's EuroMD proposal in more concrete forms. Sergeev departed from general confidence-building measures initiated to overcome a new division of Europe. The Russian minister linked together several issues. First, he assumed that the Russian proposal could serve as a means to overcome differences that otherwise might seem to play a role insofar as Europe derived its position on MD not from "common European interests", meaning that if the European NATO allies supported a US position on the issue, the Russian side would have to ask against whom the MD was to be directed.¹²⁸

Secondly, the Russian side proposed a list of possible areas of cooperation with NATO. The list included measures such as: conduct a common evaluation of the character and scale of proliferation of missile technology and possible missile threats; elaborate a joint concept for EuroMD; create a joint all-European multilateral center for early warning; conduct joint HQ operative exercises; conduct joint research; jointly elaborate a system of non-strategic MD; elaborate a joint non-strategic MD for coordinated actions within peacekeeping.¹²⁹

This list of proposals was coupled with what seemed to be a conditional approach to resuming the dialogue between NATO and Russia. Sergeev maintained:

It is clear that the re-establishment of contacts between Moscow and NATO can only proceed step by step and by keeping a focus on prioritized areas. A subsequent widening of the agenda will only be possible insofar as Russia's interests are taken into account.¹³⁰

Clearly, the Russian minister – although presenting the issue in NATO – still looked for a European position on strategic issues. Elaborating on the issue in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on June 22, Russia's position was set on preserving the ABM Treaty, and Sergeev also dismissed allegations that Russia would be willing to accept an adaptation of the Treaty. Hence, the clause in the Joint Declaration that allegedly opened for such an adaptation, given "changes in the strategic situation", was not to be interpreted as to suggest-

¹²⁸ "Sergeev konkretisiroval initsiativu Putina v oblasti PRO", *NeGa*, June 10, 2000.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

ing that Russia would support this. “Our position is as earlier,” Sergeyev stated. “Any changes in the strategic situation should not undermine the essence of this document, and should be directed only at strengthening the ABM Treaty.”¹³¹

Most importantly, the article gave insights as to Russia’s European policies. Judging from the article, Russia had pinned its hopes on two factors: First, that the “transatlantic partners come to realize that the abrogation of the ABM Treaty will lead to a sharp change of the political climate in the world.”¹³² Secondly, that European states would respond to the invitation to join in a Common European Early Warning Center. To the latter respect Sergeyev claimed that: “no one desire to become a hostage of the egoistic plans of the Americans. The defense ministers of France and Germany have pointedly made this position. This situation strengthens our position.”¹³³

How did these priorities spell out with regard to the transatlantic agenda? First, the idea behind a joint Early Warning Center as sketched bilaterally between Russia and US in June was – according to Sergeyev – “not to unite the warning systems of Russia and the US, nor to unite systems of anti-missile defense, as some incompetent media have suggested.” The aim was rather that the US and Russia should involve European partners. Secondly, Russia’s minister stressed the idea of a European MD, which should not be set up to the detriment of the ABM Treaty.¹³⁴ As the Russian proposal spelled out, it was more to be consultation on possible joint action and research. Hence, a non-strategic MD should consist of:

Joint assessments of the character and scale of missile proliferation and possible missile threats; jointly elaborate an pan-European non-strategic MD system; jointly establish an pan-European multilateral Early Warning center for missile launches; joint command exercises and joint experiments and research.¹³⁵

These statements suggest that the context of the proposal was one of making the European voice within the Alliance more salient. Also the domestic context interpreted Putin’s European tour to this end.

3.3.2. Domestic and Foreign Policy Interpretations of Putin’s Tour

The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the State Duma also engaged widely in the debate on sculpting Russia’s position. A round-table was held in June 2000 under the overarching title: “How should we respond to the US?”¹³⁶ Participants departed from the assumption that the US would, regardless of the Russian ratification of START II and the CTBT, still leave the ABM Treaty unilaterally, but were split in their view on how to respond. Members of the parliamentary apparatus wavered between supporting the US democrat position, and leave all treaties from the ABM, START I, START II, the CTBT and other agreements.

131 Igor Sergeyev, “SShA razrushayut strategicheskuyu stabil’nost’”, *NeGa*, June 22, 2000.

132 *Ibid.*

133 *Ibid.*

134 *Ibid.*

135 *Ibid.*

136 “Chto otvetit’ Vashingtonu?” *Dipkur’er- NG*, June 22, 2000.

The position of Dmitry Rogozin, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, is worth some attention. Rogozin contended that the US was moving towards isolationism, and that Cold War deterrence was about to be replaced by a unipolar system where the US would rank national security as an overriding priority. Combining this with Russia's attempt not to become the scapegoat in the discourse of disarmament, and Europe's increased significance for Russia, Rogozin stated:

We were absolutely correct to ratify START II. Hence we effectively foresaw the plans of the US to leave the ABM Treaty. What would have happened if we did not ratify? The US would still leave the treaty, but this time we would be to blame. [...] Now the US is guilty not only in the face of us, but in the face of the whole world and the process of disarmament. [...] What about the Europeans? The last parliamentary seminar with French and Germans revealed that their position is quite close to the Russian one. For the first time in NATO history, the Americans have created a situation of unequally distributed security, which might lead to elements of discord in the future.¹³⁷

Lengthy quotations like the one above might reveal how Russia sculpted the marker "Europe" in the internal debate. Although Rogozin maintained that Russia should still approach the US through dialogue and not withdraw from any of the ratified treaties, he interpreted future US unilateralist positions as favorable with respect to Russia's future voice in Europe.

There seems to be ample evidence to suggest that Russia's active Europe policy was designed and interpreted as a means to engage European capitals. Other internal sources back this assumption. Putin's move was considered a shrewd effort to avoid a continuation of the Yeltsin line of back-peddling on lost positions in the European security system. Commenting on Putin's style as foreign policy-maker in Russia, Aleksander Bessmertnykh, former USSR minister of foreign affairs, suggested that Putin had taken a "flank maneuver" and thus avoided a repetition of Yeltsin's earlier hints on the possibility of adapting the ABM Treaty. Hence, rather than backtracking on the US proposal, he had proposed a different version for discussion:

Some are frustrated that he started to cultivate the Europeans by starting with Italy and Spain, which do not play any central role in NATO [...] I quite enjoyed this flank attack. Entrenching Europe from the flanks, he moved the peripheral states to the center of the discussion of vital European security interests.¹³⁸

Clearly, Putin had utilized bilateral contacts to flag an idea of an independent Europe on the international scene. This was echoed also in Russia's official policies vis-à-vis Europe. Following in this vein, Igor Ivanov stated in a speech held at the European Forum in Berlin on November 25, 2000 that Europe should take the initiative in disarmament. "Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are no longer exclusively a topic for Russia-US relations, and other nuclear powers," Ivanov maintained. Furthermore:

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ "Delovityy, skuchnovaty, dobivayushchey svoey tseli politik", *Dipkur'er-NG*, June 2000.

Europe should and must become a generator of comprehensive strategic stability in the world. First and foremost in order to make cardinal progress in disarmament on the condition of preserving and strengthening existing treaties and agreements in this field. [...] It is necessary that the rest of the international community, European powers included, join in on that process. This theme could become a permanent theme in the trilateral dialogue between Russia, the US, and the EU.¹³⁹

Summing up, the domestic policy dimensions of Putin's foreign policies suggest that Putin's moves were basically interpreted in a damage limitation perspective. Anticipating that the US would leave the ABM Treaty unilaterally, Russian policy-makers pinned their hopes on an independent European position on the issue that possibly could manifest itself in a trilateral configuration in international politics. This would in turn serve the overriding perspective of keeping an open European process in terms of security. The EU was by and large viewed as a possible interlocutor and counterweight to US unilateralism. By assigning the EU and Europe actor capacities within the field of strategic stability, the multipolar paradigm was confirmed – Russian policy-makers saw an independent Europe as a potential pole in a system of balance. Recapturing the definition above, it seems clear that engaging in a dialogue with both NATO and the EU on this issue did not contradict the long-term ambitions of damage limitation. Russia was just not being specifically romantic about it and stressed that Russian interests had to be taken into account.

As suggested above, this did not materialize in any institutional arrangement. What Russia had with the EU was basically two reciprocal strategies and the arrangements of biannual summits and consultations and working groups within the framework of the EU–Russia PCA. The EU and Russia had no separate institutional framework for addressing security issues. In this sense, the May summit between the EU and Russia had reopened the political dialogue, but not developed it. The fall of 2000 implied a further development of that dialogue, however.

3.4. The EU as a Security Actor: The Balkans

Given the importance attached to the EU as an actor in disarmament and economy, one should expect that Russia readily saw possibilities for the EU to play a more clearly defined security role pursuant to the development of the ESDP. Indeed, at the Moscow summit in May 2000, security issues had emerged as a point on the EU–Russia agenda. According to the joint statement, President Putin “expressed a positive interest in the EU's evolving European Security and Defense Policy”. This statement fell in line with Russia's overall strategic perspective of multipolarity and respect for the UN Charter. Hence:

139 Igor Ivanov, “Rossiya v Evrope: vozmozhnost’ i perspektivy obshche-evropeiskogo sotrudnichestva”, in Igor Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit. p. 212.

He [President Putin] noted that there are possibilities for cooperation in accordance with the UN Charter principles and in recognition of the main responsibilities of the UN Security Council, in particular on the issues of strengthening international peace, security and stability, notably early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction.¹⁴⁰

The central focus for an increased role for the EU was undoubtedly the Balkans. By 2000, multipolarity and UN primacy readily sum up Russia's main priorities in the region. Igor Ivanov had in March 2000 suggested that in the Balkans, the struggle for a new world order had entered a final phase and that "future peace is possible only on the basis of multipolarity and the strict respect for international laws."¹⁴¹ This had been duly noticed also at the Moscow summit in May 2000, where the EU and Russia landed on a common statement on "Furthering a settlement in Kosovo on the basis of full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1244 and full support for the Dayton–Paris accords."¹⁴² This policy was reiterated in many forums. Anticipating the UN millennium meeting in the fall of 2000, Igor Ivanov voiced support for returning to status quo ante by appealing to strict loyalty and abidance by UNSCR 1244. "As is well known," the minister stated, "resolution 1244 includes a clause that Kosovo is an integral part of the territory of the FRY. In other words, preservation of the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia is a fundamental condition for a solid and long-lasting conflict resolution."¹⁴³

Simultaneously, Russia had strategic interests in the region. Igor Ivanov contended in a speech to the State Duma on October 13 that the Balkans was still "a region of strategic significance for Russia", and that the objective of Russia's foreign policies was to create conditions that allowed Russia to "strengthen its positions."¹⁴⁴ During the fall of 2000, Russia had tried to define these strategic interests, among other things by playing a role as arbiter. As the crisis of government erupted in the former Republic of Yugoslavia in September 2000, Moscow tried to gain a role as special mediator. Indeed, Putin invited both Milosevic and Kostunica to Moscow for trilateral talks in the beginning of October 2000, but in the upshot, Belgrade refused Russian intermediate efforts.¹⁴⁵ According to minister of foreign affairs, Igor Ivanov, Russia tried three times to play a role as intermediary, but had limited success.¹⁴⁶ Outlining Russia's policies, Ivanov stressed that Russia's position had been one of consequence and clarity. Russia's arbiter role was serious in intentions. Notably, Russia's interest in the region was not confined to supporting any of the two parties, but to:

140 Joint statement at the EU-Russia summit May 2000, Moscow. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/summit_29_05_00/joint_final_statement.htm.

141 Igor Ivanov, "Kosovskiy krizis: god spustya", *Dipkur'er-NG*, March 23, 2000.

142 Ibid.

143 bid.

144 Igor Ivanov, "Vystuplenie na zasedanii Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit., p. 199.

145 "Kreml' stanovitsya posrednikom v Yugoslavii?", *NeGa*, October 4 2000.

146 Igor Ivanov, "Vystuplenie na zasedanii Gosudarstvennoy Dumy", op.cit. p. 199.

Actively foster the strengthening of the democratic foundations of Yugoslav society and through this secure our interests in a friendly country. Concretely, Russia will strive to lift sanctions, help the FRY to return to the scene of international politics, support the FRY economically, and help to rebuild the country's economy.¹⁴⁷

With the inclusion of Yugoslavia in the Stability Pact on October 26, 2000, it seemed clear for Moscow that Russia could not play any separate role in the Balkans, let alone an indispensable one. True, Kostunica paid a visit to Moscow on October 27 with a general encouragement that Moscow should play a visible role in the Balkans. His statement was rather moderate, however, indicating that "in all the criss-crossing strategic and geopolitical influences on the Balkans, there should be one element that signalized Russian presence."¹⁴⁸ Clearly, the commonality of approaches was evident in the emphasis put by both leaders on the territorial integrity of the FRY and the need to abide by SCR 1244 with regard to the Kosovo issue. On the other hand, the president of FRY travelled to Moscow as the leader of a country heading for Europe. This was confirmed by Kostunica's statements that Yugoslavia would orientate itself towards the European Union and not Russia or the US – a policy that the Russian press referred to as a "return to the policies of Tito."¹⁴⁹

This applies also to other states in the region. During the fall of 2000, Russia faced a Balkan setting where the EU and transatlantic structures emerged as a reference point for the region. Boris Trajkovski, president of Macedonia, had made it clear in the Russian press during the spring of 2000 that Macedonia "aimed for membership in transatlantic structures", and that Macedonia's decision to allow NATO forces to use its territory was "an internal affair of Macedonia."¹⁵⁰ Moreover, at the Zagreb conference in November 2000 elected leaders of South East Europe joined in with the 15 EU countries in mapping the prospects for integrating the region into the EU.¹⁵¹

To all appearances, Russia's president did not harbor any illusions on a transatlantic rift in the Balkans. On the eve of the EU–Russia summit in Paris, Putin stated that it would be "just if NATO countries took onto themselves a considerable part of the expenditures in rebuilding former Yugoslavia, since they decided to embark on a military mission that did substantial damage to the Yugoslav economy."¹⁵² The coupling of NATO and the EU Stability Pact suggested that these were not conceived as separate entities. On the other hand, Russian diplomats signalized an interest in the EU's emerging security identity. Russia's permanent representative to the European Union, Vasilii Likhachev, had, in anticipation of the Paris summit in October 2000, suggested that the EU and Russia should "joint their potential in keeping the peace in the Balkans, the Middle East and other problematic regions." In this connection:

147 Ibid. p. 202.

148 "Moskva pooshchirila Belgrad", *NeGa*, October 28, 2000.

149 "Belgrad vozvrashchaetsya k vneshney politike Tito?", *Dipkur'er-NG*, October 12, 2000.

150 "Yugoslavia igraet osobuyu rol' v regione", *Dipkur'er-NG*, March 23, 2000.

151 Michael Emerson, *The Elephant and the Bear. The European Union, Russia and their Near Abroads*, Centre for European Policy Studies, 2001, p. 37.

152 "Vlast' vyazala v ruki dubinu", *NeGa*, October 27, 2000.

Considering the fact that the EU is actively formulating its foreign policy and its common defense policy, it is mandatory for Russia to know to which degree this activity is coherent with the principles and norms of international law, the UN Charter and the Declaration of the OSCE. How transparent is this process and how can Russia and other countries link on to Petersberg operations in accordance with EU summit decisions in Feira and Helsinki?¹⁵³

Clearly, Russian officials had at least raised expectations on the development of a comprehensive dialogue between the EU and Russia in the security sphere. Indeed, according to Likhachev, Russia's dialogue with the EU included "diplomatic talks on questions of disarmament, demilitarization of outer space, regional conflicts, human rights and economic security."¹⁵⁴ The EU suggested a somewhat narrower agenda on regional stability. Days before the EU–Russia summit in France, EU's High Representative on Foreign and Security Affairs, Javier Solana, expressed in the Russian press that:

The EU and Russia can through joint efforts give a considerable contribution in supporting the efforts of the Serb people to pull through democratic reforms, and also in stimulating the intentions of the Serb people to stabilize Serbia and the region as such.¹⁵⁵

This statement did not suggest anything else than what had been proposed in the joint statement of the EU and Russia in May 2000. Yet, the recently deceased Swedish minister of foreign affairs, Anna Lindh, who in 2000 was future chairman of the EU troika, maintained in a September issue of *Nezavisimaya gazeta* the opposite of what Javier Solana had stated in March 2000, when reluctantly holding back on cooperation with Russia within crisis management – namely that this field was of special interest in the future cooperation. "There is another aspect concerning security and crisis management," she stated:

The European Union is currently seeing new possibilities in the field of civilian and military conflict management. In this field we also count on active support from Russia, and on the active participation of Russia in this process.¹⁵⁶

Apparently, the EU had developed a more receptive role in terms of cooperating with Russia on issues related to crisis management. This is clear not least from the Paris summit, which brought several strands together in a common declaration. First, the declaration welcomed the democratization process in FRY and the return of FRY to the league of European nations. Secondly, Russia's and the EU's beginning rapprochement within security was solidified by a special declaration on strengthening the dialogue and cooperation on political and security matters in Europe. According to the statement, substance should be given to the strategic partnership by institu-

153 Ibid.

154 "Vladimira Putina v Parizhe ozhidaet blagozhelatel'naya atmosfera", *Dipkur'er-NG*, October 26, 2000.

155 "ES vse eshche ozabochen Chechney", *NeGa*, October 28, 2000.

156 "Nam nuzhna sil'naya, stabil'naya i protsvetauyshchaya Rossiya", *Dipkur'er NG*, September 14, 2000.

tionalizing the security and defense dialogue, develop a strategic dialogue, hold regular consultations on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation and cooperate in crisis management.¹⁵⁷ More specifically, the declaration stated that:

On the basis of the initial proposals, which will be presented at the Nice European Council to enable potential partners in the operations to contribute, we will examine mechanisms for contribution by the Russian Federation to the European Union's crisis management operations. In the context of preparations for the next European Union–Russia Summit, we will draw up proposals designed to give substance to our cooperation. We will also examine possibilities for a contribution by the Russian Federation to the implementation of civilian crisis management instruments.¹⁵⁸

Apparently, the EU had widened the scope of consultation with Russia substantially. A major reason for this might have been the ambition to gain capacities as a security actor in the Balkans. Russia did not counter this development. According to Dov Lynch, Russia reversed its Balkan policies by taking a “back-seat” in the region during the course of 2000. In this perspective the “EU has taken the lead with Russia’s tacit consent.”¹⁵⁹ In the upshot, the Russian–EU dialogue on security issues made a considerable leap forward during the Paris summit and opened for regular consultations on security matters.

This does not imply that Russia refrained from promoting a status quo approach to the Balkans. As observed by Michael Emerson, Russia proposed to hold a Balkan summit conference during the summer of 2001 to cement territorial borders, secure strict abidance by the UN Charter and combat regional extremism and terrorism. This proposal also challenged the EU’s policies in the region. According to Russia’s special representative, “it is not in our common interest nor is it in the interest of the Balkan states that illusions regarding a possibility of an imposed solution is replaced by another, i.e. in the search for a panacea in the shape of speedy integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.”¹⁶⁰

The situation in the Balkans is central to understanding the background for one particular strand of EU–Russia relations – that of security. From the perspective of decline in institutional powers, Russia achieved a dialogue with the EU on security issues during the latter half of 2000. Clearly, maintaining a dialogue on these issues did not imply any direct institutional leverage on developments, nor did it imply any parallel arrangement similar to the PCA. It does, however, reflect the degree of interest on Russia’s part to sculpt and initiate a security dialogue with the EU as a part of a new policy. The fact that the summit was in France, dictated a certain focus on security affairs, as France since the beginning of European integration had been asso-

157 “Joint Declaration on strengthening dialogue and cooperation on political and security matters in Europe.”

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/russia/summit_30_10_00/stat_secu_en.htm

158 Ibid.

159 Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, op.cit. p. 66.

160 Michael Emerson, *The Elephant and the Bear*, op.cit. p. 37.

ciated with the idea of a separate defense capability.¹⁶¹ Indeed, before the Paris summit Russian officials had underlined several times, among other things at the visit of the French minister of foreign affairs, Hubert Vedrine, to Moscow in September, that France was an indispensable partner for Russia.¹⁶²

Developing a dialogue with the EU on security did not imply any direct investments from Russia's side, however. Russia anticipated an increased security role for the EU and wanted to stay at the forefront of this development by initiating a dialogue on security issues. In a damage limitation perspective, Russia could, on the contrary, expect certain dividends in terms of an open-ended European security process, and one that readily took Russian perspectives more into account.

In sum, the policy moves made during the opening phase of Putin's tenure suggest that the EU emerged in Russian perceptions as a potential security actor, and one that also would have a say in strategic questions and disarmament. The basic interpretive frame for the EU's capacities was still that of multipolarity – independent EU capacities would for Russia imply that the strategic aim of multipolarity would be reached.

Was this policy rooted in any substantial change in perceptions with regard to Russia's understanding of the Western security system? The next chapter seeks to highlight the internal Russian debate on the Western security system and link various perceptions of Russia's options to the interpretive approaches of damage limitation and decline in institutional powers.

161 See Dmitry Danilov, "Zadumchivost', iz kotoroy pora i vyyti", *Dipkur'er-NG*, October 26, 2000.

162 Dmitry Danilov states explicitly that "if Russia during the Paris summit signalizes a preparedness to a more substantial dialogue with the EU in this direction, it will be hard for France not to respond." Ibid.

4. Debating Europe: The EU and NATO in Russia's Security Debate Prior to September 11

The aim of this chapter is not to indicate any causal link between the policies adopted by the Putin administration in the first part of 2000 and various policy-making perceptions of the EU, nor to suggest that there is any inevitable link between perceptions and foreign policies at a more theoretical level. The aim is more modestly to analyze various perceptions of the Western security system in relation to the overall perspectives of damage limitation and decline in institutional powers. The chapter starts off by debating Russia's positions on the development of the OSCE as a pan-European organization, and to which degree cooperation with the EU harmonized with Russia's priority to preserve the organization. After this, the NATO–EU nexus will be discussed and focus will be put on whether or not researchers viewed the EU as an alternative to NATO, or simply as an integral part of the future development of a European and transatlantic crisis management capacity. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the development of the debate on Russia–EU relations on the ESDP and future crisis management operations.

4.1. The OSCE–EU Nexus: Preferred Partner?

Russia made substantial progress in developing the security dialogue with the EU in 2000 and 2001. Still, the major outlook on the Western security arrangement remained colored by Russia's position during the Kosovo crisis. Decline in institutional powers was a primary concern. In early 2001, Russia's minister of foreign affairs expressed concerns that the OSCE was gradually becoming less important, and stressed that in order to gain significance, the organization had to reform deeply and become more of a pan-European organization with equal access for all members. Clearly, Russia both feared and did not support the marginalization of the OSCE in Europe. In this respect, Igor Ivanov stated in November 2000 in a speech held to the "European Forum" in Berlin that:

In order for Europe to become a moving force in the formation of a multipolar system of international relations, Europe must become a powerful and self-sufficient "pole." And this is possible – and this is my deep conviction – only if Europe is transformed into a unified space for stability and security, economic growth and democracy.¹⁶³

This line indicated continuity with Primakov's foreign policies in so far as it pictured Europe as an independent pole in the international system. Following in this vein, Ivanov maintained: "the OSCE should become the primary forum for developing a unified approach from the part of European powers to fundamental contemporary problems, and also a primary mechanism for dialogue with other regional security organizations."¹⁶⁴ The suggestion that the OSCE should be a "primary mechanism" illustrates the central tenet of the Primakovian approach – European security should develop under the

¹⁶³ Igor Ivanov, "Rossiya v Evrope: vozmozhnost' i perspektivy obshcheevropeyskogo sotrudnichestva", *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit. p. 214.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

guidance of the OSCE to the extent that the OSCE should coordinate other security institutions.

Still, Moscow seemed to have modified the suggestion that the OSCE should serve as the only viable alternative to other Western security institutions. Indeed, Igor Ivanov maintained that “the attempt to contrast the OSCE with other European institutions with a limited number of participants and to make this organization the sole fundament of European security are counter-productive.”¹⁶⁵ Hence, what Moscow anticipated was first and foremost that the OSCE should be a forum for security pluralism – an architecture consisting of a variety of interlocking or independent security arrangements on the European continent.

This idea was still salient in the internal security debate, and served as a background for interpreting what Russian officials perceived as a stalemate within the OSCE. Linking up to the EU was perceived as a possible exit solution for Russia’s declining institutional powers. Former ambassador to the US and deputy chairman of the State Duma, Vladimir Lukin, envisaged the emerging EU–Russia relationship as a move beyond the deadlock that had developed within the OSCE after the Istanbul summit in 1999. In his view, the OSCE had in a sense polarized during the summit as the European part increasingly interpreted the Charter’s clause on not allowing exclusive spheres of interests and exclusive mandates on peacekeeping as “denouncing the principle practiced by Russia of seeing the CIS sphere as one of exclusive interests.”¹⁶⁶ Russia was on the other hand utilizing this as an argument against increased “NATO centrism” in Europe. Hence:

Russia has urged to widen the scope of the OSCE and give it an actual pan-European character, whereas the countries of NATO have sought to narrow the organization’s function to a minimum, and focus by and large on the conflicts in post-Soviet states and in the Balkans.¹⁶⁷

This policy was highly visible in the many statements made by Igor Ivanov on developments within the OSCE – allegedly that the organization was turning into a “vehicle for forced democratization of the post-Soviet space.”¹⁶⁸ The essence of this argument touched upon that of Lukin above, namely that the OSCE stood in danger of being narrowed down to the human dimension of security and the concept of humanitarian intervention, while other security issues were confined to organizations where Russia was not represented.

What is interesting about Lukin’s analysis is that he singles out the EU as a completely new actor and partner for Russia, and possibly also a way out of the negative status quo situation. “The new Russian administration justly considers the EU and not NATO to be its primary interlocutor,” he maintained on the anniversary of the OSCE Istanbul meeting. Moreover:

¹⁶⁵ Igor Ivanov, “Vneshnyaya politika Rossii na rubezhe XXI veka: problemy formirovaniya, evolyutsii i preemstvennosti”, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, op.cit., p.37.

¹⁶⁶ Vladimir Lukin, “God posle Stambula”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, November 9, 2000.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Igor Ivanov, “Rossiya i Evropa”, *Novaya Rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, op.cit. p. 125.

By proposing to widen and strengthen the structures of the permanent EU-Russia dialogue [...] Russia supports the Finnish proposal on a trilateral summit between Russia, the EU and the US [...] Such a European security architecture that harmonizes bilateral relations with the cooperation between various international organizations (UN, OSCE, EU, WEU, NATO, CE, CIS and so forth) would not only secure stability on the continent, but also serve as a pattern for other regions in the multipolar world of the XXI century.¹⁶⁹

This analysis brought the Primakovian approach to a new level in so far as it did not harbor any illusions of the primacy of the OSCE in Europe. Rather than assuming that the OSCE should have a coordinating role with regard to the development of the EU's security identity, Lukin recognized the EU as a more distinct foreign policy actor, and pictured this as a process that eventually should affect Russia as well. Hence, Lukin suggested that this dialogue could only develop in substance on three conditions: First, the EU had to make more explicit what the ESDP was actually all about; secondly, the US had to overcome its own inherent tendency to "unipolarism" and, thirdly, Russia would become a stable part of this triangle in so far as Russia proved that "the European direction is not only a concept, but a genuine political orientation".¹⁷⁰

Russia has no less of a claim to have a "separate identity" than the US and the EU – but only within the framework of a long-term collective security strategy for the triangle.¹⁷¹

Although going beyond the Primakovian paradigm in the sense that counterbalancing US influence was not an option, the search for a triangular configuration harbored at least a suggestion that Russia should be considered an equal partner. Moreover, Lukin's triangular configuration followed the ambition of Moscow from the Lisbon meeting and onwards to initiate a dialogue on strategic disarmament issues and security with the US and the EU. By supporting what was conceived as a "Finnish option", Lukin saw an alternative to the OSCE for Russia and some alternative collective security arrangement for the triangle.

Such assertions found backing also in other policy-making environments. Yet, the official position of Moscow seemed somewhat reluctant to adopt such a strategy in its full scope. Two fundamental positions deserve some treatment: First, the status quo approach – that the OSCE should be upgraded, modernized and made more effective on the condition that the organization still remained the only truly pan-European security organization. Secondly, the assertion that Russia's policies of upgrading the OSCE had been an ineffective one, and – in the words of some researchers – a forum first and foremost for Russian back-peddalling from lost positions in the European security debate.

The first view was frequently launched by conservative research environments in discussions dedicated to the future relationship between the EU

169 Vladimir Lukin, "God posle Stambula", *Dipkur'er-NG*, November 9, 2000.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

and Russia. Hence, in connection with a May 2001 conference at the Institute of Europe, the director of the MFA department on relations with the EU, Vladimir Ovsyannikov, stated that although Russia “objectively appreciate the development [of the ESDP]”, and the direction of Russia’s foreign policies “coincides with the major objectives of the common foreign and security policies of the EU”, Russia still had to conclude:

We believe that the military component of EU’s policies in the field of security and defense should be organically inscribed into the existing system of European institutions, with the aim of strengthening the pan-European security architecture and avoid a shattering of its foundations. First and foremost, this implies to confirm the fundamental role of the OSCE.¹⁷²

Similar assertions worked as to confirm not only the prevalent post-Kosovo mood in Russian security thinking, but also a more deeply rooted status quo thinking as to conceptualizing the EU as an actor. Hence, the director of the Russian Institute of Europe, Nikolay Shmelev, suggested that although the EU was a preferred partner for Russia in regional and global affairs, the Union still harbored certain negative dependencies that projected on to the Russian sphere of interests. These “negative dependencies” had made themselves known as:

NATO enlargement, the events in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, the undermining US policies in the Caucasus and Central-Asia – all of these reveal that the weight and influence of the EU can be and are utilized against Russia’s interests.¹⁷³

Other analysts underlined the importance of addressing the ESDP actively in order to avoid further back-peddalling on lost positions vis-à-vis the Western security system. To be sure, the fundamental rationale for entering into a more structured dialogue with the EU in security matters should, according to these assessments, be to emerge as more proactive, and less linked to the status quo position on the OSCE. First and foremost, this approach harbored few illusions as to Russia’s capacity and ability to counter the enlarging Western security system. According to Dmitry Danilov and Arkady Moshes, Russia’s OSCE policies had been “illusive” to this end. It proved ineffective in stalling NATO enlargement, and would be ineffective as to dealing with the ESDP. Hence:

Russia continues to live by illusions and defends a hierarchic system of security with the OSCE at the top of the pyramid. Whereas the West has chosen a clearly defined strategy, Russia has chosen what is really a blind alley. The Russian proposals are excluded from the sphere of practical policies, basically due to lacking support from the majority of OSCE countries, while the declamatory defense of

172 “Moskva–nezamenimyy partner dlya nezavisimogo ES”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, no. 8 2001.

173 *Ibid.*

these positions has narrowed Russia's room for direction and possible access to other forms of collective security organizations in Europe.¹⁷⁴

The analysts' points were centered on the fact that Russia, by pursuing a selective approach and trying to give preference to separate organizations really neglected the fact that the Western security fabric constituted an inseparable network of various institutions. Russia would, if pursuing the overall line of giving preference to the OSCE, remain marginalized in the Western security system and have little access to its internal fabric.

Interestingly, these analysts also attached great importance to what Vladimir Lukin had referred to as the Finnish initiative above – to conduct trilateral meetings between the US, the EU and Russia. Clearly, this approach was coupled to the notion that “Russia could, by striking a partnership with the EU/WEU to a certain degree compensate for insufficient relations with the West in the sphere of security.” In this vein:

Russia officially supported Finland's proposal on conducting a trilateral summit ‘Russia–EU–US’. With the start of the ‘Lisbon process’ (the first trilateral meeting of ministers from Russia–EU–US took place on March 3, 2000 in Lisbon) a new format for Russian–Western dialogue was opened.¹⁷⁵

Hence, it seemed that many analysts considered the “troika” format to be a worthy substitute for the organization that in the words of Moshes and Danilov had declined in importance after the Cold War.¹⁷⁶ Clearly, this did not imply that the analysts did not see the OSCE as still relevant. Russia had at Istanbul made European states see more clearly that the OSCE should be based on consensus and non-violence in resolving conflicts. To the latter end, Russia had, in their view, “to a certain extent succeeded if not in limiting the tendency towards ‘NATO centrism’ in Europe, then at least in avoiding certain dangerous ‘landing operations’ similar to actions in Kosovo.”¹⁷⁷ Yet, the emphasis on the trilateral context was interesting for analysts and politicians alike as it anticipated a situation that would emerge as a product of EU enlargement and closer integration. In this respect, the “European channels may to a certain extent fill up the deficit of relations between the West and Russia in the field of security, and even enrich the actual content of this relationship.”¹⁷⁸

The search for a triangular security configuration in Europe was clearly linked to the perspective of decline in institutional powers. First, researchers and policy-makers assumed that the OSCE was a lost arena for Russia, and that new institutional designs had to be fronted. Secondly, the assumption that the EU would fill up the institutional void in Russia's relationship to the West harbored a long-term ambition to find some arrangement with the EU that would link Russia closer to Western security institutions.

174 Dmitry Danilov and Arkadiy Moshes, *Strukturizatsiya prostranstva bezopasnosti na zapade i vostokey Evropy*, Moscow, Ekslibris Press 2000.

175 Ibid. p. 108.

176 Ibid. p. 73.

177 Ibid. p. 102.

178 Ibid. p. 112.

Focus on the EU included also perspectives derived from damage limitation. By suggesting the EU as a preferred partner for Russia, and one that softened the cool relationship between Russia and the West after Kosovo, policy-makers reflected both the zero-sum institutional game of the late 1990s by balancing NATO and the EU against one another, and the overall perspective of stalling the fixation of a NATO-centered security arrangement in Europe. At the bottom line, however – as we shall see below – this approach harbored no illusions as to the possibility of breaking down internal coherence in NATO.

4.2. The NATO–EU Nexus: Independent or Not?

The nature of EU–NATO relations was a sphere of special interest for Russia. Indeed, in the official statements by Igor Ivanov that Russia had a primary interest in the development of the ESDP and that Russia would not stay on the sidelines of this process there were certain imminent expectations that it would either transform the NATO alliance, or simply make it superfluous. A more blunt statement to this latter end was made in the *International Affairs* journal. Analyst Vladislav Inozemtsev contended that the St. Malo process and the Helsinki decision to create a rapid reaction capacity of 60,000 men would “inevitably decrease the importance of US-dominated NATO.”¹⁷⁹

Yet, the common declaration between Russia and the alliance in February 2000 suggested that Moscow was looking for a normalization of the relationship to NATO. As suggested above, Russia wanted to “go slow” on this, however, and not rush into restoring a full-fledged relationship within the framework of the PJC. A major condition was “full assurance that the alliance will not allow a violation of the Founding Act between Russia and NATO [i.e. references to the UN Charter].”¹⁸⁰ Still, during the summer of 2000, a relatively wide agenda was opened, including discussions on combating terrorism, proliferation and crisis management. Officially, Moscow formulated this policy to the end that all states on the European continent should be included in a common security structure. Hence, “Russia believes that the formation of a NATO-centric system is erroneous.” On the other hand, this did not mean that “we tend to ignore or not fully appreciate the role of NATO in European affairs”. Indeed, Ivanov maintained: “Russia has made considerable efforts to transform our contacts with the Alliance into a substantial element in the European system of security and stability [by signing the Founding Act].”¹⁸¹

Russian research communities were not in agreement on the development of NATO. Those supporting the multipolar point of departure tended to see the Primakovian policies as a model for the Putin administration as well. In their analysis, the Primakovian period was the sole exception after the dissolution of the Soviet Union when Russia’s foreign policies had been consis-

179 Vladislav Inozemtsev, “The US, EU and Russia in the 21st Century”, *International Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 6, 2002, p. 131.

180 Igor Ivanov, “Regional’nye napravleniya Rossiyskoy vneshney politiki”, *Novaya Rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, op.cit. p. 135.

181 Igor Ivanov, “Rossiya i Evropa na rubezhe stoletiy”, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, op.cit. p. 178.

tent and coherent.¹⁸² More so, this perspective held that Russia had a special mission in the sense that it was by and large up to Russia's foreign policy choices whether or not Europe would transform into "larger Europe with free participation of states on equal terms [...] or status quo, with Europe as the junior partner of the US."¹⁸³ Such assertions recommended the new administration under Putin to take up the banner of an independent foreign policy – not in direct confrontation with the US – but still a policy that could serve as a counterweight against "the global arbitrariness of single states or clusters of states (such as the US and NATO) and defend the leading functions of the UN."¹⁸⁴

More detailed academic analyzes of the European security architecture and Russia's possible choices had a different vantage point. Again, the volume written by Moshes and Danilov made more explicit references to the tightly coupled network of West European and transatlantic institutions. To be sure, the volume did not harbor any illusions as to Russia's capacity to influence the development of the European security architecture. On the contrary, Russia could lean back and watch how the European system itself developed along certain inherent conflicting lines. Hence:

The mutual violation of this division of labor looks like a paradox, as the military bloc NATO on the one hand is becoming a political organization and the peaceful European Union is "militarized" on the other. [...] In a strategic perspective this process is in complete harmony with Russia's interests. First, how paradoxical it may seem, this "militarization" will facilitate a demilitarization of international relations, since the military dimension of the EU will play a supportive role in the EU's complex security policy. [...] Secondly, a strengthening of the role and responsibilities of the EU/WEU would strengthen the perspectives for cooperation [reciprocity] between Russia and the West in the sphere of security.
185

The argument of reciprocity was central, in so far as the analysts maintained that the OSCE would be an uncertain foundation for a proactive Russian security strategy in Europe. As suggested above, they called for the need to depart from the "blind alley" of the OSCE strategy, asserting that this would only imply further back-peddalling for Russia's policy in Europe. Opening a dialogue on the ESDP would – on the other hand – put Russia in position with regard to future developments, and hence, Russia's policies would be less reactive. Moreover, a more proactive and security-oriented relationship with the EU would also lead Russia out of the blind alley of having to accept and rely too heavily on NATO in the post-Kosovo period. Thus, without excluding the OSCE and NATO, Russia should pursue a diversification of its policies in the European vector:

This will make it possible to conduct an active and not a passive policy, and also to influence important European processes by cooperating with the EU/WEU.

182 Zhurkin et al. *Evropa v mnogopolyarnom mire*, Moscow Ekslibris Press, 2000, p. 42.

183 Ibid. pp. 41–42.

184 Ibid. p. 44.

185 Dmitry Danilov and Arkadiy Moshes, *Strukturizatsiya prostranstva bezopasnosti na zapade i vostokey Evropy*, op.cit. p. 64.

This political course will in itself not imply a cooling down of relations with the US and NATO [...] And there should be no reason to harbor illusions that the Western system is a system of counterweights, where a strengthening of the “European” weight implies to weaken the American one.¹⁸⁶

In sum, this position suggested that Russia should not nurture any illusions that it would be possible to “divide” NATO. Still, the analysis seemed to suggest that the EU could play a role as a softer version of NATO, thereby removing some of the inherent Russian misperceptions of NATO. The argument went that “Russian society does not fear a militarized EU and the Russian public opinion and elite do not have a negative perception of the EU, which stands out in sharp contrast to NATO.”¹⁸⁷ Moreover, as Dmitry Danilov asserted: “Russia has made it clear that its attitude to the enlargement of NATO and the strengthening of military activities in NATO have nothing in common with Russia’s attitude to the enlargement of the EU and its ‘militarization’.”¹⁸⁸

This argument is launched numerous other places, but does – however intriguing – still not deal with the issue of capacities and the political issue of what an independent EU in the field of crisis management would imply in the relationship with Russia. Russian researchers pursued a strategy that aimed at filling the institutional void in Russia–Western Europe relations, but the proposed trilateral configuration offered little in terms of institutional leverage. Moreover, it was not clear what kind of institutions would emerge on the basis of a tighter dialogue. The Paris summit had offered consultations on security issues, but no institutional framework beyond the PCA. What is clear is the fact that the Russian research community did not see any possible way for Russia to use the EU as leverage on other institutions, such as NATO, or the US.

4.3. Cooperation at Arm’s Length: The Problem of ESDP

Russian officials had approached the Paris summit by listing certain main questions concerning the development of the ESDP. This cautious approach materialized in an optimistic Russian policy succeeding the summit. Speaking in Berlin on November 25, 2000, Ivanov stated that the Paris summit had “entailed important principal agreements in this field [the Europeans aspirations for providing for their own security].” Moreover, Russia and the EU should:

[...] together study possible contributions from Russia to operations by the European Union in crisis management. Of course, we need to work jointly to form an appropriate legal framework and mechanisms for dealing with our respective interests.¹⁸⁹

As stated above, Russia’s interests were confined to defining the geographical area of Petersburg operations, possible linkages between third countries

186 Ibid. p. 109.

187 Ibid. p. 110.

188 Dmitry Danilov, “Zadumchivost’ iz kotoroy pora i vyyti”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, October 2000.

189 Igor Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit. p. 215.

and the EU in Petersberg operations and in securing strict commitment to the UN Charter.¹⁹⁰ Russian foreign policy officials repeatedly focused on these interests, also during 2001. Speaking on the “strategic” nature of Russia–EU relations in April 2001, Ivanov once again suggested that Russia and the EU had made substantial progress on the issue of European security, but still he called for more concrete results. The objective of the CFSP and the ESDP should be “the strengthening of stability and mutual trust, and also strict adherence to the UN Charter”, he maintained. Moreover:

Now we must make the ideas that are promoted in this document [the Paris summit Appendix] more concrete and translate them to the area of practical co-operation. In particular, Russia is prepared to cooperate with the EU to strengthen stability and security on our continent, among other things by elaborating the parameters of future crisis management operations with participation from future European rapid reaction forces.¹⁹¹

The need to clarify the rules was repeated also elsewhere. Institute of Europe researcher Dmitry Danilov identified four aspects of “common interests”, through which Russia’s president could move away from the tendency to simply await developments in European affairs and move from a “reactive foreign policy, to an assertive one”.¹⁹² First, Russia should utilize the opportunity to engage in a conceptual discourse on European security institutions, European security at large and the ESDP. This would involve elaborating the parameters for use of military power. Secondly, both parties should define technical areas for concrete military and technological cooperation that would help the EU overcome inherent limitations on military capacities; thirdly, Russia should be allowed to take part in discussing scenarios for participation in Petersberg operations and fourthly, since the EU underlined “civilian” tasks in crisis management, possibilities for cooperation in civilian crisis management should be explored.¹⁹³

Hence, both research circles and official policies pulled in the same direction. Yet, as policies played out, beginning rapprochement would reveal differences in interests. There are indications that the EU and Russia were discussing several aspects of the emerging security relationship during the spring of 2001. Igor Ivanov stated on April 6, 2001 after a meeting with Javier Solana in Moscow that the EU and Russia had an excellent dialogue on security issues. More so, the minister of foreign affairs was reportedly satisfied with the level of negotiations. Solana met with the minister of the interior, Vladimir Rushailo, and the minister of defense, former Secretary of the Security Council, Sergey Ivanov. Even declared hard-liner Leonid Ivashov announced to the press that talks were on “conflict prevention and joint peacekeeping operations on the Balkans.”¹⁹⁴

To be sure, these talks took place on the background of an escalation of the crisis in FYROM, and Russia framed these events as a large-scale crisis reaching from the Balkans to the Caucasus and Central Asia. Igor Ivanov

¹⁹⁰ See also Clelia Rontonnyanni, “So far, so Good? Russia and the ESDP”, op.cit. p. 814.

¹⁹¹ Igor Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit. p. 230.

¹⁹² Dmitry Danilov, “Zadumchivost’ iz kotoroy pora i vyyti”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, October 2000.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ “Solanu prinyali v MIDe, Sovbeze i Minoborony”, *NeGa*, April 6, 2001.

had hence in March announced that Russia would not “stand on the sideline with regard to events on the Balkans”, and that “Moscow’s task now consists in convincing the world that the situation in Macedonia is only a part of a larger war from the Philippines to Indonesia, the Caucasus and the Balkans.”¹⁹⁵

Whether these circumstances contributed to cooling off the dialogue is hard to estimate. Dov Lynch observes at any rate: “Russia was informed about EU policies during the crisis in Macedonia but had no say in the development of European policy.”¹⁹⁶ What is clear is that expectations reached a certain peak in 2001. Indeed, other researchers have highlighted the March 23, 2001 meeting as a central milestone, where Moscow tried to engage the ESDP. As analyzed above, Moscow tried to mediate in the internal political standoff in rump-Yugoslavia in September 2000. Although not successful, this attempt, combined with the partial progress in the EU–Russia security dialogue in October 2000, may have prompted a hope that the EU would attain a more central security role on the Balkans with Russia as a co-sponsor.

Russian analyst Vladimir Baranovsky suggests as much. In his analysis, the March 23 meeting took place on the background of US rejection of sending additional forces to the Balkans, and emerging EU ambitions to provide a separate CESDP force.¹⁹⁷ Baranovsky notes that President Boris Traikovsky of Macedonia also attended the meeting, and that CFSP envoy to Macedonia, Francois Lyotard, raised the issue in Moscow in September 2001. Finally, he suggests: “this was the first of when Russia-CESDP interaction could have been translated into practice.”¹⁹⁸ Indeed, also Baranovsky suggests that the major reason for this was the fact that the Europeans were “technically and politically unprepared” for this, and that Russia’s troublesome relationship to NATO was the single most important technicality that hampered closer interaction.

Realities may have intercepted with policies even at an earlier stage. By May 2001 and the EU–Russia summit in Moscow, the initial optimism that had characterized research communities was substituted by a more tempered analysis of the actual prospects for a closer interaction between Russia and the EU in the security field. Institute of Europe analyst Dmitry Danilov even suggested that the EU and Russia had switched places in the ongoing debate on the ESDP. Whereas Russia initially had reacted somewhat reluctantly to the ESDP process and held a rather vague position, Russia was now “struggling to maximize the level of cooperation, whereas the EU does not reciprocate.”¹⁹⁹ Danilov identified several issues as being problematic, among other things the level of consultations. Russia was seeking consultations that were equal in scope to those of NATO – a proposal the EU refused in fear of jeopardizing the ESDP. Moreover:

195 “Ul’timaturno nasmeshil boevikov”, *NeGa*, March 22 2001.

196 Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, op.cit. p. 66.

197 Vladimir Baranovsky, *Russia’s Attitudes Towards the EU: Political Aspects*, op.cit. p. 117.

198 Ibid.

199 Dmitry Danilov, “Ob isskustve uderzhivat’ soseda na rasstoyanii vytyanutoy ruki”, *Dipkur’er-NG*, May 24, 2001.

Russia is stubbornly proposing to Brussels first to define the geographic scope of future Petersberg operations, secondly to take on the obligation to use military power only to use military force with a UN mandate. The Europeans are softly contending that let us first of all create these forces and only afterwards define where and how we will use them.²⁰⁰

This assessment was not entirely negative to future developments of EU–Russia relations within the security field. In fact, the analyst viewed the “sincere wish of the Swedish government to develop the dynamics opened by the Paris summit” as a positive indication that a partnership *could* develop.²⁰¹ Yet, institutional developments were not favorable with regard to Russia’s (and even the EU’s) chances to embark on deepening the relationship. The EU was in fact anticipating a solution to the deadlock over access to NATO resources in Nice, Danilov maintained, and Turkey’s blocking of this in Nice 2001 hampered a development of the relationship. Hence:

Can Moscow really count on serious movement with regard to the EU’s position on developing a partnership with Russia in conflict management while the Union has not succeeded in landing a contract from NATO on future European operations? This is impossible, even technically. [...] But what is even more important is the fact that the Europeans do not want to irritate their transatlantic partners by excessive rapprochement with Moscow.²⁰²

Hence, if the political climate was conducive to a rapprochement between the EU and Russia, there were certain obstacles that hampered closer cooperation. Russian analysts came to consider these as first and foremost linked to the NATO–EU nexus. This position was not one that emerged from the preconceived suggestion that Russia could encourage the EU to take steps that would imply greater distance to NATO. Rather on the contrary, analysts seemed to interpret the non-event of closer cooperation between the EU and Russia in this field as a product of certain political and structural limitations inherent in the EU.

On the other hand, Russian analysts also maintained that Russia was not ready for a closer cooperation with the EU in this field. Baranovsky suggests that “there was (and still is) a need to recognize that military-related cooperation with the EU is simply not feasible without restoring interaction with NATO”.²⁰³ Moreover, speaking in Brussels in October 2001, Dmitriy Danilov suggested that Russia was not ready to meet the EU process, and that the debate on possible interaction and cooperation was confined to academic circles only.²⁰⁴ Russia could not expect to gain militarily on cooperating with the ESDP. The crux of the matter was more that of playing a considerable role, Danilov asserted.

200 Ibid.

201 Ibid.

202 Ibid.

203 Ibid. p. 118.

204 Dmitry Danilov, “A Russian Perspective”, *The EU’s Rapid Reaction Capability, ESF Working paper* no. 4, 2001, p. 18.

There are three general motifs that seem to be crucial in explaining Russia's attitude. First, Russia's is interested in increasing the EU's political weight, which is consistent with Russia's concept of a multipolar world. Secondly, this would increase the potential for a two-sided strategic partnership, which is considered by Russia as especially important for its integration into Greater Europe. Thirdly, the increasing EU autonomy in foreign and security policy would bring new opportunities for the latter to reach its security aims and strengthen its own voice in Europe.²⁰⁵

This development suggests several things. First, that Russia's priorities within the foreign policy and security field were not substantially altered by the comprehensive internal discourse on the Western security architecture in Europe and the attempt to address the ESDP. Russian analysts may have harbored certain expectations with regard to possible compensation for the decline in institutional powers and also called for new institutional arrangements. Secondly, the traditional perspective of damage limitation and realist assumptions that Russia wanted to secure a multipolar world was, according to liberal researchers, central in understanding Moscow's position. Clearly, researchers assumed that Russia had more to gain from pronouncing willingness to cooperate than from remaining passive and receptive to changes in the European security debate. In the final analysis, however, the suggestion that Russia would "strengthen its voice in Europe" implied that focus would be on security gains and the overall perspective was to stall a NATO-centered security system in Europe.

This said, it is clear, however, that the internal debate in Russia on the Western security architecture in many aspects departed from the overriding perspective of "wedge-driving" – that is, dividing Europe and the US. In fact, most assessments seemed to coalesce with the assertions made by Moshes and Danilov that Russia – being marginalized from the Western security debate – would still, and independently of whether or not the Putin administration chose a proactive policy – only be an observer of the developments in Europe. Choosing the "European" path would certainly make Russia a more visible player in Europe, but not necessarily result in direct access, let alone leverage on European developments.

The degree of overlap with official policies on this particular instance is an open question, however. Clearly, Russia had approached the EU in a conditional manner. After the Paris summit Russian officials had not only suggested that the security dialogue should be institutional, but also at a level that paralleled the institutions that Russia had with NATO.²⁰⁶ This policy more than suggested that Russia perceived the EU as a possible contender to NATO and that an institutionalization of the security dialogue with the EU should be sculpted in a manner that supported a further drifting apart in transatlantic relations.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 21.

²⁰⁶ Dmitry Danilov, "Ob isskustve uderzhivat' soseda na rasstoyanii vytyanutoy ruki", *Dipkur'er-NG*, May 24 2001.

5. Linking up to Europe: The EU and NATO in Russia's Security Debate after September 11

The former chapter concludes that Russian policy-making circles contributed significantly to raise the awareness of the EU as an alternative interlocutor for Russia in the field of security. Expectations that the EU–Russia dialogue initiated at the Paris summit would transform into a genuine cooperation reached a climax in 2001 and ebbed out as it became evidently clear that the EU would not link up too closely with Russia in regional crisis management. The limitations of the dialogue were also evident. Russia wanted new institutions and an institutional dialogue, while the EU maintained that the ESDP was only in its beginning phase.

There is hardly a study of Russian security thinking that does not conceive of September 11 as a watershed in Russia's relationship to the West,²⁰⁷ and the following chapter will analyze perceptions after September 11. This division line indicates that there has been a substantial change in Russia's priorities vis-à-vis the EU and NATO succeeding the attack on the World Trade Center. On the one hand, the terrorist attacks have evoked notions of a paradigmatic change in global security affairs – a change that by default should lead to a closer cooperation between Russia and the Western security institutions. The Russian debate took these events into consideration and conceptualized Russia as an inevitable partner in transatlantic relations.

On the other hand, the discourse has developed around central ambiguities that have been accentuated further. Russian policy-makers have still called for comprehensive triangular or bilateral security arrangements in Europe and have voiced uncandid disappointment over the fact that the EU–Russia dialogue on these issues has stagnated. At the bottom line, the September 11 events most certainly highlighted the need for a further rapprochement between Russia and the West – meaning the US, the EU and NATO. Simultaneously, the Russian discourse did not depart substantially from earlier assertions that the EU in many ways was an incomplete actor in the field of security and that institutionalizing the relationship with NATO presented certain difficulties for Russia.

5.1. Hyper-terrorism: An Agenda for Further Rapprochement?

If the Kosovo crisis had informed the Russian policy-making community that Russia was without any say whatsoever in European security affairs, September 11 evoked a feeling that Russia still had something to contribute with in the fight against international terrorism. According to deputy chairman of the Duma's Defense Committee, Aleksey Arbatov, "participation in the war against terrorism is the main thing that Russia can offer the West in its further integration into Europe."²⁰⁸ Similarly, a report on the relationship between the EU and Russia voiced: "Russia's role in shaping the antiterrorist

207 See for instance Oksana Antonenko, "Putin's Gamble", *Survival*, vol. 43, no.4, 2001–02.
 208 Aleksey Arbatov "'Superterrorizm' kak glavnyaya ugroza evropeyskoy bezopasnosti", *Evropbezopasnost': Est' li v ney mesto dlya Rossii*, Russia in United Europe Report, Moscow 2002, p. 11.

coalition has created new opportunities for Russia's cooperation with the European Union and the USA."²⁰⁹

Clearly, the attack underpinned a sense of paradigmatic change in global security affairs that was duly noted in policy-making and research communities. Indeed, it spurred the notion that Russia did in fact face a similar "window of opportunity" vis-à-vis the Western community, as did the West. The Council for Foreign and Security Policies noted in a May 2002 report on Russia's security that:

September 11 ended the period of 'celebration' of the end of the Cold War, during which most capitals, including Moscow, allowed themselves inaction with regard to the new security challenges. As civilizational and social differences sharpen along the North-South axis the disadvantages of this situation have become evident. Russia and the West have not overcome the heritage of the Cold War, but remain 'semi-enemies and semi-partners'.²¹⁰

The report stressed that the moment was ripe for leaving this conundrum, and that the realignment of Putin behind the US in Central Asia had offered at least a "theoretical possibility" that Russia could leave the deadlock and develop into a full-fledged partner of the Western security community.²¹¹ Central prerequisites for this, the report suggested, should be to develop the dialogue with the US on strategic questions, while focusing on the energy dialogue and the political dialogue with the EU.

Although the SVOP report offered several new options for Russia, it still revealed that Russia faced a Western security system that still was lingering under the effect of the Kosovo crisis. The OSCE was, according to the SVOP report, "marginalized and silently declining." Moreover, Russia had "during the last 12 years erroneously made the organization the center piece for securing its political and security interests in Europe."²¹² On the other hand, Russia could utilize the opportunity provided by the September 11 events to address the EU's security dimension, thereby fuelling the political dialogue. Russia should seek this option not the least for political reasons, although it was unclear what the EU would actually achieve in this field.

The events of September 11 have spurred the discussion on activating the so-called European policies in the field of security and defense. But this discussion is only in its opening phase. These plans may be hindered by conscious interference from the outside, as well as the fact that this concept is directed towards repulsing old threats or marginal challenges (such as instability in Macedonia), and hence may be rendered obsolete. At the same time Russia is objectively interested in developing the cooperation with the EU in the field of security, at least

²⁰⁹ *Russia and the European Union: options for deepening strategic partnership*, Russia in United Europe Report, Moscow 2002, p. 39.

²¹⁰ "Novye vyzovy bezopasnosti i Rossiya", *Sovet po vneshney i oboronnoy politike*, May 2002.

²¹¹ Indeed, Russia had been quick to offer support and alignment with the US in the war on terrorism. In late September, Putin offered intelligence sharing, the opening of Russian airspace for US planes, assistance in help and rescue operations, military assistance to the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, and endorsement to former Soviet Central Asian states of logistic support to the US operation against Taliban.

²¹² "Novye vyzovy bezopasnosti i Rossiya", *op.cit.* p. 11.

for political reasons, but also in order to combat new threats: terrorism, drug smuggling, trafficking, criminality and other internal European problems.²¹³

This lengthy quotation suggested that the Russian policy-making community had not been especially impressed by the performance of the ESDP. Whereas a possible EU mission in Macedonia had been a primary focus for Russia in discussing the ESDP in 2001, the SVOP report more than indicated that the Russian political and research community did not view the ESDP as particularly effective. Moreover, talks with the EU had imbued the Russian research community with a greater sense of realism concerning what the EU actually could offer in terms of security.

Similar sentiments were reflected also in discussions on European security following the September 11 events. In pro-European foreign and security circles, the attack on the WTC was conceptualized as marking the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the era of hyper-terrorism. In deputy chairman of the Committee of Defense, Aleksey Arbatov's phrase, hyper-terrorism implied: "international terrorism plus WMD."²¹⁴ Although offering a platform for orienting Russia towards Europe in order to boost further integration, this view was coupled with a tint of conditionality. Initially Russia and the Western community faced similar risks connected with ethnic and religious conflicts in Europe, organized crime, illegal migration and smuggling of weapons and narcotics. Yet, the absence of a joint strategy could imply that single states would combat terrorism in violation of international law. Expressing a preference for the EU and disapproving US unilateralism, Arbatov stated that

In this sense, Europe, that is, the European Union is by default substantially closer to Russia in formulating such a common strategy, than the US. This is due to the fact that the EU acts multilaterally, adopts common rules for conduct and adequate solutions, however complicated they might seem. All of this brings Europe and Russia closer together.²¹⁵

Although a "preferred partner", Arbatov maintained that the EU was not able to go far in developing genuine cooperation with Russia. For one thing, the "unclear relationship between the military bloc of the EU and NATO is still an object of heated discussions", Arbatov contended: "As long as these relations are not worked out, Europe cannot go far in cooperating with the Russian Federation."²¹⁶ Analyst Sergey Karaganov offered an even more direct assessment in suggesting that the EU was suffering under a complete lack of perspective vis-à-vis combating not only the new challenges, but also in defining the scope of Petersberg operations.

The absence of a distinct European voice in security affairs and the lack of a clearly defined agenda create problems for Russia in the dialogue with Europe on military-political questions and security. They propose to cooperate in peace-

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Aleksey Arbatov "'Superterrorizm' kak glavnyaya ugroza evropeyskoy bezopasnosti", *Evropbezopasnost': Est' li v ney mesto dlya Rossii*, op.cit. p.15.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 17.

keeping, but do not say where. They propose to prepare for joint operations, but they do not say what kind of operations.²¹⁷

In the upshot, Russian policy-makers saw the actual prospects of a closer association between the EU and Russia in the sphere of security as warranted, yet not likely to happen. Earlier assertions that the EU in some way could emerge as a preferred partner at the expense of NATO, was substituted by emerging realism. First, Russian policy-makers were uncertain about whether or not the EU could deliver within the field of defense and security. Secondly, the EU seemed in fact to prepare for the challenges of yesterday and had no clear agenda in combating hyper-terrorism. Thirdly, insufficient institutionalization of the relationship between the EU and Russia – that is a lingering PCA agreement and largely symbolic mutual strategies – reflected a standstill in EU–Russia relations that could result in a new line of division in Europe.

This did not imply, however, that the idea of tighter coordination and integration with the West was abandoned altogether. Indeed, the SVOP saw no other viable alternative for Russia than maximum integration with the West. In fact, the report voiced that Russia should enter into a strategic union with the West and secure: “maximum rapprochement with the West, avoid confrontation and defend only vital interests.”²¹⁸ This also involved that the SVOP – with the exception of Aleksey Arbatov – recommended a revision of earlier “wedge-driving” strategies. According to SVOP recommendations, Russia should – obviously for reasons of being the weaker part in US–Russia relations – seek to develop a bilateral security dialogue with the EU following the French proposal [a reference to the French initiative from October 2000] on a tight security dialogue between Russia and the EU. In this perspective:

A renewal of the French idea to create a security union [sic] between the EU and Russia on matters pertaining to terrorism, crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration and so forth should be secured. [...] Joint action and consultation with the EU on a broad number of questions in the bilateral relationship should be intensified. [...] In the event of increased differences in the approach of Western Europe and the US, Russia should not play on these differences as earlier, but attempt to maximize influence while fulfilling the role as an integrator of the Euro-Atlantic security space.²¹⁹

Playing the role as integrator of the Euro-Atlantic security space would – among other things – imply that Russian policy-makers held a different and more proactive view of questions pertaining to NATO’s development. Enhancing the dialogue with the EU on central soft-security issues would certainly not be an obstacle for this. Indeed, the SVOP report proposed to “make active use of the Committee NATO at 20 to gain concrete experience in cooperation within a limited field of questions.”²²⁰

217 Sergey Karaganov, “Novye vyzovy evropeyskoy bezopasnosti”, *Evropbezopasnost’: Est’ li v ney mesto dlya Rossii*, op.cit. p.22.

218 “Novye vyzovy bezopasnosti i Rossiya”, op.cit. p. 16.

219 Ibid. p. 19.

220 Ibid. p. 18.

Yet, the “NATO at 20” structure activated certain inherent ambiguities in Russia’s relationship to Europe. Indeed, as the government newspaper *Rossiyskaya gazeta* suggested, the question was simply “How much NATO?”²²¹ Would further institutionalization with NATO imply that the heritage of the in Russia’s view ineffective PJC would be surmounted? Could NATO actually absorb a partner stretching from Europe to Asia?

5.2. “NATO at 20”: Limitations and Ambiguities

Dov Lynch has characterized the relationship between Russia and NATO as being marked by three distinct periods. The post-Kosovo period of sharp protest against NATO centrism in Europe ended with the invitation of Lord Robertson to Moscow in February 2000. The second period lasted until September 11, 2001, and was distinguished by a pragmatic resumption of the political dialogue with the PJC. The third period is characterized by a widening of the NATO-Russia agenda and a new institutionalized relationship with the “NATO at 20” structure.²²²

As mentioned above, during these different periods, Russia’s response to NATO was never one of blind submission to the facts of NATO enlargement, let alone to NATO’s campaign in Kosovo. The Concept of Russia’s Foreign Policies voiced that “real and constructive cooperation between NATO and Russia is possible only if it is founded on mutual respect for the parties’ interests and unconditional fulfilment of the obligations that the parties have taken on themselves.”²²³ In Moscow parlance, this had been the policy of Russia also during the Kosovo crisis, a crisis that was conceptualized as being in violation of the Founding Act. According to Igor Ivanov: “In this [Kosovo] situation, Russia did not isolate from NATO, nor did it engage in conflict with NATO. Russian diplomacy pursued a constructive path [...]”²²⁴

The Kosovo crisis had activated a central dilemma for Russia. Russia was not able to stall developments in Europe, or to gain a viable foothold in European security structures. Hence, Putin’s resumption of the dialogue with NATO and his pragmatic acceptance of matter-of-fact-like developments such as NATO enlargement indicate that Russia sees itself as well served by being a part of a dialogue, rather than being on the fringes of the Western security architecture. By late 2001 this position had evolved into a more pragmatic view on NATO enlargement and possible areas of cooperation between Russia and the alliance. Commenting on the contents of the PJC meeting in Brussels on December 7, 2001, Igor Ivanov stated that Russia and NATO, by entering into the “NATO at 20” format, had initiated a radical turn in NATO–Russia relations. Concerning the enlargement issue, Ivanov contended: “This question was not raised today. Every state has a sovereign right to enter into this or that organization.” Still: “We believe that in the

²²¹ *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, November 16, 2002.

²²² Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, op.cit. p. 33ff.

²²³ Igor Ivanov, *Novaya Rossiyskaya diplomatiya*, op.cit. p. 226.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 57.

current situation, where we are facing the challenge from international will not strengthen the security of the member states or future members.”²²⁵

Following in this vein, Russian policy-making and research communities have not refrained from stressing that Russia would like to have an effect on the “NATO at 20” agenda, including questions that are labelled ultimate Russian concerns. Sergey Karaganov termed the “Blair plan” as a structure through which Russia could “actively cooperate with Europe and NATO,”²²⁶ although the mandate of NATO was a limited one. Moreover, since the question of NATO enlargement was not on the “NATO at 20” agenda, Russia would be well served by keeping a semi-institutionalized structure through which the 19+1 structure should still be active. Hence, Karaganov suggested that Russia should retain a similar possibility for holding back certain themes from the agenda with NATO.

For Russia it would be optimal to keep two structures – “19+1” and “NATO at 20.” The mechanism “19+1” could perhaps discuss CBM issues and limitations on military activities of NATO in new member countries. This structure should pursue a clear aim – to avoid that NATO enlargement – which is practically inevitable – turns into a factor that complicates the relationship between Russia and the West. [...] At the same time, the mechanism “NATO at 20” should be put into effect to boost cooperation between Russia and NATO, for example on combating hyper-terrorism, proliferation of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons and civilian defense.²²⁷

As suggested by Karaganov, Russian policy-makers were still lending an ear to the post-enlargement situation and the distribution of conventional weapons in Europe after the admission of new members. As suggested by Aleksey Arbatov, “it is easy [for NATO] to repeat that it [enlargement] is not in violation of Russian interests, but still more difficult to adopt deep-going measures in cutting down on conventional weapons in Europe and adopt an obligation not to station NATO forces on the territory of new members.”²²⁸ In a collective work by the Committee “Russia in United Europe”, this point was made even more explicit. According to this report, which took on the terminology of the paradigmatic post-September 11 changes in global security and echoed concerns that Russia and Europe were slow in responding to the threats, the sheer strength of NATO was a concern with regard to enlargement.

[...] the problems that we inherited from the Cold War and that have manifested themselves in the relations between Russia and the West still remain unresolved. For Russia, it is first of all the problem of the two million-strong armed forces

225 Igor Ivanov, “Vystuplenie na press-konferentsii po itogam zasedaniya Sovmestnogo postoyannogo soveta Rossiya-NATO”, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii v epokhu globalizatsii*, op.cit. p. 248.

226 Sergey Karaganov, “Novye vyzovy evropeyskoy bezopasnosti”, op.cit. p. 23.

227 Ibid. p. 24.

228 Aleksey Arbatov, “Rossiya, Evropa i SshA: virtual’ny troeugol’nik”, in NATO, *Rossiya i Evropeyskiy Soyuz*, Russia in United Europe Report, Moscow 2003, p. 29.

and NATO's enormous arsenal of conventional arms, which acquire special significance in view of NATO's expansion to the East.²²⁹

In summarizing the new challenges, the report voiced old concerns of Moscow that limitations should be put on the presence of NATO forces in new member countries, that nuclear zones should be created in the center of Europe [Kaliningrad and Belarus] and that these issues should be the primary focus for NATO–Russia cooperation. The report also offered a more traditional corollary to the European Union in suggesting that “the European Union should also draw conclusions from the contradictory relations existing between Russia and NATO in the past ten years. [...] Inclusion of Russia in the sphere of security and defense (Russia's participation in the Petersburg missions, military and technical cooperation) cannot be regarded as an act of EU charity. Rather, Russia with its significant intellectual potential, advanced military technologies may become a vital partner of the European Union.”²³⁰

The inherent ambiguity in these perceptions could be understood in a realist versus institutionalist perspective. In conceptualizing the relationship between Russia and Europe the Russian research and policy-making community distinguished between two primary positions in the internal discourse following the September 11 events. On the one hand, Russian *derzhavniki* would maintain that the prospects of Russia integrating into the Western security community were limited for geopolitical reasons. Russia should primarily pursue national interests due to the fact that “the possibility of integrating Russia into NATO is highly limited. For the US it is preferable that Russia remains an external partner to NATO. For leading European powers a Russia inside NATO is imbued with several problems, first and foremost that their partial weight in NATO would decrease.”²³¹ On the other hand, Russian *liberals* stressed that Russia would be in a better position to influence European affairs if linking up with the Western security community. Playing the role as a primary integrator of the Euroatlantic security space, Russia could increase its role in European affairs and also overcome limitations put on the economic relationship between the EU and Russia. Hence:

They [those who favor integration] have a positive attitude to cooperation with NATO in the “NATO at 20” structure and maintain that Russia should submit to the fact that it will have a voice equal to that of a NATO member inside the Alliance. NATO is considered a structure that Russia should participate in even under the hegemony of the US, since there is a possibility that Russia, in cooperating with the European countries in NATO, could have a disciplinary effect on the US.²³²

By 2002 this position seemed to have gained the upper hand in the foreign and security policy community in Russia – at least in SVOP circles. In fact,

²²⁹ *Russia and the European Union: options for deepening strategic partnership*, op.cit. p. 43–44.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 45.

²³¹ *Obshchiy arshin. Eksperty o budushchem Rossii*, Russia in United Europe Report, Moscow 2002, p. 11.

²³² *Ibid.* p. 9.

the SVOP report on Russia and international security from May 2002 maintained that although many members of SVOP had recommended not signing the Founding Act from 1997, this position was altered for several reasons. On the one hand, the creation of the “NATO at 20” would certainly follow the path of the Founding Act in making NATO enlargement an easier affair for the Alliance, the report stated. On the other hand, Russia should not repeat earlier failures, such as refraining from influencing on NATO’s agenda, while still having to reconcile itself with NATO enlargement.

Although there is a theoretical possibility that new conditions are underway for transforming NATO into a security alliance for combating the threats of the 21st century and operations outside the area of responsibility, this process can be stalled by institutional inertia and the US not wanting to tie its hands by taking on additional obligations. At any rate, it is worthwhile for Russia to utilize the new possibilities and engage in cooperation with NATO by pushing its agenda inside the “NATO at 20.” It’s impermissible to repeat the experience with “19+1” when we failed to influence on the agenda while simultaneously legitimizing the further enlargement of the Alliance.²³³

This approach echoed the often-repeated assertion in Russia’s policy circles that NATO was a fact, and that Russia could do little to remove this fact. Even when the Primakovian approach permeated Russian security thinking, Russian officials had been careful not to suggest that NATO should cease to exist as a security alliance. The sole point had been, as observed by Dov Lynch, that NATO should not be the only security organization in Europe, let alone the most fundamental one.²³⁴

Although this current was by far the most central one among Russian liberals, reflections were made also over the eventual weakening of NATO as an institution. Needless to say, this prospect did not worry Russian policy-makers as much as a prosperous, enlarged NATO, which dealt with Russia at arm’s length. Again, Russian policy-makers threw in the US-Russia card in this part of the analysis as to indicate that any development that weakened the separate identity of Europe in security affairs actually would not be to the detriment of US interests or Russian interests. In Aleksey Arbatov’s phrase: “the attitude between Europe and the US is further complicated by European concerns that the US is leaving Europe and that NATO is marginalized as a security organization for Europe. [...] How strange it may seem, Russian and US interests confluence at this point. The Americans are not concerned, since they do not worry about Europe. Russia is not concerned since NATO does not invite us, and the less important this organization, the better we will feel.”²³⁵ Sergey Karaganov made a similar point in assuming that the terrorist attacks had rendered European security organizations “dysfunctional or inadequate.”²³⁶ Hence, “while NATO has achieved most of its goals, and in the process become one of the most successful military alliances in history, it is nevertheless becoming weak and outdated.” Although prepared to back

233 “Novye vyzovy bezopasnosti i Rossiya”, op.cit. p. 12.

234 Dov Lynch, *Russia Faces Europe*, op.cit. p. 34.

235 Aleksey Arbatov, “Rossiya, Evropa i SshA: Virtual’ny troeugol’nik”, op.cit. p. 26.

236 Sergey Karaganov, “Russia, Europe and New Challenges”, *Russia in Global Affairs* no.1, 2002.

“NATO at 20”, Karaganov maintained, the Russian policy-making community was still in “doubts about NATO’s future relevance as an effective partner.”²³⁷

In the upshot, Russian assessments of the “NATO at 20” structure seemed to vacillate somewhere between the inevitable (need to cooperate with an enlarging alliance) and the possible (NATO becoming irrelevant). In this analysis, “it should not be forgotten”, Arkady Moshes asserts, “that Putin’s pragmatic stance on enlargement results from Russia’s inability to stop it, and not from reassessments of its implications.”²³⁸ In the final analysis, Moshes contended, Moscow would prefer the Alliance to be less of a military alliance, and more of a political organization. Russia’s priorities would eventually be to cultivate bilateral arrangements and security “deals” involving select partners and coalitions.

Moscow praises the NRC particularly for the fact that every state is legally represented there in an individual national capacity, not as an Alliance member. The latter emphasis encapsulates the essence of the Russian position: although interested in establishing cooperation with a certain group of states on certain security-related issues, Moscow would nevertheless not necessarily like to associate this cooperation with the main institutional vehicle of the Western security system.²³⁹

Hence, the objectives of damage limitation could be met. Association with NATO in the “NATO at 20” structure would keep the process of European security an open-ended one, and provide Moscow with the opportunity to actively strengthen its voice in European security affairs.

5.3. Cooperative Multipolarism: Ambivalence and Uncertainty

At best, Russia’s policy towards the Western security institutions is still riddled by ambivalence, although this ambivalence may be closely intertwined with the character of European institutions. In sum, the Russian policy-making community was recommending a place in Western structures basically for pragmatic reasons. Russian policy-making communities were clearly relating to the fact of NATO enlargement and also seeking to influence on the NATO agenda by proposing that Russia should utilize the full possibilities of the “NATO at 20” structure. Moreover, the suggestion that the EU should emerge as some sort of viable alternative to NATO was not widely supported. This was partly due to the fact that the ESDP was still in its nascent phase, and that the EU was more concerned about sorting out the relationship to NATO than to enter into burdensome third-party relationships.

This said it is clear that many in the research community looked to the EU to solve what was conceptualized as an emerging security void in international relations. One aspect of this was the widespread notion that security

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Arkady Moshes, “Russia and NATO: Analysis of Russian perceptions”, in Bertil Heurlin and Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (eds.) *Challenges and Capabilities. NATO in the 21st Century*, Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2003.

²³⁹ Ibid.

could become a field for closer interaction between Russia and the West. Following in this vein, the Russian research and policy-making community tended to hypertrophy security as the primary concern for the 21st century. According to Sergey Karaganov, “this aspect of foreign policy [economy] is losing significance in a world where security concerns are becoming the predominant issue.”²⁴⁰

The suggestion that Russia should play the role as an integrator of the transatlantic community was fuelled by this notion of a security void developing in the West. The weakness of Western institutions called for a new and bold approach to security to which Russia was the key, some asserted. Sergey Karaganov developed this idea explicitly by suggesting that Russia was in fact the key to a more self-sufficient EU. Hence, “it is obvious to me that the EU, by maintaining an arm’s-length relationship with Russia, is seriously weakening its own international standing, especially while international security and geopolitics are regaining priority status.”²⁴¹

Making the G-8 a forum for global security questions, Karaganov suggested, should compensate the absence of the EU as a viable partner for Russia. Moreover, new wine should be poured into the old bottles of the EU–Russia relationship. Lamenting that the “EU’s mundane foreign generates practically no new ideas”, and that the French proposal to create an internal security alliance between Russia and the EU had disappeared in the EU bureaucracy, Karaganov suggested that the EU and Russia should form a special security council.

It is also necessary to place the dialogue between EU and Russia into a new format, moving from general declarations to the discussion of concrete issues. One way to do this might be by creating a EU-Russian security council (within the framework of a broader security alliance) that would coordinate policies on, for example, WMD, terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal business activities and illegal migration.²⁴²

As suggested by Dov Lynch, such assertions may reflect the inherent need for options in Russia’s foreign policy. Russia seeks to link up with as many Western institutions as possible, and does not shun the creation of new ones. On the other hand, the creation of new forums and institutions may very well duplicate existing ones and lead to further bureaucratization of a relationship which according to Russian estimates already is burdened with excessive bureaucracy. At the bottom line, the very idea of creating an EU-Russia security council seems too reminiscent of the Primakovian proposal to make the OSCE an arena for a similar structure in Europe.

Ambivalence prevails also with regard to the nature of what Igor Ivanov recently called the multipolar world order. Apparently, the Putin administration tries to coin an alternative multipolar version to that of the Primakov doctrine. In Igor Ivanov’s phrase, “multipolarity does not imply competition, but interdependence and partnership between the various ‘building blocs’ of

240 Sergey Karaganov, “Russia, Europe and New Challenges”, *Russia in Global Affairs* no.1, 2002.

241 Ibid.

242 Ibid.

the new world order.”²⁴³ Yet, at some point the contours of this order seem to fall into a rather repetitious pattern of balance and counterbalance. Alignment with the EU and NATO does not imply membership. Moreover, Russia does not refrain from pursuing foreign policy interests.

One arena where this has spelled out is the Iraq crisis, where Russia sided with Germany and France in proposing a peaceful, UN-led resolution. According to Ivanov, “all countries are now responsible for the problems of the world and are finding new and deeper forms of international cooperation for dealing with them [new threats of hyper-terrorism]. These developments reflect an emerging multipolar order.”²⁴⁴ However, Russia does not suggest that this order in any way should resemble the clash of different cultures, let alone lead to any fundamental misunderstanding that Russia was opposing the US. On the contrary:

The preservation of a unified Euro-Atlantic community, with Russia now part of it, is of immense importance. The development of a constructive partnership between my country, Europe and the US, united by a common responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the vast Euro-Atlantic area and by a common concern for establishing a secure environment for our peoples serves this purpose.²⁴⁵

Although intriguing – at least in Russia’s view – there are no signs that an alliance with France and Germany in the Iraq question will develop into a renewal of what Russia several times has hinted to as a strategic alliance between Russia and the EU in international affairs. The Iraq crisis has certainly fuelled Russia’s multipolar version of the world, but not given Russia anything in terms of cementing the partnership with the EU. In Igor Leshukov’s view a concert between the EU and Russia would be ideal in reconstructing Iraq, but still he suggests that Russia’s moves were based more on “anti-American sentiment and a frustrated sense of national pride than the establishment of a responsible coalition with Europe based on a commonality of interests between Russia and Europe”.²⁴⁶

Moscow does not pursue this line, but seeks to engage in non-confrontational multipolarism. This implies that both the US and the EU are important partners for Russia. Speaking to Al-Jazeera, President Putin suggested that the “world cannot be unipolar by definition [...] it should be balanced and multipolar. But this does not mean that by this multipolarity we mean some kind of confrontation.”²⁴⁷ Including the EU in this perspective, Putin stressed, however, that bilateral ties to France and Germany were of special importance.

Our opinion on the overwhelming majority of questions, rather complex questions regarding Iraq, coincided with those of France and Germany. We highly value this work together and will do all we can to develop it, and not only on

²⁴³ Igor Ivanov, *Vneshnyaya politika Rossii i mir*, op.cit. p. 37.

²⁴⁴ Igor Ivanov, “New Realities in World Politics”, *Financial Times*, February 14 2003, http://www.great-britain.mid.ru/GreatBritain/pr_rel/pres3-03.htm.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ *Johnson’s Russia List*, August 20, 2003.

²⁴⁷ *Johnson’s Russia List*, October 19, 2003.

Iraq or some other crisis situation, but also with regard to our cooperation with the European Union – Germany and France are key members of the European Union. We will try to build up these relations with Germany and France on international issues in other parts of the world.²⁴⁸

This points to a certain ambivalence in Moscow with regard to the EU as a foreign and security policy actor. As under Primakov, bilateral ties to central European partners are seen as more important than a strategic dialogue with the EU. Hence, although the multipolar approach is not confrontational, it clearly departs from the assertion that bilateral and triangular ties with Germany and France can yield more direct benefits for Russia than institutionalized cooperation with the EU as such.

This may also imply that Russia would advertise for more comprehensive institutional arrangements than the existing Western security network. Moreover, although the EU and major European nations still will be central actors for Russia in pursuing the aim of non-confrontational multipolarism, institutional arrangements such as the “NATO at 20” structure and the security dialogue with the EU will make up for some of the inherent uncertainty immanent in Russia’s approach to Europe, but not for Russia’s implicit aim of defining a multipolar order based on equality and pluralism.

248 Ibid.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this report has been to analyze Russian perceptions of the EU as a security actor in the light of the interpretative approaches of damage limitation and decline in institutional powers. The findings are diverse and suggest that the Russian discourse on Europe is a pluralistic one – albeit with a specific direction – and that Russia seeks to become more coordinated with European affairs without becoming an outright member of European institutions. The Russian policy-making environment has coopted a proactive view of European security policies and the Putin administration has made the European vector in foreign policies a visible one.

As argued in this report, this was in part due to the realization that the OSCE offered limited institutional possibilities to influence on European security affairs. Addressing the ESDP would, in this perspective, enable Russia to seek new institutional arrangements with Europe and compensate for a decline in institutional powers. Russia's President chose a head-on strategy in this respect, and gave extensive attention to the security dimension of the EU. At the EU–Russia summit in May 2000, a clause was introduced in the joint statement that opened for a closer dialogue within security. This resulted in a common statement in the appendix to the Paris EU–Russia summit in October 2000. In spite of declarations, however, the EU and Russia have to all appearances failed to cooperate directly. Russia has urged the EU to define scope, geographical area and mandate for EU-operations, while the EU has maintained that the force structures have to be created first. A case in point was Russia's focus on a EU peacekeeping mission in FYROM, where policy-making communities anticipated a joint effort between the EU and Russia. In dealing with this aborted joint action, researchers have pointed either to Russia's multipolar strategy to encourage EU independence to the detriment of NATO, or Russia's reluctance to address NATO.

As suggested in this report, the reassessment of Russia's policies vis-à-vis the Western security system contains certain elements of revision of the Primakov doctrine. Cooperative multipolarism does not exclude a tighter association to the European and transatlantic system of security. Moreover, it seems clear that Russia has undergone an evolution with regard to the ESDP and CFSP of the EU. The perspective of wedge driving is not widely supported in academic circles and Russia's ability to influence on internal NATO-EU affairs is seen as limited. This said, however, the conceptualization of the EU as a preferred partner to NATO has included notions of a “demilitarization” of relations with the West. Russian analysts have also discussed the possible politization of NATO as to making the alliance less of an alliance and more of a political organization. This development, which in fact is seen as stemming not from Russia's influence, but from internal developments in the EU, is pictured as in accordance with Russian interests, and also with the multipolar perspective.

In the period after September 11, notions of a “demilitarization” of the relationship to the West seem to have stranded in the internal Russian debate. The ESDP is more of a disappointment for Russia than an option. Russian policy-makers are clearly more realistic with regard to what the EU can deliver within this field, and more prone to think in terms of seeing NATO as the institution that defines the actual reach of the ESDP. The question is,

however, whether forging relations with NATO may have emerged as a substitute for the EU strategy in the sense that Russia seeks to influence European security by entering into “NATO at 20” and hence temper US unilateralism. Although Russia apparently has left the illusion of counterbalancing the US by playing on differences between the EU and the US, entering into the “NATO at 20” may still imply a strategy to strengthen Russia’s position in Europe.

In sum, both damage limitation and decline in institutional powers offer insights into Russia’s security policies on the European arena. Short-term institutional priorities may serve long-term objectives, such as keeping the European security process as open and accessible as possible. An institutional perspective may explain why the Russian pro-European policy-making community has suggested that Russia should play the role as an inevitable partner in the transatlantic security space. The “NATO at 20” structure offers Russia an institutionalized platform in European security affairs, and a framework for debating Russian security concerns in the combatting of terrorism paradigm. The damage limitation perspective may explain why Russia conceded to NATO enlargement and why Russia has gone so far in encouraging the ESDP and also the CFSP. Hence, in Pavel Baev’s phrase, Putin “locates the main source of potential risks in US unilateralism, [...] and intends to focus his European networking on preventing it.”²⁴⁹ This certainly coalesces with a closer cooperation with NATO in “NATO at 20.” According to Russian policy-makers, this cooperation could have a modifying and balancing effect on the US. Alignment hence gives Russia the opportunity to balance, not necessarily by contrasting the ESDP and NATO, but by joining in with both processes and multiplying possible gains in the European dimension.

Hiski Haukkala has summarized emerging problems in the EU–Russia relationship as being located somewhere in between assertiveness and pragmatic cooperation from the part of Russia. “It is this new combination of Russian assertiveness and fostering of pragmatic, selective cooperation that has seemed to give the initiative, possibly also the upper hand, to Russia in the relationship.”²⁵⁰ No doubt, this will continue to riddle the European community. Russia will expectedly not refrain from underlining that there is a certain institutional void in the relationship between Europe and Russia that needs to be filled with more comprehensive institutional arrangements in order to avoid new division lines in Europe. Russia would like the EU to be part of this, but will the EU?

249 Pavel Baev, “Putin’s foreign policy agenda: post-Soviet challenges to the European orientation”, op.cit. p. 13.

250 Hiski Haukkala, “A problematic ‘strategic partnership’”, op.cit. p. 10.

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