

Conflict Studies Research Centre

The Dynamics Shaping European Security

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When 'cold war' provided the framework for defence and security in Europe, ideology not only served to define and demarcate two 'camps', it also produced considerable misunderstanding between them. Despite the fact that we now operate within a new framework, courteously termed 'partnership', ideological differences - or at least philosophical and cultural ones - continue to create misunderstanding on those occasions where interests diverge. This only stands to reason. The end of confrontation, the opening up of communication, the erosion of borders and the pervasiveness of business

have not swept history away, let alone political culture, the identities of people or even, in many cases, the character of the states in which they live. Indeed, in the absence of cold war, philosophical differences, not to say differences of interest, have come into their own in the West itself. The controversies surrounding former Yugoslavia and Iraq, not to say European Monetary Union, certainly testify to this.

Yet whereas the West's differences are understood inside the West, it is between the West and Russia (and, by extension, Russia's partners in the 'Union of the two' and the 'Community of the four') that difference is more likely to produce misunderstanding. The danger is not that such misunderstanding will lead to a 'new cold war' - for in dramatically transformed and still transforming conditions, European security is more likely to be shaped by the West's and Russia's views of themselves than by the views they hold of one another. But the danger, nevertheless, is that motives will be misjudged, trends misdiagnosed, consequences unanticipated and opportunities missed.

The dynamics most deserving of critical objective analysis are these: European integration, post-Communist change and, where Russia and many of its neighbours are concerned, the process that Boris Yel'tsin has called the 'reconstituting of Russian statehood.' It is these dynamics that are shaping Europe's character. Unless they are understood in their own terms, without ideological distortion, then (to use old ideological language) the possibility exists that 'contradictions' between them could assume an 'antagonistic' rather than an 'unantagonistic' form.

But where does ideological distortion now exist? One must surely begin with the West, where liberal internationalist perspectives have acquired an almost official, if not altogether unquestioned, status since the collapse of the Soviet Union. That this collapse stemmed from the underlying deficiencies of the 'command administrative system', rather than simply from deficient policies within it, is generally conceded. What is debatable, however, is the proposition that 'Western models of liberal democracy and market relations - not to say the civic, legal and ethical culture that underpin them - are becoming and can become the universal norm. No less debatable are the propositions that in a 'free', interdependent and global economy, national interests are destined to recede, problems will become increasingly 'common' and solutions will become increasingly financial and technical. The approach is well conveyed by the effort to find 'formulas' for NATO enlargement and the inordinate emphasis placed on 'security architecture', rather than security interests. Not only does this approach fail to be geopolitical, it risks becoming apolitical and fundamentally unhistorical as well. To be sure, this orthodoxy has its critics in the West, but an orthodoxy it is.

It is ironic that much of Russia's political, defence and security establishment re-legitimised geopolitics just at the time that the West de-legitimised it. Between late 1992 and early 1997, these propositions, too, had a nearly official status - well expressed in President Yel'tsin's declaration (to the senior staffs of the Foreign Intelligence Service on 27 April, 1994) that 'global confrontation has been replaced by a struggle for spheres of interest in geopolitics'. Geopolitical perspectives are well reflected in the widespread view that the West not only seeks to 'dominate' the former USSR but promote the disintegration of Russia itself, similarly the view that NATO enlargement is the pet project of those determined to relaunch the cold war. To be sure, in the context of socio-economic threats to the integrity of the Russian Federation - and in the wake of the Chechen war - these perspectives lack the authority and apparent coherence that they so recently possessed. Indeed, to judge by the National Security Concept approved by President Yel'tsin on 17 December, 1997, Russia now possesses a security blueprint whose dominant themes - internal and non-military challenges to security - are as post-geopolitical as those of the Western world. Yet in diverse and influential circles, geopolitical and *kto-kogo* thinking continues to obstruct lucid, objective analysis of how the West is evolving and why it behaves as it does.

### Where is the West Heading?

The beginning of wisdom is to understand that the former Soviet Union is no longer the centre of Western attention. By comparison with the cold war years, today's West is both more introverted and more global in its preoccupations. Where European integration is concerned, this introversion bears study, because differences over the timing and substance of European Union have the potential to become a security problem. At the root of these differences is a clash between two models of 'the West'. The first, influential in Britain, Scandinavia but also amongst sizeable minorities in France and Germany, is premised not only on a community of liberal democracies, but a community of sovereign states, co-operating intimately and energetically on the basis of common values, mutual respect and fundamental national interests. The second, reflected in the Treaty of Rome itself, tends towards a different vision: the political union of Europe.

Although the latter vision is a powerful one throughout western Europe, its driving motor has usually been the Franco-German relationship. From the 1950's onwards, the basis of this relationship has been a mutual fear of Germany. These fears have only advanced since German unification shifted Germany's centre of gravity east.

It is an open secret that France, Germany's principal partner, had long been a silent opponent of German unification, Germany's principal aim. It stands to reason, therefore, that France has had its share of ambivalence about the corollary of German unification: the end of Europe's division between east' and west' and the rebirth of central Europe'. In a Europe of nation states, who is to integrate (or at worst dominate) central Europe? Not France. If Germany is not to do so, then Europe must do so, and Germany must be locked into' it. And until Europe' exists - an integrated, supranational Europe with its own defence and foreign policy (and indeed its own currency) - the integration of central Europe should be approached with caution. On the other hand, ties with Russia must be expanded with vigour. For given the inevitable - a special relationship between Germany and Russia - France requires its own special relationship, both to offset German influence in Moscow and maintain French influence in Berlin.

In Germany - where unification has revived the country's anxiety about itself - perceptions are, with one exception, the mirror image of these. The exception lies in Germany's perception that the integration of the core central European states - Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary - cannot wait. For anything which increases the risk of despair and instability in central Europe - ie on Germany's borders - increases the risk that Germany might have to assert its national interests there before Europe asserts its own. A revival of Russian hostility would also affect Germany before it affected its Western partners - for which reason it is less than keen to see integration' advanced to the Baltic states and pursues an elaborately balanced policy between Russia and Ukraine. For a country whose long-term aim has been to de-legitimise not only its own national interests, but those of others, Germany's unique influence over, and vulnerability to, developments in central Europe is especially disturbing to itself. If Germany must be pro-active in central Europe, then she must be pro-active at the behest of Europe - but she will only be allowed to act at Europe's behest if Europe' exists and Germany is locked into' it.

The magnetic fields generated by the Franco-German relationship have three wider effects. First, they affect states of the former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet Union who seek admission to the European Union (EU). After all, the demand for the widening of EU arises first and foremost from these newly independent states. The demand is at cross purposes with the central priority of France (not to say Italy, Spain, Greece and several others): the further deepening of European integration amongst the EU's current members - in other words, the further harmonisation of law, employment practices and economic policy in countries which, by post-Communist standards, are impressively harmonised already. To the proponents of political union, the Single European Act (December 1986), the Maastricht Treaty (December 1991) and the Amsterdam Treaty (June 1997) represent monuments to harmonisation already achieved and legal authority to achieve more.

How can the aspirants to EU membership catch up with this moving target? How can they bring their standards up to EU norms and clear barriers to EU membership if the EU does not meet them halfway by relaxing its own standards, lowering its own barriers and slowing its own pace? If the invitations issued by the December, 1997 Luxembourg European Council are to produce membership, let alone benefit new members, won't the EU have to make concessions to the diversity (and the shortcomings) of post-Communist Europe? It is partly with these questions in mind that the UK - committed to a pluralistic and diverse Europe - is such a strong proponent of moving Europe east. Yet even if compromises between diversity and harmonisation are struck, meeting EU standards will impose social costs on new entrants that they might not be able to bear.

The second concern is that the stronger members of the EU will not be able to bear them either. The rigours of preparing for a common currency are already producing opposition in the Europe of the 15, even in countries where pro-integration sentiment has been strongest. Public sector strikes in France and Germany are not merely 'about pay', but about the dismantling, in the name of 'convergence', of the institutions and contracts that provided the basis for post-Second World War consensus and stability: institutions and contracts which defined national communities as communities. By the same token, countries that feel they have achieved a balance between rural and urban interests, or a high degree of ethnic harmony, may resist 'common' policies that alter these balances. Worse, if their resistance is overridden, they may cease to be harmonious places at all.

Third, it affects trans-Atlantic relations. Not for the first time, it forces Europeans to ask whether the United States will continue to be seen - and continue to see itself - as an extension of European civilisation or, as it did in the interwar years, as something *sui generis*. Given the multiple interests of the United States and the plurality of forces defining these interests, Europe cannot answer this question by itself. But projects for a 'European defence identity' reinforce the reasons to pose it, particularly when influential advocates of 'European defence' demand support from NATO whilst denying authority to it. Why after all should the United States assume risks, share burdens and undertake commitments on behalf of a 'European defence entity' whose defining characteristic would be its exclusion from decision making and membership?

Fortunately, for three reasons these concerns are now less acute than they were when the Cold war ended:

\* the conflict in former Yugoslavia has exposed the pretensions of 'common European foreign policy' and severely chastened its proponents;

\* France herself sees the American presence as a counterweight to and an insurance policy against the unpredictable evolution of Germany and an equally unpredictable German-Russian relationship;

\* NATO enlargement has given the United States a new sense of purpose and a new set of enthusiasms in Europe.

Where is NATO Heading?

As already implied, the fundamental reasons for enlarging NATO have little to do with the former Soviet Union. Apart from the cynical purpose of 'keeping NATO employed', enlargement is instrumental to the broader, transcendental purpose of keeping the United States engaged in Europe. Shortly after NATO's founding, Field Marshal Lord Ismay stated that the purpose of the Alliance was 'to keep the Americans in, the Germans down and the Russians out'. Harsh as it might sound, the premise of Western policy is that Russia is 'out' now that the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union no longer exist. In these conditions an anti-Russian policy simply has no purpose. But this does not deprive Lord Ismay's first two imperatives of their purpose.

Today, there is a third. For in the absence of the Soviet Union (and what Britain's last Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, once termed 'cold war disciplines') avoiding instability in central Europe - and, part and parcel of the same, preventing the re-nationalisation of foreign policies (German and others) - has assumed profound importance. There are strong reasons to assume that NATO can achieve these objectives. There are stronger reasons to assume that the OSCE cannot achieve them. As a 'universal' body it lacks cohesion. It also lacks organs of military integration, not to say the habits of integration (and trust) that make NATO NATO. Most important of all, those it is meant to protect - the current aspirants to NATO membership - do not desire its protection. Most revealing of all, the OSCE's greatest advocates - Russia and Belarus - do not rely on it for their own security, but prefer instead to develop their 'common defence space' within the context of the CIS. No convincing reason has been given as to why others should be denied the freedom that these states allow themselves.

As in the case of EU enlargement, NATO enlargement is a 'demand driven' process. Moreover, Russia and the CIS play almost as small a role in the calculations of central Europe's aspirants to NATO membership as they do inside NATO itself. The one exception is the determination of former Warsaw Pact countries to remove the 'Russian factor' from their own internal politics. For if 'irreversibility' is to be the norm of political life, then it must be axiomatic to all political forces that Russia can no longer play the role of threat or saviour. The corollary is worth stressing. Only as NATO members will central Europeans have the confidence to develop friendly relationships with Russia without fearing that they will become 'special' relationships. And only then will governments promoting friendship with Russia escape the charge that they are acting against the national interest. This point has as much bearing on Poland's eastern neighbour, Belarus, as it has on Russia itself.

Yet for former Warsaw Pact states, the overwhelming motivations for joining NATO are West-West rather than East-West. Indeed, the principal reason for joining NATO is the conviction that, by doing so, they will join the West. To be sure, 'Westernisation' was never a large part of the 'old' NATO's purpose and, in the cold war period, several of the most Western countries in Europe ruled out NATO membership altogether. Nevertheless, thanks to Partnership for Peace and an increasingly dense matrix of bilateral programmes of co-operation, NATO is now one of the most effective agents of Westernisation in central Europe. For Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and others, the achievement of Western status is complemented by an equally important obsession: the elimination of the ghosts of the cordon sanitaire and the spectre of an aggressive Germany. Fifty three years after the end of the Second World War, the prospect of collaboration with Germany on an alliance footing is not only alluring, but essential. But only seven years after the cold war, the possibility of similar collaboration with Russia is almost as unthinkable as the possibility of collaboration with Adenauer's Germany would have been in 1952.

But if the rationale for enlargement is political and psychological, then why does NATO insist on retaining a military form? The question itself is a non sequitur, for it confuses the military purposes of NATO, which are positive and substantial, with the military purposes of NATO enlargement, which are not. Indeed, if there is a military agenda in enlargement, it is overwhelmingly negative: ensuring that new members do not weaken NATO's military capabilities or compromise its traditional military attributes. To defence professionals brought up within the military systems of the former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet Union, these attributes are worth restating:

\* In an Alliance of sovereign states (whose sovereignty the Washington Treaty does not and cannot override) NATO's integrated military structures - its

multinational headquarters, commands and staffs - are the only mechanisms capable of enabling national armies to operate together effectively. If in the name of 'demilitarisation', these structures were disbanded, it would be very difficult for 16 independent countries to conduct an integrated defence, let alone a timely one. Europe would be left with separate armies (indeed separate defence systems) each capable of providing military capability at no more than an operational-tactical scale. Having experienced the break-up of the Soviet Armed Forces, the signatories of the Tashkent Collective Defence Treaty should understand why we would not inflict similar damage upon ourselves.

\* Even in periods when military danger is low, NATO provides a standing forum for planning and consultation, as well as a mechanism for detecting threats, monitoring crises and responding to them. The survival of this mechanism is crucial, for if a threat emerges - and the policy of its members hardens - it is a mechanism that can translate will into action.

To most NATO members, the conflict in former Yugoslavia has reinforced all of these points: the disarray that ensues when coalitions are based upon universality rather than agreement, the paralysis that emerges when national armies are brought together under ad hoc and deficient command arrangements - and, in these miserable conditions, the ability of determined and unscrupulous actors to achieve political aims through force.

But great as the anxieties about future Yugoslavias' is, the still greater anxiety is Europe's vulnerability to non-European opponents, whose arsenal of tools ranges from terror to weapons of mass destruction. Without doubt, on a strictly military plain, Europe's vulnerability to weapons of mass destruction was greater during the days of the 'balance of terror' than it is now. But as that term indicates, the cold war system was governed by Clausewitzian disciplines, which in today's less systemic world an unhealthy number of state and non-state actors reject and despise. Even if this were the only risk that NATO faced, it would be sufficient reason to retain its core capabilities, as well as its freedom of action.

Taken as a whole, these opportunities, pressures and concerns distinguish the West from Russia, but they are not motivated by anti-Russian sentiment. The question is whether Russia can accept these distinguishing features without antagonism or apprehension. Since the spring of 1997, there are signs that the attempt is being made, and there are also some signs of success.

## New Thinking' in Russia?

Like the advent to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985, the elevation of Anatoliy Chubays and Boris Nemtsov in March 1997 (and less dramatically, the appointment of Ivan Rybkin as Secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council in September, 1996) produced a reorientation of priorities, a re-assessment of the means of achieving policy ends and a determination to find a *peredyshka* (breathing space) to remedy urgent internal problems. As in the 1980's, the latest re-assessment arises from perceptions of threat, eerily reminiscent of those that existed at the start of the Gorbachev era:

\* the threat from within, in the form of the increased fragmentation of the multinational Russian Federation (reminiscent of the 'pre-crisis situation' facing the USSR in 1985);

\* the threat from the south, in the form of the Chechen tragedy and its continued reverberations throughout the Caucasus (reminiscent of the earlier trauma of Afghanistan);

\* the threat from the West, in the form of NATO enlargement (reminiscent of the 'change of attitude' in the West associated with Ronald Reagan, rearmament and SDI).

Yet there are also contrasts. The prime aim of Soviet 'new thinking' was to 'eliminate enemy images' in the West; the prime aim of Russian 'new thinking' has been the elimination of such images in what Russians still privately call their 'near abroad'. In this enterprise, the classically Russophile stance of Belarus was an irrelevance, even an encumbrance, rather as the traditional fidelity of the GDR and CSSR were to Gorbachev. What matters to the liberal-monetarists who, for the first time since 1992 dominate policy, is to change thinking and vectors of movement on the part of those who are traditionally wary and hostile. Hence the privately expressed view of many officials in Kyiv: that the state visit of Boris Yel'tsin and the signing of the Black Sea Fleet Accords (28 May) and the Comprehensive Treaty (31 May) vindicated Ukraine's long-standing

efforts to persuade Russia that its policies were driving it into the arms of NATO. The Tallinn communique, of 27 May - in which Ukraine's President, Leonid Kuchma and Poland's President Aleksandr Kwasniewski backed the Baltic states' quest for NATO membership - probably played an important role in its own right. Within days of the accords, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, suggested that 'new thinking' was under way:

We have to find the strength within ourselves to overcome this obsession with Sevastopol. Putting reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia on the agenda would be to launch a new Chechen war. If Russia and Ukraine can rise to the level to which de Gaulle and Adenauer rose in their time to solve the issue of Alsace and Lorraine, then we will be able to work together, help each other and overcome mistrust. We must look at the world with open eyes and see it as it really is. [emphasis added].

With less flamboyance, Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin articulated the principal premises of Russian 'new thinking': that the main threats to Russia are of a non-military nature' and that she should look for the causes [of threat] in her own country'.

But not only does 'new thinking' raise dilemmas for Russia (and its neighbours), there is no guarantee how long it will last. Whereas Gorbachev came to power in a totalitarian state and had tools of policy at his disposal, the tools of policy in today's Russia are not only uncoordinated, they are semi-autonomous and in some cases even privatised. If Chubays and Nemtsov can change thinking in the Kremlin and in Staraya Ploshchad', does it stand to reason that they can change the behaviour of Russia? The deferment of the State Duma's debate on the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership with Ukraine is merely the most obvious sign that, in today's conditions, a profound difference exists between agreements and their implementation.

Second, it begs the question of what Russia seeks to achieve with its neighbours. Between November 1997 and January of this year, the May 1997 accords with Ukraine were followed by others of nearly equal significance: abolishing VAT on trade and opening Ukraine's energy sector to Russian capital. Just as Gorbachev once calculated that he would achieve more influence over the West by moving military forces east than Brezhnev achieved by moving them west, do his successors now believe that opening Russian markets will do more to strengthen 'reintegration processes' than closing them? There are several signs of Russian confidence that the western trajectory of Ukraine can now be reversed.

Finally, it begs the eternal question of Russia's geo-political direction. Taken together, NATO enlargement, turmoil in the Caucasus - not to say Caspian Sea oil and, now, the prospect of Japanese collaboration in exploiting still larger energy reserves further east - have strengthened those who believe that Russia must develop as a Eurasian, rather than as a European power. As Europe widens and consolidates - but in ways that leave Russia in the margins - the question many Russians raise is, what is Russia to become and where will Russia's comparative advantage lie?' And the most attractive answer is that Russia's advantage will lie in its dominance of strategic energy transport corridors: between Asia and Europe, and between north and south.

To be sure, this Eurasian focus sustains a competitive disposition (if not yet a competitive capability) in two areas, China and the Gulf, each of which are highly problematic from the standpoint of Western security. For better and for worse, Eurasian thinking also reinforces the importance of Ukraine and the Baltic states to Russia. For worse (from a Western point of view), because in general and theoretical terms, Eurasians see the dominance of 'post Soviet space' as vital to the balance of power in Europe and Asia. For worse, too, because it gives Russia an interest in dominating energy corridors across Ukraine - whose independent development would hold strong attraction for those states in the Caucasus and Central Asia wishing to free themselves from the grip of Russia's energy monsters'. For the better because the precondition of Russian inroads into Ukraine is Ukrainian confidence that Russia has fully accepted Ukraine's statehood, its sovereignty and the integrity of its borders. For better, too, because it is as independent states that the Baltic countries - with their attractive ports, their internal stability and their western orientation - are seen as a profitable terminus for Russian energy corridors, as well as a preferred window on Europe. Indeed, Russian policy now endorses the admission of these countries to the EU. Following the astonishingly successful Stockholm summit of December, 1997, there is also talk of windows opening yet further west.

These developments must be taken into account when assessing the deterioration in relations between Russia and Belarus in the spring of 1997, not least of all the downgrading of the Union treaty concluded in April of that year. For whilst Russia's orthodox geopoliticians (and Slavophiles) believe that the Union of the two could project Russian power and finance into central Europe, the liberal-monetarist wing of policy views such integration as economically unprofitable - whereas the Baltic states, independent and benefiting from Western investment, offer a cheap alternative, speeding Russia's acceptance by, and entrance into, Europe as a whole.

The renewed ascendancy of Russia's liberal monetarists therefore poses challenges for

Russia's neighbours: to be sure, different challenges for Belarus than for Ukraine or Estonia, but challenges nonetheless. These policies also demonstrate that, even under liberal and pro-Western stewardship, Russia is a Eurasian state which in geo-economic as well as geo-political terms operates on a trans-continental scale and in ways which are occasionally unnerving to the West. Competitive in several respects, the paths of Russian and Western development are not antagonistic in essence. It is national policy, human decision, that would make them antagonistic in practice.

## Conclusion

Europe's evolution is being shaped more profoundly by factors outside the East-West relationship than by factors within it. This is one reason why Russia and the West fail to view one another as they wish to be viewed, let alone as they ought to be. To the West, Russia (and much of the CIS) has a profound and, in recent years, even a growing importance. But it is no longer central. The issues which planners and policy makers place under the rubric of 'Russia' are weighty and serious. But, in contrast to Western practice during the cold war, these issues are no longer integrated into overall policy, and they are often ignored when equal or more pressing concerns arise. Even where NATO enlargement is concerned, the 'Russia factor' has been treated as a serious complication, not as a core ingredient of the problem. This approach could prove to be to the West's detriment. But it is on Europe's periphery (the Balkans) and outside Europe (China, Iran and Iraq) that complacency about Russia and inattentiveness to it could produce the greatest surprises.

On the other side of the equation, in Russia it is still only the *peredovoy* (vanguard), not the core of the defence and security elite who understand the West in its own terms. Today, indeed for some considerable period of time, the core preoccupation of the West has not been geopolitics, but stability. For a civilisation which is outward looking and commercial in its roots and ethos, this only stands to reason. Far from aiming to fragment the Russian Federation, the further fragmentation of Russian power is deemed to be almost as worrying a prospect in Western capitals as the reconsolidation of this power under the auspices of a Zyuganov, a Lebed' or a Luzhkov. The former scenario is also deemed to be more likely than the latter. Here, Western presentiments are probably correct.

So, too, is the perception that the relationship between stability and security is more subtle than it was in the past. For today, the question is no longer how states can be threatened, but how they can be undermined, whether by governments acting in their

own name, by financial entities, by criminal structures or by what are politely but inadequately called 'intelligence means'. This question is particularly acute for newly independent, post-Communist states which lack self-confidence, strong civic traditions and a history of trust between state and society. It is these preoccupations which sustain the West's commitment to help such states overcome their vulnerabilities. Whereas Russia's geopoliticians view this commitment as an encroachment on 'former Soviet space', the West views it as the substance of building security in Europe. If an 'objective' basis for discord exists in Europe, it probably lies in this difference of aim and perception.

But 'European integration' will not solve this problem by itself. Where newly independent states are concerned, the overwhelming imperative is not integration, but state-building and samostoyatel'nost' - for only on this basis can independence (nezavisimost') be a meaningful term and co-operation be voluntary, beneficial and safe.

In Western Europe, the domain of strong states but equally strong integrationist sentiment, nation states continue to have the competence, ingenuity and will to bend integrationist schemes to their own national interests. As the examples of European and NATO enlargement bear out, not all of these national interests are narrow, unenlightened or selfish. There is much, however, to remind one of Bismarck's axiom that 'those too timid to ask for something in their own name speak of Europe'.

Given not only the reality of diversity, but its evident attractions, calls for 'pan European' solutions to every problem are not only unnecessary and impractical, they are likely to have unpleasant results, generating formulas, platitudes and 'mechanisms' on the part of those who do not understand what is being demanded of them, and generating false expectations and resentment on the part of those who do. The more enlightened course might be to ignore calls to eliminate differences and ensure instead that they are respected and understood. The relationship between Belarus and the West might be a useful place to start.

ENDNOTES

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When 'cold war' provided the framework for defence and security in Europe, ideology not only served to define and demarcate two 'camps', it also produced considerable misunderstanding between them. Despite the fact that we now operate within a new framework, courteously termed 'partnership', ideological differences - or at least philosophical and cultural ones - continue to create misunderstanding on those occasions where interests diverge. This only stands to reason. The end of confrontation, the opening up of communication, the erosion of borders and the pervasiveness of business have not swept history away, let alone political culture, the identities of people or even, in many cases, the character of the states in which they live. Indeed, in the absence of cold war, philosophical differences, not to say differences of interest, have come into their own in the West itself. The controversies surrounding former Yugoslavia and Iraq, not to say European Monetary Union, certainly testify to this.

Yet whereas the West's differences are understood inside the West, it is between the West and Russia (and, by extension, Russia's partners in the 'Union of the two' and the 'Community of the four') that difference is more likely to produce misunderstanding. The danger is not that such misunderstanding will lead to a 'new cold war' - for in dramatically transformed and still transforming conditions, European security is more likely to be shaped by the West's and Russia's views of themselves than by the views they hold of one another. But the danger, nevertheless, is that motives will be misjudged, trends misdiagnosed, consequences unanticipated and opportunities missed.

The dynamics most deserving of critical objective analysis are these: European integration, post-Communist change and, where Russia and many of its neighbours are concerned, the process that Boris Yel'tsin has called the 'reconstituting of Russian statehood.' It is these dynamics that are shaping Europe's character. Unless they are understood in their own terms, without ideological distortion, then (to use old ideological

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But where does ideological distortion now exist? One must surely begin with the West, where liberal internationalist perspectives have acquired an almost official, if not altogether unquestioned, status since the collapse of the Soviet Union. That this collapse stemmed from the underlying deficiencies of the command administrative system', rather than simply from deficient policies within it, is generally conceded. What is debatable, however, is the proposition that Western models of liberal democracy and market relations - not to say the civic, legal and ethical culture that underpin them - are becoming and can become the universal norm. No less debatable are the propositions that in a free', interdependent and global economy, national interests are destined to recede, problems will become increasingly common' and solutions will become increasingly financial and technical. The approach is well conveyed by the effort to find formulas' for NATO enlargement and the inordinate emphasis placed on security architecture', rather than security interests. Not only does this approach fail to be geopolitical, it risks becoming apolitical and fundamentally unhistorical as well. To be sure, this orthodoxy has its critics in the West, but an orthodoxy it is.

It is ironic that much of Russia's political, defence and security establishment re-legitimised geopolitics just at the time that the West de-legitimised it. Between late 1992 and early 1997, these propositions, too, had a nearly official status - well expressed in President Yel'tsin's declaration (to the senior staffs of the Foreign Intelligence Service on 27 April, 1994) that global confrontation has been replaced by a struggle for spheres of interest in geopolitics'. Geopolitical perspectives are well reflected in the widespread view that the West not only seeks to dominate' the former USSR but promote the disintegration of Russia itself, similarly the view that NATO enlargement is the pet project of those determined to relaunch the cold war. To be sure, in the context of socio-economic threats to the integrity of the Russian Federation - and in the wake of the Chechen war - these perspectives lack the authority and apparent coherence that they so recently possessed. Indeed, to judge by the National Security Concept approved by President Yel'tsin on 17 December, 1997, Russia now possesses a security blueprint whose dominant themes - internal and non-military challenges to security - are as post-geopolitical as those of the Western world. Yet in diverse and influential circles, geopolitical and kto-kogo thinking continues to obstruct lucid, objective analysis of how the West is evolving and why it behaves as it does.

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Although the latter vision is a powerful one throughout western Europe, its driving motor has usually been the Franco-German relationship. From the 1950's onwards, the basis of this relationship has been a mutual fear of Germany. These fears have only advanced since German unification shifted Germany's centre of gravity east.

It is an open secret that France, Germany's principal partner, had long been a silent opponent of German unification, Germany's principal aim. It stands to reason, therefore, that France has had its share of ambivalence about the corollary of German unification: the end of Europe's division between 'east' and 'west' and the rebirth of 'central Europe'. In a Europe of nation states, who is to integrate (or at worst dominate) central Europe? Not France. If Germany is not to do so, then Europe must do so, and Germany must be locked into it. And until 'Europe' exists - an integrated, supranational Europe with its own defence and foreign policy (and indeed its own currency) - the integration of central Europe should be approached with caution. On the other hand, ties with Russia must be expanded with vigour. For given the inevitable - a special relationship between Germany and Russia - France requires its own special relationship, both to offset German influence in Moscow and maintain French influence in Berlin.

In Germany - where unification has revived the country's anxiety about itself - perceptions are, with one exception, the mirror image of these. The exception lies in Germany's perception that the integration of the core central European states - Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary - cannot wait. For anything which increases the risk of despair and instability in central Europe - ie on Germany's borders - increases the risk that Germany might have to assert its national interests there before Europe asserts its own. A revival of Russian hostility would also affect Germany before it affected its Western partners - for which reason it is less than keen to see 'integration' advanced to the Baltic states and pursues an elaborately balanced policy between Russia and Ukraine.

For a country whose long-term aim has been to de-legitimise not only its own national interests, but those of others, Germany's unique influence over, and vulnerability to, developments in central Europe is especially disturbing to itself. If Germany must be pro-active in central Europe, then she must be pro-active at the behest of Europe - but she will only be allowed to act at Europe's behest if Europe exists and Germany is locked into it.

The magnetic fields generated by the Franco-German relationship have three wider effects. First, they affect states of the former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet Union who seek admission to the European Union (EU). After all, the demand for the widening of EU arises first and foremost from these newly independent states. The demand is at cross purposes with the central priority of France (not to say Italy, Spain, Greece and several others): the further deepening of European integration amongst the EU's current members - in other words, the further harmonisation of law, employment practices and economic policy in countries which, by post-Communist standards, are impressively harmonised already. To the proponents of political union, the Single European Act (December 1986), the Maastricht Treaty (December 1991) and the Amsterdam Treaty (June 1997) represent monuments to harmonisation already achieved and legal authority to achieve more.

How can the aspirants to EU membership catch up with this moving target? How can they bring their standards up to EU norms and clear barriers to EU membership if the EU does not meet them halfway by relaxing its own standards, lowering its own barriers and slowing its own pace? If the invitations issued by the December, 1997 Luxembourg European Council are to produce membership, let alone benefit new members, won't the EU have to make concessions to the diversity (and the shortcomings) of post-Communist Europe? It is partly with these questions in mind that the UK - committed to a pluralistic and diverse Europe - is such a strong proponent of moving Europe east. Yet even if compromises between diversity and harmonisation are struck, meeting EU standards will impose social costs on new entrants that they might not be able to bear.

The second concern is that the stronger members of the EU will not be able to bear them either. The rigours of preparing for a common currency are already producing opposition in the Europe of the 15, even in countries where pro-integration sentiment has been strongest. Public sector strikes in France and Germany are not merely about pay', but about the dismantling, in the name of 'convergence', of the institutions and contracts that provided the basis for post-Second World War consensus and stability: institutions and contracts which defined national communities as communities. By the same token, countries that feel they have achieved a balance between rural and urban interests, or a high degree of ethnic harmony, may resist common' policies that alter these balances.

Worse, if their resistance is overridden, they may cease to be harmonious places at all.

Third, it affects trans-Atlantic relations. Not for the first time, it forces Europeans to ask whether the United States will continue to be seen - and continue to see itself - as an extension of European civilisation or, as it did in the interwar years, as something *sui generis*. Given the multiple interests of the United States and the plurality of forces defining these interests, Europe cannot answer this question by itself. But projects for a 'European defence identity' reinforce the reasons to pose it, particularly when influential advocates of 'European defence' demand support from NATO whilst denying authority to it. Why after all should the United States assume risks, share burdens and undertake commitments on behalf of a 'European defence entity' whose defining characteristic would be its exclusion from decision making and membership?

Fortunately, for three reasons these concerns are now less acute than they were when the Cold war ended:

- \* the conflict in former Yugoslavia has exposed the pretensions of 'common European foreign policy' and severely chastened its proponents;

- \* France herself sees the American presence as a counterweight to and an insurance policy against the unpredictable evolution of Germany and an equally unpredictable German-Russian relationship;

- \* NATO enlargement has given the United States a new sense of purpose and a new set of enthusiasms in Europe.

### Where is NATO Heading?

As already implied, the fundamental reasons for enlarging NATO have little to do with the former Soviet Union. Apart from the cynical purpose of 'keeping NATO employed', enlargement is instrumental to the broader, transcendental purpose of keeping the United States engaged in Europe. Shortly after NATO's founding, Field Marshal Lord Ismay

stated that the purpose of the Alliance was 'to keep the Americans in, the Germans down and the Russians out'. Harsh as it might sound, the premise of Western policy is that Russia is 'out' now that the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union no longer exist. In these conditions an anti-Russian policy simply has no purpose. But this does not deprive Lord Ismay's first two imperatives of their purpose.

Today, there is a third. For in the absence of the Soviet Union (and what Britain's last Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, once termed 'cold war disciplines') avoiding instability in central Europe - and, part and parcel of the same, preventing the re-nationalisation of foreign policies (German and others) - has assumed profound importance. There are strong reasons to assume that NATO can achieve these objectives. There are stronger reasons to assume that the OSCE cannot achieve them. As a 'universal' body it lacks cohesion. It also lacks organs of military integration, not to say the habits of integration (and trust) that make NATO NATO. Most important of all, those it is meant to protect - the current aspirants to NATO membership - do not desire its protection. Most revealing of all, the OSCE's greatest advocates - Russia and Belarus - do not rely on it for their own security, but prefer instead to develop their 'common defence space' within the context of the CIS. No convincing reason has been given as to why others should be denied the freedom that these states allow themselves.

As in the case of EU enlargement, NATO enlargement is a 'demand driven' process. Moreover, Russia and the CIS play almost as small a role in the calculations of central Europe's aspirants to NATO membership as they do inside NATO itself. The one exception is the determination of former Warsaw Pact countries to remove the 'Russian factor' from their own internal politics. For if 'irreversibility' is to be the norm of political life, then it must be axiomatic to all political forces that Russia can no longer play the role of threat or saviour. The corollary is worth stressing. Only as NATO members will central Europeans have the confidence to develop friendly relationships with Russia without fearing that they will become 'special' relationships. And only then will governments promoting friendship with Russia escape the charge that they are acting against the national interest. This point has as much bearing on Poland's eastern neighbour, Belarus, as it has on Russia itself.

Yet for former Warsaw Pact states, the overwhelming motivations for joining NATO are West-West rather than East-West. Indeed, the principal reason for joining NATO is the conviction that, by doing so, they will join the West. To be sure, 'Westernisation' was never a large part of the 'old' NATO's purpose and, in the cold war period, several of the most Western countries in Europe ruled out NATO membership altogether. Nevertheless, thanks to Partnership for Peace and an increasingly dense matrix of bilateral programmes of co-operation, NATO is now one of the most effective agents of Westernisation in central Europe. For Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and others, the achievement of Western status is complemented by an equally important obsession:

the elimination of the ghosts of the cordon sanitaire and the spectre of an aggressive Germany. Fifty three years after the end of the Second World War, the prospect of collaboration with Germany on an alliance footing is not only alluring, but essential. But only seven years after the cold war, the possibility of similar collaboration with Russia is almost as unthinkable as the possibility of collaboration with Adenauer's Germany would have been in 1952.

But if the rationale for enlargement is political and psychological, then why does NATO insist on retaining a military form? The question itself is a non sequitur, for it confuses the military purposes of NATO, which are positive and substantial, with the military purposes of NATO enlargement, which are not. Indeed, if there is a military agenda in enlargement, it is overwhelmingly negative: ensuring that new members do not weaken NATO's military capabilities or compromise its traditional military attributes. To defence professionals brought up within the military systems of the former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet Union, these attributes are worth restating:

\* In an Alliance of sovereign states (whose sovereignty the Washington Treaty does not and cannot override) NATO's integrated military structures - its multinational headquarters, commands and staffs - are the only mechanisms capable of enabling national armies to operate together effectively. If in the name of 'demilitarisation', these structures were disbanded, it would be very difficult for 16 independent countries to conduct an integrated defence, let alone a timely one. Europe would be left with separate armies (indeed separate defence systems) each capable of providing military capability at no more than an operational-tactical scale. Having experienced the break-up of the Soviet Armed Forces, the signatories of the Tashkent Collective Defence Treaty should understand why we would not inflict similar damage upon ourselves.

\* Even in periods when military danger is low, NATO provides a standing forum for planning and consultation, as well as a mechanism for detecting threats, monitoring crises and responding to them. The survival of this mechanism is crucial, for if a threat emerges - and the policy of its members hardens - it is a mechanism that can translate will into action.

To most NATO members, the conflict in former Yugoslavia has reinforced all of these points: the disarray that ensues when coalitions are based upon universality rather than agreement, the paralysis that emerges when national armies are brought together under ad hoc and deficient command arrangements - and, in these miserable conditions, the ability

of determined and unscrupulous actors to achieve political aims through force.

But great as the anxieties about future Yugoslavias' is, the still greater anxiety is Europe's vulnerability to non-European opponents, whose arsenal of tools ranges from terror to weapons of mass destruction. Without doubt, on a strictly military plain, Europe's vulnerability to weapons of mass destruction was greater during the days of the balance of terror' than it is now. But as that term indicates, the cold war system was governed by Clausewitzian disciplines, which in today's less systemic world an unhealthy number of state and non-state actors reject and despise. Even if this were the only risk that NATO faced, it would be sufficient reason to retain its core capabilities, as well as its freedom of action.

Taken as a whole, these opportunities, pressures and concerns distinguish the West from Russia, but they are not motivated by anti-Russian sentiment. The question is whether Russia can accept these distinguishing features without antagonism or apprehension. Since the spring of 1997, there are signs that the attempt is being made, and there are also some signs of success.

#### New Thinking' in Russia?

Like the advent to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985, the elevation of Anatoliy Chubays and Boris Nemtsov in March 1997 (and less dramatically, the appointment of Ivan Rybkin as Secretary of the Russian Federation Security Council in September, 1996) produced a reorientation of priorities, a re-assessment of the means of achieving policy ends and a determination to find a peredyshka (breathing space) to remedy urgent internal problems. As in the 1980's, the latest re-assessment arises from perceptions of threat, eerily reminiscent of those that existed at the start of the Gorbachev era:

\* the threat from within, in the form of the increased fragmentation of the multinational Russian Federation (reminiscent of the 'pre-crisis situation' facing the USSR in 1985);

\* the threat from the south, in the form of the Chechen tragedy and its continued reverberations throughout the Caucasus (reminiscent of the earlier trauma of Afghanistan);

\* the threat from the West, in the form of NATO enlargement (reminiscent of the change of attitude' in the West associated with Ronald Reagan, rearmament and SDI).

Yet there are also contrasts. The prime aim of Soviet 'new thinking' was to eliminate enemy images' in the West; the prime aim of Russian 'new thinking' has been the elimination of such images in what Russians still privately call their 'near abroad'. In this enterprise, the classically Russophile stance of Belarus was an irrelevance, even an encumbrance, rather as the traditional fidelity of the GDR and CSSR were to Gorbachev. What matters to the liberal-monetarists who, for the first time since 1992 dominate policy, is to change thinking and vectors of movement on the part of those who are traditionally wary and hostile. Hence the privately expressed view of many officials in Kyiv: that the state visit of Boris Yel'tsin and the signing of the Black Sea Fleet Accords (28 May) and the Comprehensive Treaty (31 May) vindicated Ukraine's long-standing efforts to persuade Russia that its policies were driving it into the arms of NATO. The Tallinn communique, of 27 May - in which Ukraine's President, Leonid Kuchma and Poland's President Aleksandr Kwasniewski backed the Baltic states' quest for NATO membership - probably played an important role in its own right. Within days of the accords, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, suggested that 'new thinking' was under way:

We have to find the strength within ourselves to overcome this obsession with Sevastopol. Putting reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia on the agenda would be to launch a new Chechen war. If Russia and Ukraine can rise to the level to which de Gaulle and Adenauer rose in their time to solve the issue of Alsace and Lorraine, then we will be able to work together, help each other and overcome mistrust. We must look at the world with open eyes and see it as it really is. [emphasis added].

With less flamboyance, Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin articulated the principal premises of Russian 'new thinking': that the main threats to Russia are of a non-military nature' and that she should look for the causes [of threat] in her own country'.

But not only does 'new thinking' raise dilemmas for Russia (and its neighbours), there is

no guarantee how long it will last. Whereas Gorbachev came to power in a totalitarian state and had tools of policy at his disposal, the tools of policy in today's Russia are not only uncoordinated, they are semi-autonomous and in some cases even privatised. If Chubays and Nemtsov can change thinking in the Kremlin and in Staraya Ploshchad', does it stand to reason that they can change the behaviour of Russia? The deferment of the State Duma's debate on the ratification of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership with Ukraine is merely the most obvious sign that, in today's conditions, a profound difference exists between agreements and their implementation.

Second, it begs the question of what Russia seeks to achieve with its neighbours. Between November 1997 and January of this year, the May 1997 accords with Ukraine were followed by others of nearly equal significance: abolishing VAT on trade and opening Ukraine's energy sector to Russian capital. Just as Gorbachev once calculated that he would achieve more influence over the West by moving military forces east than Brezhnev achieved by moving them west, do his successors now believe that opening Russian markets will do more to strengthen 'reintegration processes' than closing them? There are several signs of Russian confidence that the western trajectory of Ukraine can now be reversed.

Finally, it begs the eternal question of Russia's geo-political direction. Taken together, NATO enlargement, turmoil in the Caucasus - not to say Caspian Sea oil and, now, the prospect of Japanese collaboration in exploiting still larger energy reserves further east - have strengthened those who believe that Russia must develop as a Eurasian, rather than as a European power. As Europe widens and consolidates - but in ways that leave Russia in the margins - the question many Russians raise is, 'what is Russia to become and where will Russia's comparative advantage lie?' And the most attractive answer is that Russia's advantage will lie in its dominance of strategic energy transport corridors: between Asia and Europe, and between north and south.

To be sure, this Eurasian focus sustains a competitive disposition (if not yet a competitive capability) in two areas, China and the Gulf, each of which are highly problematic from the standpoint of Western security. For better and for worse, Eurasian thinking also reinforces the importance of Ukraine and the Baltic states to Russia. For worse (from a Western point of view), because in general and theoretical terms, Eurasians see the dominance of 'post Soviet space' as vital to the balance of power in Europe and Asia. For worse, too, because it gives Russia an interest in dominating energy corridors across Ukraine - whose independent development would hold strong attraction for those states in the Caucasus and Central Asia wishing to free themselves from the grip of Russia's energy monsters'. For the better because the precondition of Russian inroads into Ukraine is Ukrainian confidence that Russia has fully accepted Ukraine's statehood, its

sovereignty and the integrity of its borders. For better, too, because it is as independent states that the Baltic countries - with their attractive ports, their internal stability and their western orientation - are seen as a profitable terminus for Russian energy corridors, as well as a preferred window on Europe. Indeed, Russian policy now endorses the admission of these countries to the EU. Following the astonishingly successful Stockholm summit of December, 1997, there is also talk of windows opening yet further west.

These developments must be taken into account when assessing the deterioration in relations between Russia and Belarus in the spring of 1997, not least of all the downgrading of the Union treaty concluded in April of that year. For whilst Russia's orthodox geopoliticians (and Slavophiles) believe that the Union of the two could project Russian power and finance into central Europe, the liberal-monetarist wing of policy views such integration as economically unprofitable - whereas the Baltic states, independent and benefiting from Western investment, offer a cheap alternative, speeding Russia's acceptance by, and entrance into, Europe as a whole.

The renewed ascendancy of Russia's liberal monetarists therefore poses challenges for Russia's neighbours: to be sure, different challenges for Belarus than for Ukraine or Estonia, but challenges nonetheless. These policies also demonstrate that, even under liberal and pro-Western stewardship, Russia is a Eurasian state which in geo-economic as well as geo-political terms operates on a trans-continental scale and in ways which are occasionally unnerving to the West. Competitive in several respects, the paths of Russian and Western development are not antagonistic in essence. It is national policy, human decision, that would make them antagonistic in practice.

## Conclusion

Europe's evolution is being shaped more profoundly by factors outside the East-West relationship than by factors within it. This is one reason why Russia and the West fail to view one another as they wish to be viewed, let alone as they ought to be. To the West, Russia (and much of the CIS) has a profound and, in recent years, even a growing importance. But it is no longer central. The issues which planners and policy makers place under the rubric of 'Russia' are weighty and serious. But, in contrast to Western practice during the cold war, these issues are no longer integrated into overall policy, and they are often ignored when equal or more pressing concerns arise. Even where NATO enlargement is concerned, the 'Russia factor' has been treated as a serious complication, not as a core ingredient of the problem. This approach could prove to be to

the West's detriment. But it is on Europe's periphery (the Balkans) and outside Europe (China, Iran and Iraq) that complacency about Russia and inattentiveness to it could produce the greatest surprises.

On the other side of the equation, in Russia it is still only the *peredovoy* (vanguard), not the core of the defence and security elite who understand the West in its own terms. Today, indeed for some considerable period of time, the core preoccupation of the West has not been geopolitics, but stability. For a civilisation which is outward looking and commercial in its roots and ethos, this only stands to reason. Far from aiming to fragment the Russian Federation, the further fragmentation of Russian power is deemed to be almost as worrying a prospect in Western capitals as the reconsolidation of this power under the auspices of a Zyuganov, a Lebed' or a Luzhkov. The former scenario is also deemed to be more likely than the latter. Here, Western presentiments are probably correct.

So, too, is the perception that the relationship between stability and security is more subtle than it was in the past. For today, the question is no longer how states can be threatened', but how they can be undermined, whether by governments acting in their own name, by financial entities, by criminal structures or by what are politely but inadequately called 'intelligence means'. This question is particularly acute for newly independent, post-Communist states which lack self-confidence, strong civic traditions and a history of trust between state and society. It is these preoccupations which sustain the West's commitment to help such states overcome their vulnerabilities. Whereas Russia's geopoliticians view this commitment as an encroachment on 'former Soviet space', the West views it as the substance of building security in Europe. If an 'objective' basis for discord exists in Europe, it probably lies in this difference of aim and perception.

But 'European integration' will not solve this problem by itself. Where newly independent states are concerned, the overwhelming imperative is not integration, but state-building and *samostoyatel'nost'* - for only on this basis can independence (*nezavisimost'*) be a meaningful term and co-operation be voluntary, beneficial and safe.

In Western Europe, the domain of strong states but equally strong integrationist sentiment, nation states continue to have the competence, ingenuity and will to bend integrationist schemes to their own national interests. As the examples of European and NATO enlargement bear out, not all of these national interests are narrow, unenlightened or selfish. There is much, however, to remind one of Bismarck's axiom that those too

timid to ask for something in their own name speak of Europe'.

Given not only the reality of diversity, but its evident attractions, calls for 'pan European' solutions to every problem are not only unnecessary and impractical, they are likely to have unpleasant results, generating formulas, platitudes and 'mechanisms' on the part of those who do not understand what is being demanded of them, and generating false expectations and resentment on the part of those who do. The more enlightened course might be to ignore calls to eliminate differences and ensure instead that they are respected and understood. The relationship between Belarus and the West might be a useful place to start.

ENDNOTES