

note n°03/2014

NORDIKA Programme

5 février 2014

FONDATION
pour la RECHERCHE
STRATÉGIQUE

Dr Szymon Kardaś

Research Fellow, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich
(OSW)

Great Unfulfilled Expectations: Russia's Security Dialogue with Europe

This text is published as part of the NORDIKA programme, with the support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Abstract

Reconstruction of the European security architecture, within the framework of the multipolar world, remains one of the constant aims of Russia's foreign policy. Moscow aims at strengthening its position in Europe by increasing its influence on European decision-making processes, reducing the American influence in Europe and eradication of the indivisibility of transatlantic security. Different approaches to common security issues (missile defense system, NATO expansion, frozen conflict resolution) are a the key obstacle to boosting security relations between Russia and Europe.



Security issues are - invariably - a priority in Russian foreign policy. This article is an attempt to analyze the basic assumptions of Russian foreign policy in the security field, with a particular emphasis on major initiatives reported by Russia in the context of the reconstruction of the European security architecture (Treaty on European Security.) The article also presents Russia's main European partners in security dialogue (NATO, OSCE, EU and EU Member States) and the most important issues on the bilateral agenda (the Syrian crisis, the issue of the nuclear program of Iran, the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet). Although both parties are interested in developing a comprehensive dialogue, the dominant role of economic issues in the bilateral agenda and the divergence of approaches will

hinder the closer relations and greater integration between Russia and Europe.

“Assertive” Russia in the multipolar world

After a period of instability and weakness in the 1990s, which reinforced the favorable situation in the energy market, Russia began to pursue a more assertive foreign policy. This was reflected both in a tightening of rhetoric reflected in the statements of Russian leaders and in the editions of the of key foreign policy documents: the Russian national security strategy until 2020, adopted in May 2009, the Russian military doctrine adopted in February 2010, stressing Russia’s more explicit readiness to use military means to defend its interests; the proposal of the European Security Treaty prepared by Russia and sent to the European partners in November 2009¹, the new edition of Foreign Policy Concept of February 2013².

The main objective of the Russian strategy is a concept of the construction of the multipolar international order. In practice, this means the rejection of the model emerging in the first decade after the Cold War, based on the dominance of the United States and at the same time the need for acceptance of this new order by other international actors. Russia was condemned to play the role of a weaker partner, both in the regional and global levels. The new edition of the Foreign Policy Concept still calls for the decentralization of the international environment. However, it does not mention the need to overcome the Cold War legacy literally. Instead it puts greater emphasis on the world’s ‘civilizational diversity’, competition over values and the negative impact of a ‘re-ideologization’ of international affairs³ which should be interpreted as a new version of the old concept of multipolarity.

Part of Russia’s traditional approach is the recognition of spheres of privileged interests (Russia considers post-Soviet space as such)

1. S. Fernandes, European Security through EU-Russian relations: Towards a New Multilateral Order?, *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, Vol. 7, Issue 2, pp. 195-215.

2. Read more W. Rodkiewicz, The Russian Federation’s foreign policy concept, *Eastweek*, 20 February 2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-02-20/russian-federations-foreign-policy-concept>.

3. A. Monaghan, The New Russian Foreign Policy Concept: Evolving Continuity, Chatham House, April 2013, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0413pp_monaghan.pdf.

in which interference from third parties is treated as crossing the "red line". After the coming to power of Vladimir Putin's, Russia has seen itself as a hegemonic power in the post-Soviet space and has tended to accept this status by the international community and the actors of the region. Russia uses many instruments in order to maintain its status, especially through the establishment of the different integration structures in the post-Soviet space such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the draft of the Eurasian Economic Union serving the wider geopolitical objectives (mainly dependent post-Soviet countries, in particular as the key to Ukraine in the sphere of Russian influence). In crisis situations, like in 2008-2009, the first phase of the global economic crisis, Russia has been able to manifest a greater willingness to cooperation, which, however, should not be interpreted as a radical turn in Russian foreign policy, but only in terms of tactical adjustments related to the negative trends in economic development.

European Security Treaty proposal

One of the constant demands of Russia is a reconstruction of the European security architecture. Aim to be submitted regularly by Russia suggestions conclusion of the European Security Treaty, a concept that appears at the end of the 1980s in the 20th century, developed in the 1990s during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin. The essence of the concept was to modify the rules of functioning of the CSCE / OSCE, perceived by Russia as a pillar of the European security system. Adopted at the OSCE summit in Istanbul, the Charter for European Security, however, did not meet the Russia’s expectations (the document was not legally binding and did not provide Russia with a privileged position on the decision making with regard to European security issues)⁴. The concept was uttered again by Dmitry Medvedev in June 2008 during his visit to Germany, and thoroughly presented in November 29, 2009⁵.

The revitalization of the European Security

4. M. Menkiszak, Greater Europe. Putin’s Vision of the European (Dis)integration, *OSW Studies*, 14 October 2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-studies/2013-10-14/greater-europe-putins-vision-european-dis-integration>.

5. The draft of the European Security Treaty, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/275>.

Treaty idea is the result of both external factors (changes in the EU covering mainly the development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, EU enlargement, EU member states activation in the East and the evolutionary expansion of the EU's ambition to play a role in the security sphere), and internal (the restoration of Russia's economic potential that enables Kremlin to pursue a more active foreign policy on the regional and global levels) factors. Russia's exclusive rights to shape the European governance should result both from its military potential, but also its geopolitical position (central actor in the Eurasian region).

The Draft European Security Treaty is a short document based on a few fundamental principles. Firstly, it is based on the key principles underpinning the post-war international order, such as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, the inadmissibility of the use of force or threat of force in international relations. Secondly, The Treaty should develop a mechanism to ensure a common way of interpreting this rule, as well as a common approach to resolving emerging conflicts. Thirdly, according to the Russian proposal the new Treaty should ensure equal security for all parties, which boils down to three "no's": 1) not providing its own security at the expense of other countries, 2) not diverting (within the existing alliances or coalitions) to weaken the coherence of actions in common security space, 3) not developing military alliances at the expense of the safety of other participants of the system, 4) neither the state nor an international organization should have exclusive rights to maintain peace and stability in Europe and that European security system should be indivisible, 5) the need to establish a framework for disarmament control and the development of military infrastructure.

Russia regrettably recognizes that the discussion on the proposal did not go beyond experts' talks and that European countries were categorically opposed to a new security treaty that would legally bind all the participants in the system. At the same time, Russia perceives the main sources of such a position to be Cold War stereotypes that predominate in thinking about the security architecture in Europe, which effectively makes it impossible for the moment to find solutions acceptable to all.

The draft proposal of a Treaty would give Russia a viable option to block decisions uncomfortable for Moscow such as the expansion of NATO to deploy elements of a missile shield in Europe and strengthen cooperation between

the U.S. and NATO with the post-Soviet space⁶. Some rightly point out that the real aim of Russia is not so much the conclusion of a new European Security Treaty, but the adoption of new transatlantic arrangements, strengthening the institutional importance of Russia in the security system. By submitting its proposal, the Kremlin actually aims at strengthening its position in Europe by increasing its influence on European decision-making processes, reducing the American influence in Europe and eradication of the indivisibility of transatlantic security⁷.

EU and other Russia's partners in the European security dialogue

The institutional dimension of Russia's relations with Western countries, including Europe, in the field of security is not significantly expanded, as a result, *inter alia*, the fact that Russia was drawn into cooperation with the so called Western world only after the end of the Cold War. Russia's key partners are therefore on the one hand, the institutions which are remnants of the Cold War two block era (NATO, the CSCE / OSCE), as well as new actors such as European Union, that emerged after geopolitical changes in 1980s and 1990s.

For Russia, key partners in dialogue on the international and European security issues are the **United States of America and NATO**. On the rhetorical level, Russia is trying to emphasize the differences between the various centers of Euro-Atlantic cooperation, indicating that while NATO has its roots dating back to block confrontation, the components of the European Union foreign policy on the contrary were developed in a new geopolitical situation. In practice, however, Russia perceives NATO as an organization playing the crucial role in the context of ensuring European security. This is evidenced by both the documents adopted by NATO and the EU, among others. According to Moscow, the participation of European countries in NATO operations confirms the EU's dependence on Washington in ensuring its own safety (communication, management, capability for deployment of troops, etc.), and the most recent illustration of this is the military operation in Libya.

Relations with NATO are now the result of two

6. M. Menkiszak, Obszar WNP: w stronę nowego ładu?, Rocznik Strategiczny 2009/2010, Warszawa 2010, p. 210.

7. S. McNamara, Russia's Proposed New European Security Treaty: A Non Starter for the U.S. and Europe, Heritage Foundation, September 16, 2010, no 2463.

factors. On the one hand, according to Russia's perception, NATO seeks to preserve its role as the main body shaping the European security architecture, pushing into the background the agreements reached in the framework of the CSCE – OSCE; on the other, Moscow is striving to restore its position at the regional and global levels, as is seen by the West as manifestation of imperial ambitions and return to the rhetoric of the Cold War.

Initially, the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe** was perceived by Moscow as the main platform for dealing with security issues. However, in Russia's perception OSCE has been gradually peeling off from dealing with security issues and focusing more and more on humanitarian issues, which naturally reduced the Moscow's interest in active participation within the institutional framework of the organization. Russia also accuses the Member States of the organization that Western countries impose the interpretation of standards, which is not always compatible with the Russian point of view. Scepticism towards the OSCE was also associated with an increase in the importance of the European security architecture of other European organizations: the growing importance of the EU security agenda (such as the issue of conflict resolution, which was previously the domain of the OSCE) and the further strengthening of NATO resulting mainly in the enlargement of the Organization. Russia's disappointment in the OSCE was manifested not only in harsh rhetoric, but also in practice as exemplified by the output in December 2007 with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

The idea of creating a common space of external security has become one of the elements of the concept of building "Common Spaces" in relations between the **European Union** and Russia, launched during the summit in St. Petersburg summit in 2003. Within its framework, the following areas of cooperation were established: an active dialogue on issues related to international relations and security, the fight against terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, along with strengthening the arms export control regime, cooperation in crisis management in the field of civil defense.

Although UE-Russia dialogue did not bring quite significant results, it brought some practical outcomes. Russia supported but some EU action in the field of security: it took part in the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina providing support for EU operations in Chad (EUFOR in Chad in 2008, the involve-

ment of so exceptional that Russia for the first time engaged operating within the framework of the EU mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy aegis) and the Central African Republic, as well as through participation in anti-piracy operations, the EU "Atalanta" operation in the Gulf of Aden. Russia was also the first non-EU country, which held regular meetings with the EU Political and Security Committee, created on the basis of the Treaty of Nice in 2001. However, in the broader perspective cooperation of Russia and the EU in the area of security is a decade of unfulfilled promises in the field of security and defense. Although the security dialogue was incorporated into the bilateral agenda, mainly in the context of the common security space, the results do not allow treat it as "strategic partnership".

There are a few factors that directly influence the bilateral EU-Russia relations. Among them, the key impeding the creation of qualitatively new mechanism of cooperation is primarily a difference in the approach to the development of bilateral relations and the vision of a common Europe. From the EU's point of view, which could be seen even in the Common EU strategy towards Russia adopted in 1999 Brussels emphasizes the need for cooperation for the transition in Russia to strengthen Russia's ability to integrate with Western Europe in the economic and social spheres. In turn, in Russia's Strategy on the development of relations with the European Union in the medium term, adopted in 2000, it was pointed out that Russia's objective is to secure its national interests and to increase the role and position of Russia in Europe and the world⁸.

The second important factor is the bilateral agenda. Both parties are primarily focused not so much on global security issues as the vision of the close proximity, but first of all on economic cooperation, especially related to energy issues and competition for commodity markets. Regardless of postulated by Russia having to withdraw from the geopolitical logic of building relationships, it seems that the lack of readiness to change their attitude by Russia will not allow to find a compromise solution in this regard. A fundamental difference in the approach of Russia and the EU to shape the European order is a different interpretation of the concept of sovereignty and integration. For Moscow, as E. Y. Vinokurov argues, up-

8. А. Бойко, Россия в контексте европейской безопасности, „Обозреватель – Observer“, 9/2011, http://rau.su/observer/N9_2011/026_034.pdf.

holding sovereignty is the constant concern and the dogma of the foreign policy. Furthermore, ensuring sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation is seen as one of the principal tasks in order to ensure the national security of the Russian Federation. It sets limits to deep integration that can be based on the functional understanding of sovereignty and willingness to give up national sovereignty to a certain extent⁹.

A good example of different approaches to integration processes is the current situation in Ukraine which has turned - to a large extent - into a geopolitical battleground between Russia and the EU. Perceiving Ukraine as a country of vital importance, Moscow used many political and economic tools aimed at preventing Kiev from signing the DCFTA and moving closer to the EU. By doing so, Russia proves that its strategic long term goal is integrating Ukraine with the Customs Union and Eurasian Economic Union, projects that are treated as competitive with regard to EU initiatives such as Eastern Partnership.

Although the Kremlin avoids an open involvement in the Ukrainian crisis, Russian political declarations prove that Kremlin supports president Yanukovich and the legally elected authorities. On the one hand, Russia is interested in establishing order in Ukraine - Kremlin is very much concerned about the deepening destabilization of the political system in Ukraine and unexpected scale of social protests. On the other hand, politically and economically weakened Ukraine is an easier partner for Russia in bilateral negotiations. In the absence of serious political and economic offer from the EU, it is very likely that Moscow will make an attempt to increase Ukraine's economic and political dependence on Russia (plans to take control of the Ukrainian gas pipeline system; expected attempts to persuade Ukraine to join the integration process carried out within the framework of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union).

The security issues play much a more important role in **bilateral and trilateral formats with EU member states**. Meeting in Merseberg (4 and 5 June 2010) between Angela Merkel and Dmitry Medvedev was important as an impetus for relations Russia - EU on security matters. One of the key issues discussed during the meeting was a proposal

9. E. Y. Vinokurov, Russian Approaches to Integration on the Post-Soviet space in the 2000s, <http://vinokurov.info/assets/files/russianapproachestointegration.pdf>.

to create the Political and Security Committee, chaired by Sergey Lavrov, and Catherine Ashton. The main tasks of the Committee shall be the establishment of rules for joint civil and military means to solve international crises and elaboration of proposals to solve existing conflicts. The intention was therefore to create a specific coordination mechanism, independent of those which exist in relations with the U.S. and NATO. The first area of cooperation was to be the Transnistrian conflict. Russia succeeded in creating the trilateral mechanism providing for political consultation platform with Germany and France. The triangle formula was established during a meeting in Deauville (18-19 October 2010), between D. Medvedev, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy - the first trilateral meeting on such a level since 2006.

Security agenda in Russia's dialogue with Europe

The problem of **anti-missile defense** is one of the key issues in the Russian security policy towards Europe, although it should be noted that this issue refers more to bilateral relations between Russia and NATO and Russia's relations with selected European countries than the EU - Russia agenda. The revision of the concept of a missile shield in Europe announced by the US president Barack Obama in September 2009 encouraged Russia to formulate the postulate of a complete abandonment of Washington's plans. During the NATO summit in Lisbon on 19-20 November 2010, member states of the Alliance decided to create an allied missile defense system in Europe using elements of the American and European countries and to invite Russia to discuss on possible cooperation. The summits decisions were critically judged by Russia. President Medvedev has stated that missile defense cooperation must eventually amount to "a full-fledged strategic partnership between Russia and NATO". This in fact means that Moscow is able to accept such a proposal that would lead to creating a joint missile defense system in Europe. In his television address on November 30th 2010 he warned his Western partners that any unilateral action on the part of Western states would be met with an adequate response on the part of Russia, comprising among others the development of offensive nuclear systems, that would eventually lead to "a new round of the arms race"¹⁰. The deploy-

10. M. Menkiszak, Obszar WNP: Powrót Rosji, Rocznik Strategiczny 2010/2011, Warszawa 2011, s. 194; A. Osborn, Dmitry Medvedev warns of Cold War-style

ment of Iskander-M missiles in the Kaliningrad Region are presented by Russia as a direct response to NATO decisions¹¹.

Another issue that reveals serious contradictions in the bilateral security agenda are the **perspectives of NATO expansion**. Russia consistently opposes NATO's enlargement, which was seen not so much by the way of extensions in 1999 and 2004 (the consequence of Russia's weakness in 1990s), but very visible at the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, when NATO considered awarding the Membership Action Plan to Georgia and Ukraine¹². The Russian position on that matter was a demonstration of the restoration of its influence as an international player. Attitude to NATO enlargement reveals that a fundamental contradiction exists in Russia's relations with the West. Moscow disputes the merits, and thus the legitimacy of NATO in the conditions of the fall of the Iron Curtain. In turn, NATO member states perceive the Alliance as the main pillar of Euro-Atlantic security system.

EU- Russian agenda on issues of international concern also show some important differences between parties.

The Syrian crisis remains one of the im-

arms race, "The Telegraph", 30.11.2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/8171037/Dmitry-Medvedev-warns-of-Cold-War-style-arms-race.html>.

11. On 14 December the large circulation German daily *Bild* published information that Russia had deployed 9K720 Iskander short-range ballistic missiles (NATO code SS-26 Stone), which a range of operation of up to 500 km, in the Kaliningrad Oblast near the border with Poland and along the border between Russia and the Baltic states. On 16 December the spokesman for the Russian Ministry of Defence general Igor Konashenkov while commenting on the information published by *Bild* said that Iskander ballistic missiles were part of the equipment of the Western Military District and the areas of their deployment do not infringe on international agreements. A. Wilk, Iskander ballistic missiles on NATO's borders, Eastweek, 18.12.2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-12-18/iskander-ballistic-missiles-natos-borders>. Russia has treated the issue of deploying Iskander missiles in Kaliningrad instrumentally. Moscow has consistently worked to present its actions as retaliation in response to the US's actions. Meanwhile, the rearmament of army units in the Kaliningrad region with latest-generation weaponry is a part of the general technical modernisation of the Russian army, which has been planned since at least 2006 (and currently is scheduled for 2011-2020). More: A. Wilk, Iskanders in the Kaliningrad region, regardless of the 'missile shield', Eastweek 01.02.2012, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2012-02-01/iskanders-kaliningrad-region-regardless-missile-shield>.

12. I. Elling, M. Maigre, NATO Membership Action Plan: A Chance for Ukraine and Georgia, International Centre for Defence Studies, http://www.icds.ee/fileadmin/failid/Indrek_Elling_MAP_Policy_Paper_Eng250308.pdf.

portant points of the bilateral agenda between the EU and Russia in recent months. Moscow, on the one hand is trying to act as a defender of international law, pointing out the need to resolve the conflict only by peaceful means and in conformity with UN regulations. On the other hand by supporting President Bashar al-Assad it is trying to save its faltering influence in the Middle East and to defend its particular political interests (Syria is perceived as the last "Russian" ally in the Middle East after the Arab Spring), economic interests (Russian relatively large investments in Syria) and military interests (Syria is the important recipient of Russian weapons; the Russian naval facilities¹³ in Tartus)¹⁴. Russia fears the danger flowing from the radical Islamic groups (mainly Sunni) increasingly active in Syria. The prospect of the spread of the influence of Islamic extremists in the Middle East is seen by Russia not only as a direct threat to the situation in the region, but also as a potential threat to the stability of the Russian North Caucasus. Hence the controlled delivery of weapons for the Assad regime – are in Moscow's view – aimed at stabilizing the situation and does not pose any threat as opposed to weapons supplied to the opposition, which can easily get into the hands of Islamic terrorist groups¹⁵. As Fiona Hill argues, Putin perceives Syria as "the latest battleground in a global multi-decade struggle between secular states and Sunni Islamism"¹⁶.

Although the European Union supported the demand of finding a political solution to the Syrian conflict, it did not take a single position on the disclosure of information of a suspect by the Syrian authorities to use chemical weapons. France and the United Kingdom supported the strong position of the United State, indicating the possibility of military intervention in Syria. Russia, expressing its objection to any military intervention plans put forward proposals diplomatic talks, which

13. Russian official usage classifies the installation as a Material-Technical Support Point (Russian: Пункт материально-технического обеспечения, ПМТО) and not a "base"; it's Mediterranean repair and replenishment spot.

14. M. Kaczmarek, Russia on the situation in Syria, OSW Eastweek 25.01.2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2012-01-25/russia-situation-syria>.

15. R. Allison, Russia and Syria: explaining alignment with a regime in crisis, "International Affairs", vol. 89, issue 4 (2013), pp. 795-823.

16. F. Hill, The real reasons Putin supports Assad: mistaking Syria for Chechnya, 25.03.2013, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139079/fiona-hill/the-real-reason-putin-supports-assad>.

have been positively received by both Syria and Western countries, freeing up the latter - in particular the United States - from the fierce reaction to the Syrian events. For effective implementation of the plan of taking control of Syrian chemical weapons arsenals and in terms of political stability in Syria, Russia has a chance to strengthen its status as a state mediator¹⁷. Russia's position on this issue is stronger than the EU's, which in fact - except France - resigned from serious diplomatic engagement, leaving the issue agenda element of bilateral Russian-American relations.

Another important issue is the question of the **Iranian nuclear program**. The main objectives of Russia's policy towards the Iranian nuclear program remained for years: 1) preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, which would significantly weaken the position of Russia in the Caspian region and the Middle East; 2) to prevent the US -Israeli intervention in Iran repeatedly signaled by both countries, which - in Russia's view - would have resulted serious destabilization of the region. Russia for many years tried to act as an intermediary, while at the same time maintaining contacts with Iran and Western countries and has established itself in the position of a key playmaker in resolving the Iranian issue¹⁸. By reaching a preliminary agreement on Iran in the 5 +1 format (the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany) in the autumn of 2013, is a better solution for Russia than a purely bilateral agreement between Iran and the U.S. Moscow will also make an attempt to tighten relations with Iran in order to bolster its position towards the USA. Russian government sources informed in January 2014 that Moscow is negotiating a strategic oil deal with Tehran (export of 25 million tones of Iranian oil per year to Russia at a value of approximately US\$18 billion). It's is more than probable that through starting the negotiations over oil supplies from Iran, Russia is trying to "invite" USA into the bargaining over issues such as missile defence in Europe, the Russian sphere of influence in the post-Soviet area¹⁹.

17. W. Rodkiewicz, Russia's diplomatic offensive over Syria, Eastweek, 13.09.2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-09-11/russias-diplomatic-offensive-over-syria>.

18. D. Trenin, Russia's Chance in the U.S. - Iranian Rapprochement, 4.10.2013, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=53209>.

19. W. Rodkiewicz, Russian diplomatic offensive in the Middle East: the American context, Eastweek, 22.01.2014, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-01-22/russian-diplomatic-offensive-middle-east-american-context>.

Another important issue is the approach towards **conflict resolution in the EU and Russia's common neighborhood**. Moscow declares its readiness to cooperate with the EU on the resolution of these conflicts, but so far there is little evidence of the real effects of cooperation. Russia was considered by the EU a country that could potentially participate in the mechanisms of crisis management together with the EU. After the Russian-Georgian conflict of August 2008, the collaboration still seems possible, but likely will take place under the conditions dictated mainly by Moscow²⁰. Russia has shown that it is a key player in the region, and by pursuing a policy of fait accompli proved the effectiveness of its foreign policy. It may therefore be that the Russian-Georgian conflict is an argument proving the thesis of a return to realpolitik, at least at the regional level. If the EU adopts as its starting point the factual situation ensuing after the Russian-Georgian "five-day war" cooperation will be possible. This will be done at the expense of the professed values of the European Union, and above all, coming to terms with the prospect of the failure of the concept of preserving the territorial integrity of Georgia's borders with South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The problem is even more complex. In fact Russia is not interested in reaching some serious, legally binding solutions concerning so called frozen conflicts, since it might - as in the case of Transnistria - have some positive impact on acceleration of the Moldova integration process with the European Union. Mechanisms used for conflict resolution in Iran or Afghanistan (there is a convergence of positions between parties that are aimed at truly solving the problem) cannot be applied to the conflicts in the former Soviet space. This stems from the fact that Russia does not see these conflicts as a threat to its own security, but as a means to maintain its influence in the region. Russia uses the so called frozen conflicts as a foreign policy tool that enables it to maintain serious leverages towards such states as Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

The cooperation in the crisis management between EU and Russia shall not be excluded, however, in practice it will be difficult to create some effective and fully operational security cooperation platform involving joint EU, Russia and the institutions of the Euro-Atlantic system. Such a mechanism would be

20. C. A Roberts, Russia and the European Union: The Sources and Limits of „Special Relationships”, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2007, p. 71.

very desirable, but its practical implementation seems impossible because of too large differences of interest that exist between the actors active in the region.

Concluding remarks

S. Meister notes that the improvement in relations between Russia and the United States in 2009, in particular the reduction of U.S. interest in engaging in post-Soviet space, was one of the main reasons for increased dialogue in the field of security between the EU and Russia²¹. The Russia – EU agenda, however focuses primarily on economic issues, particularly trade and energy cooperation. Security issues, including unresolved conflicts in the post-Soviet space, though gaining in importance, are not (and probably will not be in the mid-term perspective) the main plane of the dialogue. Some steps were taken in the bilateral and trilateral talk with the most influential EU member states (Germany, France).

Fundamental changes in Russian politics should not be expected in the near future. The main objectives and principles remain unchanged. Some novelty is to increase awareness of the interdependence of Russia and the outside world, and the fact that some objectives such as non-proliferation, stability in Central Asia and Afghanistan belongs to the common goals of Russia and the USA and the EU. Through the application of the proposed new security agreement and the signing of the Memorandum of Merseberg, Russia expects to increase its influence on security policy decisions taken in Europe. Submitting the European Security Treaty proposal Russia seeks to

21. S. Meister, A New Start for Russian-EU Security Policy?, The Weimar Triangle, Russia and the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, "Genshagener Papiere" Nr. 7 – July 2011.

revise the existing institutions, which meets at a different position from its European partners interested in solving problems in the existing institutional framework.

The Russian-Georgian "5-day war" should be treated on the one hand as a clear signal to the West that USA and Europe should respect Moscow's right to its sphere of privileged interests, and on the other hand as a message to Post-Soviet states that in case of a military conflict in this region it would be hard and naive to expect a strong, military reaction from the West.

From the Russian perspective, possible scenarios for the development of relations with Europe are derived from the policy of Western countries towards Russia and the shared neighbourhood. A cooperative scenario is possible in the case of reducing the EU's commitment to boost its own initiatives and integration projects in the post-Soviet space and permanent resignation from NATO expansion to the East (in particular with regard to Georgia and Ukraine). A confrontational scenario is possible in the case of continuation of the policy of rapprochement between the post-Soviet space integration and the West. Russia will not risk open confrontation, but through the existing political and economic instruments (trade wars, the instrumental use of the supply of energy resources, frozen conflicts in Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh) can effectively inhibit the progress of the approximation of the post-Soviet states and the West, thus impeding Russian - EU dialogue.

Considering the abovementioned differences between Russia and the West it is more than probable that the Kremlin's expectations with regard to implementation of the concept of Greater Europe might remain unfulfilled. ♦

Author

Dr Szymon Kardaś, research fellow, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich (OSW)