

## **Никонов В.А. К более стабильному Евро-Атлантическому региону: назад в будущее**

*Выступление на конференции "США, Европа и Россия: что дальше?"  
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## **Toward a More Stable Euro-Atlantic Region: Back to the Future**

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

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

structure was decisively rejected as a conspiracy aimed at undermining NATO. In Western capitals the governments preferred to simply expand existing institutions, leaving Russia out in the cold, offering only the rather insignificant negotiation platforms of the NATO-Russia Council and the EU-Russia summits. The Northern Atlantic alliance in essence became the Euro-Atlantic security system.

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

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

at all possible?

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

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

The United States, where there is increasing talk of a crisis in governance, is for the first time encountering the practical need to limit its politico-military ambitions due to economic restraints, and this is amplified by the country's continued large-scale military presence in the Middle East. The European Union, which is in the midst of economic, institutional and legitimacy crises, is primarily distracted by the

search for solutions to financial problems, paying ever less attention to issues of security, transatlantic solidarity or maintaining the agreed level of defense expenditures. Russia, which was written off in the 1990s as irrelevant, to the contrary is demonstrating solid macroeconomic indicators—6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world (though only 3% of the global GDP), growth of 4.5%, a balanced budget, external debt at an enviable 9% of GDP, 3<sup>rd</sup> largest foreign exchange reserves—and it intends to strengthen its defense potential, which was undermined over the past two decades. This reemerging Russia, seen as an authoritarian country, adhering to its own view on all international issues and often contradicting the position of the West, is perceived simultaneously as a growing challenge and as an emerging opportunity. It could become a more dangerous competitor or a more valuable partner, depending on how relations develop. Active discussion has begun on the question of what to do with Russia: to contain or to engage. A Euro-Atlantic partnership has once again been placed on the table as an option.

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

### **Who Wants What and Why?**

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

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

Barack Obama’s administration engaged in efforts aimed at strengthening unity in the West following its weakening under George W. Bush, creating for this pur-

pose an expert group led by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The main conclusions of the group can be summarized as follows:

- NATO, as the alliance which won the Cold War, should continue to play a key role in the consolidation of the Euro-Atlantic and provision of security; although the capacity of the US to play a leading role as it had previously is diminishing;
- An agreed bloc approach should be developed in relations with key countries outside the alliance: in Europe this is Russia, Serbia and the nonaligned countries; in the Middle East it is the Arabic states; and in South Asia it is India, Iran and Afghanistan.

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

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

At the same time, the United States "will continue to engage with Russia's neighbors as fully independent and sovereign states,"<sup>ii</sup> which reflects a complete rejection of the idea of Russia's sphere of influence. The Obama administration put the brakes on plans to speed the membership of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO while maintaining practical cooperation on a level necessary to prepare for membership. Following the war in South Ossetia in 2008, conventional military planning with

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regard to Russia was reinstated. The list of dangers presented by Moscow includes the supply of arms to "wrong" states. The de facto ban on access by Russian companies to American and other Western technologies of a military or dual-purpose nature remains in place. In terms of strategic relations with Russia, attention is giv-

en to the theme of supporting efforts toward its transformation as a post-imperial country and developing democracy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

development and is met with counter-measures, which naturally creates grounds for misunderstanding.

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

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

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

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

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

### **How to Institutionalize or Promote Partnership**

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

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

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

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

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

Russia came forward with its own initiative—a European Security Treaty. This initiative is based on the equal cooperation between Russia, the European Union and North America—the three branches of European civilization, as Medvedev put it. Moscow proposed engaging in the negotiation process all European states and the non-European NATO members as well as existing multilateral organizations specializing in security. This initiative is clearly dissonant with the West’s customary format for looking at security issues: within the framework of existing structures without imparting to the legally binding agreements.

Similarly, no broad support has been found in the West for Moscow’s proposal to consider the essence of the proposed Treaty in the format of Helsinki-2. As it turns out, even the Helsinki Plus (European Security Treaty) format, which would mainly be aimed at improving the OSCE charter, is not supported by the United States and Great Britain, in particular.

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

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

- Resuscitate the first basket of OSCE—Back to the Future!
- Hold an OSCE summit on security

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

My wish to policymakers is simple—think big.

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i James A. Baker. III. *The Politics of Diplomacy*. NY: Putnam, 1995, p.572.

ii *Quadrennial Defense Review – 2010*, pp.57-58

iii Now the question is Europe's response to Putin's return to the Russian Presidency // *Europe's World*. Summer 2012, p. 70.