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Russia and the European Union: The U.S. Impact on the Relationship

Roger E. Kanet



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University of Miami
1000 Memorial Drive
101 Ferré Building
Coral Gables, FL 33124-2231
Phone: 305-284-3266
Fax: (305) 284 4406
Web: www.miami.edu/eucenter

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Russia and the European Union: The U.S. Impact on the Relationship*

Roger E. Kanet ♦

Introduction

Since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union in late 1991 a complex set of relations has evolved among the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United States. The present discussion will focus mainly on the relationship between Russia and the EU. It is important at the very outset, however, to note that this relationship is complicated by the fact that generally Russia has attempted to ignore the existence of the EU and has dealt as much as possible with individual EU states – as has been the case in negotiations with Germany for the construction of Nord Stream gas pipeline directly from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, and those with Bulgaria concerning a similar pipeline, South Stream, under the Black Sea. In fact, in recent years the nature of relations with the Russian Federation has been a serious divisive issue within the European Union, as former communist states such as Poland and Estonia have strongly criticized their EU partners for downplaying the importance of what they view as a coercive Russian policy toward its neighbors in Central and Eastern Europe. The Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008 and the ensuing diplomatic recognition of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, have reinforced the concerns of the new members of the EU. So, in examining Russian-EU relations it will be important to recognize the fact that in foreign and security policy, even in the economic realm at times, the EU does not speak with a single voice, commitments to a Common Foreign and Security Policy notwithstanding. The European Union remains, therefore, a collection of sovereign states each of which – especially the larger ones – pursues its own relations with Russia.

Added to the complexity that arises from the divisions within the EU on the issue of relations with Russia, relations between Russia and the United States, a formal ally through NATO of most of the EU members, have soured in the past six years, or so. On some issues, such as the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, Russia joined with key U.S. NATO allies – for example, Germany and France -- to oppose American policy. Moreover, the new, postcommunist members of the European Union have generally been much more supportive of the United States and

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♦ **Roger E. Kanet** is Professor of International Studies at the University of Miami. He has published extensively on the foreign and security policy of the former Soviet Union/Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as the United States. His major publications include volumes coedited with Edward A. Kolodziej: *From Superpower to Besieged Global Power: Restoring World Order after the Failure of the Bush Doctrine* (2008); *Coping with Conflict After the Cold War* (1996); *The Cold War as Cooperation: Superpower Cooperation in Regional Conflict Management*, 1991; and *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World: Thermidor in the Revolutionary Struggle* (1989). Other edited books include *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power* (2007); *The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe* (2005); *The Post-Communist States in the World Community*, 1998; *Resolving Regional Conflicts*, 1998; (with A.V. Kozhemiakin), *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 1997 and Soviet Foreign Policy in Transition*, 1992.

critical of Russia than other EU/NATO members have been. In other words, the complexity of the relationships between the Russian Federation and the European Union/European states has been influenced and further complicated by Russian-US and EU-US relations. In many respects this essay draws upon and responds to four distinct, but overlapping, sets of literature. First, there are the many studies of the reemergence of a self-confident and assertive Russia under former President Vladimir Putin, a Russia committed to resuming its role as a major world actor – beginning with the recreation of what Bertil Nygren terms *Greater Russia* (former Soviet space) and expanding its influence into Central, and even Western, Europe, resorting to military intervention if deemed necessary, as we have seen in Georgia.¹ Of importance, as well, is the extensive discussion of the current nature of the Western alliance system and the prospects for the reestablishment of an effective and meaningful transatlantic alliance system.² A third important set of literature treats the likely emergence within the European Union of a common approach to foreign and security policy, as well as the absorption problems that the EU has faced, especially in the foreign and security policy area, since the expansions of 2004 and 2007 into Central Europe.³ Finally, a fourth literature, the relevance of which cuts across all three of the areas noted above, concerns the many studies of the deterioration of relations between the Russian Federation and the United States, especially since the short-lived ‘honeymoon’ following 9/11.⁴

Before beginning to examine the specifics of Russia-EU and/or Russian-US relations, it is important to note the context in which those sets of relationships have evolved for the past decade, or more. By the end of the 1990s, immediately prior to President Yeltsin’s selecting as his successor the unknown former KGB agent, Vladimir Putin, the position of the Russian Federation – both domestically and internationally – was extremely weak. In some respects Russia appeared to be on the verge of becoming a failed state, whose government was unable to control or administer its territory and whose views and interests were largely deemed irrelevant by major global actors. The Russian economy had been in virtual free fall since before the collapse of the USSR; the once vaunted Russian military was seemingly incapable of winning a conflict with a band of secessionists in Chechnya; Moscow was unable to collect taxes across much of its huge territory and, thus, unable to provide reliable incomes to the millions still on the

¹ Bertil Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin’s Foreign Policy Toward the CIS Countries*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007. See, also, Jakob Hedenskog, Vilhelm Konnander, Bertil Nygren, Ingmar Oldberg, and Christer Pursiainen, eds. *Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions of Security under Putin*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005; and Vladimir Rukavishnikov, ‘Choices for Russia: Preserving Inherited Geopolitics through Emergent Global and European Realities,’ in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 54-78.

² See the discussions of the future of the transatlantic relations in Michael Cox, ‘Beyond the West: Terrors in Transatlantia,’ *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 11, no. 2, (2005), pp. 203-33; Michael Cox, ‘The Transatlantic Crisis: The Wolf is at the Door,’ *European Political Science*, vol. 5 (2006), pp. 34-40; and Roger E. Kanet, guest editor, ‘The United States, Europe and the Future of the Transatlantic Relationship,’ special issue of *International Politics*, vol. 45, no. 3 (2008), pp. 231-397

³ The broad literature on the emergence of a common foreign and security policy within the European Union includes Jennifer Macnaughtan, and Stephan Keukeleire, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Recent studies focusing on the problems of absorption into the EU of the new states of Central Europe include Joan DeBardeleben, *The Boundaries of EU Enlargement: Finding a Place for Neighbours*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Joan DeBardeleben, ‘The Impact of EU Enlargement on the EU-Russian Relationship,’ paper presented at the Second Global International Studies Conference sponsored by WISC (World International Studies Committee), Ljubljana, Slovenia, 23-26 July 2008; and Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *Central European History and the European Union: The Meaning of Europe*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave-McMillan, 2007.

⁴ Useful analyses of Russian foreign policy in the 1990s and, especially, during the Putin period, include Hedenskog, et al., eds, *Russia as a Great Power*; Roger E. Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005; Kanet, ed., *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power*; Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002; Bertil Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin’s Foreign Policy Toward the CIS Countries*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2007; Dmitri V. Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2007; Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

state payroll; political and economic corruption and organized criminal activity was widespread.⁵ Although the Western states were still willing to include Russia in some of their important ‘clubs’ (e.g., the G-7), they generally ignored Russian objections to their policy initiatives – such as those concerning NATO expansion, NATO military operations against Serbia, etc. This was the context in which Vladimir Putin assumed the presidency of Russia and laid out a policy aimed at recreating the greatness of Russia.

1. The Reemergence of Russia as a Great Power

Almost immediately after assuming the presidency Vladimir Putin made clear his commitment to reestablishing Russia’s position as the preeminent regional power and as an important international actor. Essential preconditions for the fulfillment of these objectives, as the ‘Foreign Policy Concept’ laid out, were the internal political stability and economic viability of Russia⁶ “Russia had to overcome all evidence of and inclinations toward separatism, national and religious extremism, and terrorism. Putin moved forcefully and, in most cases effectively, in reasserting central governmental control in Russia. The economy, while still not flourishing, had shown strong signs of turning around with growth rates of 4.5, 10.0, and 5.0 percent in the years 1999-2001 (Central Bank, 2001). They continued, and even expanded in the following years – not merely in the oil and gas sector, but across much of the economy.⁷ These political and economic gains, however, occurred despite the growing disregard for the civil liberties and democratic processes to which Putin’s government was nominally committed. His anti-corruption campaign, for example, soon become a catch-all that targeted those who in any way challenged his policies or were concerned about the authoritarian turn in Russian politics– such as those associated with the independent national media, which was basically silenced by the end of Putin’s second term as President .

In the foreign policy realm Putin continued to seek allies who shared Russia’s commitment to preventing the global dominance of the United States that represents, in the words of the ‘Foreign Policy Concept,’ a threat to international security and to Russia’s goal of serving as a major center of influence in a multipolar world. Most of the issues on which Russia and the United States disagreed already in the mid-1990s continued to plague that relationship. In other words, until the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001 there was little evidence that the disagreements dividing Russia and the United States during the 1990s would disappear soon -- in particular since they derived from core elements of their respective foreign policy commitments. In fact, after a very brief hiatus immediately after 9/11, those issues reemerged and continue to plague Russian-U.S. relations in summer 2008.

However, Putin’s success in dealing with the major domestic problems challenging the Russian state at the beginning of the decade meant that Russia increasingly faced Europe and the United States from a position of vastly increased strength. Putin’s reassertion of central control over the territory of the Russian Federation – by eliminating the election of provincial governors, by suppressing domestic opponents and critics (especially the independent media) and by playing on the fears of Russian citizens of domestic terrorism,

⁵ On domestic developments see, especially, Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia’s Choice*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2004, and Lilia Shevtsova, *Russia: Lost in Transition*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 2007. Anders Åslund presents a somewhat more positive picture in *Russia’s Capitalist Revolution: Why Market Reform Succeeded and Democracy Failed*. Washington: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2007.

⁶ *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, Approved by the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin, 28 June. <http://www.mid.ru/mid/eng/econcept.htm>; also available in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 4403, 14. July. <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson> . See, also, ‘Kontseptsiia natsional’noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii’ (2000). *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* (Internet Version), 11 July. http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2000-01-14/6_concept.html.

⁷ *Russian Economic Report*, no. 16. The World Bank in Russia, June 2008. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTRUSSIANFEDERATION/Resources/rer16_Eng.pdf

crime, and general chaos – played an important role in strengthening the Russian state. Besides rebuilding the foundations of the Russian state at great cost to political liberty and democracy as a precondition for Russia’s ability to reassert itself as a major power, Putin and his associates benefited greatly from the exponential rise in global demand for gas and oil – at least until fall 2008 -- and the ensuing revitalization of the Russian economy. This, in turn, has contributed to Russia’s ability to pursue a much more active and assertive foreign policy, as many analysts have noted.⁸

Thus, Putin was quite successful – and fortunate -- during the eight years of his presidency in establishing the economic and political foundations for a strong centralized state as the prerequisites for Russia’s reasserting itself as a major player in international political and security affairs. While the voices calling for Russia to resume its role as a great, global, power in the 1990s were strident, but not realistic, similar voices have today taken over the dominant position in the Russian political debate – in so far as one can even refer to a debate – and are based upon realistic expectations of achieving many of their goals. Supporters of this policy position begin with former President Putin himself, as made clear in his statement to the Russian parliament and people that ‘the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.’⁹ This comment was followed early in 2006 with President Putin’s broad attack on virtually all aspects of U.S. policy delivered at a security conference in Munich that made clear Russia’s new assertive approach to foreign policy, beginning with its relations with the United States.¹⁰ As Mark Beissinger notes, Putin’s comments imply that the ‘persistence of the Soviet empire would have been preferable to the East European democracies or to the current fifteen states that now cover former Soviet space.’¹¹ The rhetoric emanating from Moscow since the military incursion into Georgia confirmed the image of a state intent upon reestablishing its dominant role, at least along its periphery.¹²

By 2008, when Putin turned the presidency over to his successor Dmitry Medvedev, Russia had reemerged as a major player in European economic and political affairs and the dominant actor in most of post-Soviet space. The foundation of this new role, as we will discuss below, is Russia’s semi-monopoly over the extraction and distribution of natural gas and oil

⁸ However, as many analysts have argued, the revived role of Russia as a regional and global political actor is based extensively on oil and gas production and exports, despite recent improvements in other aspects of the Russian economy. See, for example, Kathleen J. Hancock, ‘Russia: Great Power Image versus Economic Reality,’ *Asian Perspective*, vol. 31, no. 4, (2007), pp. 71-98; Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, ‘The Myth of Putin’s Success,’ *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 87, no. 1 (2008), pp. 68-84; and Rajan Menon and Alexander J. Motyl, ‘The Myth of Russian Resurgence,’ *The American Interest*, vol. 2, no. 4 (2007), pp. 96-101.

<http://www.the-american-interest.com/ai2/article.cfm?Id=258&Mid=8>

⁹ President’s speech to the Federal Assembly, April 2005. BBC Monitoring. ‘Putin Focuses on Domestic Policy in State-of-Nation Address to Russian Parliament.’ Source: RTR Russia TV, Moscow, in Russian 0800 gmt 25 April 2005; translated in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 9130, 25 April 2005. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/. For recent discussions of the commitment of Russia’s political elites to regaining great power status, see Ingmar Oldberg, ‘Russia’s Great Power Ambitions and Policy under Putin,’ and in Kanet, ed., *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power*, pp. 13-30 and Rukavishnikov, ‘Choices for Russia. Public opinion surveys in Russia indicate that a majority of Russians support the return of Russia to great power status. Fifty-one percent of those surveyed in early 2008 expected Putin’s successor to return Russia to a preeminent global role, while only nine percent expect the next president to establish good relations with the West. ‘Half of Russians Yearn for Super-Power Status,’ *Angus Reid Global Monitor*, 4 February 2008; reprinted in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 2008-24, 4 February 2008. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/

¹⁰ ‘Not a Cold War, but a Cold Tiff: Russia and America,’ *The Economist*, 17 February 2007, pp. 60-61. See, also, Stefan Wagstyl, ‘The Year Russia Flexed Its Diplomatic Muscle,’ *Financial Times*, 17 December 2007. Reprinted in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 2007-257, 17 December. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/

¹¹ Mark R. Beissinger, ‘The Persistence of Empire in Eurasia,’ *NewsNet: News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*, vol. 48, no. 1,(2008), pp. 1-8.

¹² Clifford J. Levy, ‘Russia Adopts Blustery Tone Set by Envoy,’ *The New York Times*, 28 August 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/28/world/europe/28moscow.html?hp=&pagewanted=print> See, also, President Medvedev’s State of the Nation address in November 2008. ‘Russian President Medvedev’s First Annual Address to Parliament, Rossiya TV, 5 November 2008, translated in *Johnson’s Russia List*, 2008-#292, 6 November 2008.

across much of Eurasia, and the growing direct influence that this semi-monopoly provides over the economies of neighboring states.

2. The Weakening of the Transatlantic Relationship

Since the turn of the century Russia has successfully rebuilt much of its position as a major power and has strengthened its overall position in its relationships with its near neighbors, with a number of emerging states in Asia, and with much of Europe. For its part, however, and despite its overwhelming global military superiority, the political position of the United States in Europe – and throughout the world – is significantly weaker than it had been a decade ago.¹³

An important part of the weakened position of the United States in world affairs relates to the major split that has occurred in transatlantic relations since the end of the cold war – greatly exacerbated since 2001 during the administration of George W. Bush by what many Europeans view as a hegemonic and unilateralist approach to policy making, most clearly visible in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. The general consensus of the contributors to a symposium on the future of the transatlantic relationship is that the current divisions in the transatlantic relationship are far more consequential and fundamental than disagreements in the past and will not likely be resolved to the point where the divisions in NATO or other aspects of the transatlantic security relationship can be completely healed.¹⁴ ‘Strategic dissonance’ and ‘fragmented security space’ will characterize future relations in which institutional linkages will be loosened and at best subsets of countries will join together to accomplish specific foreign policy or security objectives.¹⁵

Although the tone of relations between the major European states and Washington improved during the second Bush Administration, important policy differences – from those concerning the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to how to deal with global warming -- continue to plague the relationship. The question of how to respond to Russia and to Russia’s reinigorated and often contentious policy initiatives has been added to the list of other important differences. As we will discuss below, on issues ranging from growing European dependence on energy important from Russia – an issue that divides EU members, as well – to responses to Russian bullying tactics and pressure against Estonia, Ukraine and Georgia, even after the August 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia.¹⁶

3. The EU in Search of a Policy

¹³ See Edward A. Kolodziej, and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *From Superpower to Besieged Global Power: Restoring World Order after the Failure of the Bush Doctrine*. Athens: University of Georgia Press(2008), *passim*, and Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. .

¹⁴ Kanet, ed., ‘The United States, Europe and the Future of the Transatlantic Relationship.’ The status of the transatlantic relationship has generated a virtual cottage industry among analysts of U.S.-European relations. See, for example, the publications cited above in footnote 3.

¹⁵ These terms are used by Graeme Herd and Tuomas Forsberg, ‘Constructive Transatlantic Strategic Dissonance: Making a Virtue out of Vice?’ *International Politics*, vol. 45, no. 3 (2008), pp. 364-81 and Gabriela Marin Thornton, ‘The Paradox of the Transatlantic Security Project: From Taming European Power to Dividing It,’ *International Politics*, vol. 45, no. 3, (2008), pp. 382-97.

¹⁶ On the inability of the European Union to marshal support for truly serious responses to the Russian invasion see ‘Cold Comfort: The European Union Unites in Rather Mild and Belated Criticism of Russia’s War in George,’ *The Economist*, 6 September 2008, pp. 29-32, and Jean-Dominique Giuliani, ‘The European Union and the Russo-Georgian War,’ *European Issues*, no. 208, Fondation Robert Schuman, 1 September 2008. <http://www.robert-schuman.edu/questioneurope.php?num=13-108>.

In recent years, after more than a decade of both ‘the deepening and broadening’ integration in Europe the European Union has seemingly lost some of its *raison d’être*. The defeat of the proposed constitution in 2005 by voters in both France and the Netherlands and the more recent rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by Irish voters in spring 2008 have created a constitutional crisis in the EU. The political mechanisms created half a century ago for decision making by a community of half a dozen members no longer work effectively or efficiently for a union of twenty-seven members. Yet, coming up with a solution to the problem has, to date, been beyond the capability of the leadership of the EU.

A closely related issue – related because many analysts attribute the negative votes in France, the Netherlands and Ireland to the fear of being swamped by immigrants – is the rebirth of nationalism generally targeted against foreign immigrants. Even though the primary targets of the anti-immigrant forces are those from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, the EU itself has become a relatively easy target of the nationalist backlash.

Associated with this issue of the revival of nationalism in much of the ‘old EU’ -- as well as the existence of strong nationalist views in the new, postcommunist, members – is the fact that national governments across Europe – in particular the larger ones -- simply have not been able to replace individual national interests with supranational EU, interests. The common foreign and security policy to which the EU committed itself a decade and a half ago is no closer to realization in 2008 than it was more than a decade ago– despite the fact, that progress has been made in creating joint EU military assets.¹⁷ The disparate responses of the countries of Europe to the U.S. decision to overthrow Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq provide an excellent illustration of the lack of a common sense of EU interest and the absence of anything approximating a common policy. While France, Germany Belgium and others joined with the Russian Federation in opposing U.S. policy, the UK, Italy, Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands, and virtually all of the countries of Central Europe on the verge of entering the European Union supported U.S. intervention and several provided substantial numbers of troops to support the intervention and occupation. As we will see in the following section of this chapter, the issue of relations with Russia has become another important source of division among the member countries of the European Union. While the ‘old’ members seem more interested in ensuring their long-term energy supplies and in normalizing relations with the Russian Federation, the ‘new’ members are much more concerned about the suppression of dissent in post-Soviet states, about Russian domination over other members of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and about Russia’s use of the ‘energy weapon’ to blackmail those countries dependent on supplies of gas and oil that originate in or pass through Russian territory.¹⁸ Needless to say, the invasion and partial occupation of Georgia has contributed to that sense of insecurity.¹⁹

For purposes of the present analysis the most important issue concerning the EU and its overall foreign and security policy is the fact that no such thing as a common EU foreign policy exists on issues of major foreign and security policy concern. Rhetoric about a common foreign and security policy aside, the member states of the EU pursue their own national interests when it comes to their relations with the rest of the world. This is especially the case for the larger states such as the UK, Germany and France, and Poland, all of which have proven to be far from willing to turn over policymaking authority in the foreign and security area to the complex decision-making procedures and conflicting objectives of the entire community. This means that Russia –

¹⁷ See Marin Thornton, *European Security in the Post Cold War Era*.

¹⁸ For a comprehensive study of Russia’s use of energy dependence and other economic weapons in dealing with its near neighbors see, especially, Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia*.

¹⁹ Evidence of this can be seen in the rapidity with which both the Poles and the Czechs finalized agreements with the United States for the placement of radar installations and an antiballistic missile system – after months of internal debate about the entire program. Nicholas Kulish, ‘Georgian Crisis Brings Attitude Change to a Flush Poland,’ *The New York Times*, 21 August 2008.

and the United States, for that matter – do not deal with a large and integrated Europe, but rather is able to pursue a multiplicity of policies with individual European states.

4. Russia and the European Union

Throughout the history of the European Union, the Soviet Union and more recently the Russian Federation have, in effect, attempted to ignore the emergence of the multinational institution as a collective decision-making organization in favor of dealing individually and bilaterally with the member states – and, thus, playing them off against one another. Given the absence of a full commitment on the part of the EU's members to collective decision making in the areas of foreign and security policy – and, at times, even in trade and economic policy, as well as energy policy – the approach has generally been rather successful for the Russians. Yet, over the past decade the EU has also pursued a broad range of agreements and relations with the Russian Federation. At times, the EU and other West European political institutions have been extremely critical of Soviet domestic and foreign policy behavior concerning issues as wide-ranging as Russia's brutal treatment of Chechen separatists, the suppression of domestic dissent, support for secessionist movements in neighboring states, the use of gas and oil deliveries to blackmail neighboring states, and related matters.²⁰

Prior to the June 2008 EU-Russian summit two clear camps had emerged within the European Union on the issue of relations with Russia -- the military incursion into Georgia in August appears to have only reinforced those positions. On the one side are, especially, the new member states – led by Poland and Estonia. Allied with them at times and on some issues have been Sweden and the United Kingdom (Whitmore, 2008b). For the Central European states recent Russian treatment of Georgia and Estonia, as well as continuing support for secessionist groups in post-Soviet countries, was viewed as reminiscent of almost half a century of Soviet domination throughout the region. Sweden has reacted especially to Russia's treatment of Georgia over the past year even prior to the military incursion, while the UK has been concerned with all of these issues, in addition to Russia's reported involvement in the 2006 murder of ex-Russian security officer Aleksandr Litvinenko in London.²¹ On the other hand, important founding EU members 'are energetically making peace with Russia,' according to Edward Lucas. 'You've got France, Germany, and Italy, all in the Russian camp as far as energy is concerned.'²²

Before examining in any detail recent developments in the relationships between Russia and the European Union and its member states, it is important to discuss more fully the overall evolution of Russian relations with the West since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Immediately after the emergence of the Russian Federation President Yeltsin and his first foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev pursued for a brief time a decidedly pro-Western policy, as they attempted to gain acceptance into the various institutions that comprised the industrialized 'West.' The failure of the United States and Western Europe to respond as expected, as well as strong domestic

²⁰ On Russian policy in these and related matters see, especially, Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia*. Recent EU-Russian relations are treated by numerous analysts, including DeBardeleben, 'The Impact of EU Enlargement'; Katlijn Malfliet, Lien Verpoest and Evgeny Vinokurov, eds., *The CIS, the EU and Russia: The Challenges of Integration*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; and Stephen Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: History, Culture and International Relations*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. See, also, Maria Raquel Freire's chapter in this volume.

²¹ See Brian Whitmore, 'Will Brussels Get Tough with Moscow?' *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 13 July 2008. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1183415.html>.

²² Cited in Brian Whitmore, 'Will Brussels Get Tough with Moscow?' *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 13 July 2008. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1183415.html> Lucas is deputy foreign editor of *The Economist* and author of a strongly critical book on Russian foreign policy *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

opposition, resulted already by the mid-1990s in a decided shift in Russian policy.²³ As various analysts have noted (Simes, 2007; Sakwa, 2008), the West – in particular the United States – largely wrote off Russia as an important actor in the international system and virtually ignored Russia’s persistent and loud opposition to various Western policy initiatives. NATO expansion and the NATO interventions in ex-Yugoslavia were but two of the areas in which Russian concerns were ignored. Although Europe was more willing to consider Russian perspectives than was Washington, its approach to admitting Russia into ‘the core membership of the leading group of nations’ included conditions that ‘ultimately proved counterproductive in Russia’s case.’²⁴ In other words, for the first decade of its existence Russia was simply not taken seriously as a major actor in European politics and was treated much in the manner that Western states dealt with developing countries – on Western terms only. This factor, as Richard Sakwa argues most persuasively, contributed to the decision-making environment surrounding Vladimir Putin on his arrival in Moscow.²⁵ During the first decade of its relations with the Russian Federation the West, led by the United States, generally attempted to impose on Russia its own conception of acceptability for entry into what Yeltsin had termed the ‘the community of civilized states’.²⁶ Russia, even at its weakest in August 1998 after the collapse of its financial system, was simply unwilling to accept rules dictated by the West. As its economic and political position strengthened during the years of Putin’s presidency, Russia became much more assertive in pursuing what Russian leaders viewed as their legitimate interests, especially across former Soviet space.²⁷

a. Russian Energy and EU Political Divisions

For the most part the divisions in Europe’s responses to Russian policy have widened since the end of the 1990s – in large part, as Europe has sought long-term solutions to its dependence on imports of energy. Just as important, however, as the turn to Russia of some of the EU states for energy supplies has been the virtual doubling of the size of EU membership since 2004, with ten of the new members having experienced almost half a century of Soviet domination after the Second World War.

Probably the most important issue on which EU members now disagree concerns the growing dependence of Europe on energy supplied by the Russian Federation. Moreover, since the mid-1990s the United States has been an active player in the effort to contain Russia’s growing control over the development and distribution of oil and gas from Eurasia destined for Central and Western Europe. Since at least the mid-1990s the United States has led the efforts to develop pipelines for the distribution to Europe of gas and oil from the energy-rich countries of Central Asia that will skirt Russian territory and, thus, Russian influence or control. This policy

²³ Alexei Arbatov provides an excellent review of the shift in Russian policy. See, especially, his ‘Russia’s Foreign Policy Alternatives,’ *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 4 (1993), pp. 5-43, and ‘Russian Foreign Policy Thinking in Transition,’ in Vladimir Baranovsky, ed., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 135-159.

²⁴ Richard Sakwa, ‘New Cold War’ or Twenty Years’ Crisis? Russia and International Politics,’ *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 2 (2008), pp. 248.

²⁵ To a substantial degree this is the gist of the analyses of the ‘loss of Russia’ -- or, rather, the conflictual nature of Russian-Western relations -- presented by both Dimitri Simes in ‘Losing Russia,’ *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 6 (2007), pp. 36-52, and Dmitri Trenin in ‘Russia Redefines Itself and Its Relations with the West,’ *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 2 (2007), pp. 95-105. It is a position taken, as well, by political commentators such as Thomas Friedman ‘What Did We Expect?’ *The New York Times*, 20 August 2008.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/opinion/20friedman.html?sq=Friedman.What did we . . .](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/opinion/20friedman.html?sq=Friedman.What%20did%20we...)

²⁶ Boris Yeltsin on Russian Television, 14 February 1992; cited in Suzanne Crow, ‘Russian Federation Faces Foreign Policy Dilemmas,’ *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 10 (1992), <http://www.rferl.org/newsline/search/>.

²⁷ Graeme Herd argues that since 2003 Russian relations have deteriorated with all four different communities of states that comprise Europe. See his ‘Europe and Russia: From Strategic Dissonance to Strategic Divorce?’ in Thierry Tardy, *European Security: Internal and External Dynamics*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, forthcoming.

has been driven by the concern in Washington that Russia's influence vis-à-vis the West would be enhanced were Moscow to control the distribution of Central Asian gas and oil, as well as that produced in Russia itself;²⁸ The Russians, understandably, have viewed this U.S. approach – especially in conjunction with the expansion of NATO eastward -- as a continuation of the cold war policy of containment.

U.S. efforts to contain Russian influence over the delivery of energy to Europe have failed to accomplish their objectives; Russia has effectively outmaneuvered the United States in its relations with the oil and gas producing countries of Central Asia. Although several pipelines have been completed that avoid Russian territory,²⁹ In recent years Moscow has reestablished solid political and economic relations with the authoritarian regimes of Central Asia. They have signed new agreements with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other major energy producers that will result in expanded supplies of gas and oil destined for European consumers through the existing and planned pipeline network that crosses Russian territory.³⁰ This is all part of a Russian effort to increase control over the oil and gas that flows from Central Asia and the Russian Federation to Europe – a control that, as we have seen in recent years, Moscow is willing to use for political purposes in relations with neighboring states.

Especially important for the current argument is the fact that Russia and important Western partners have agreed to plans for the future distribution of oil and gas to Europe that will eliminate the possible interference of current transit states such as Ukraine and Belarus, as well as Poland, by avoiding those transit states altogether. The planned Nord Stream pipeline under the Baltic Sea directly from Russia to the Baltic coast of Germany, as well as the more recently announced South Stream pipeline that will run under the Black Sea from Russia directly to Bulgaria, will expand Russia's domination over the gas markets of Europe, while reducing the possibility of countries such as Ukraine, Belarus or Poland disrupting those flows.³¹ Overall,

²⁸ See Gabriela Marin Thornton and Roger E. Kanet, 'The Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States,' in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 165-82; Roger E. Kanet and Larisa Homarac, 'The US Challenge to Russian Influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus,' in Kanet, ed., *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power*, pp. 173-94; and Charles E. Ziegler, 'Energy in the Caspian Basin and Central Asia,' in Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment*, pp. 201-28.

²⁹ The first of these, the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, was opened in May 2005. It begins in Azerbaijan and brings oil from the Caspian area via Georgia to the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. See, S. Frederick Starr and Svante E. Cornell, eds, *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West*. Washington: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program – A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, 2005. At the same time, however, a gas pipeline from Russia to Turkey under the Black Sea has also begun operating. See Ziegler, 'Energy in the Caspian Basin.'

³⁰ See Melissa Hahn, "Moscow Achieves Success with Kazakh Oil Deal," *Power and Interest News Report*, 29 May 2007 and Andrew E. Kramer, "Central Asia on Front Line in Energy Battle," *The New York Times*, 20 December 2007, pp. C1, C6..

In fact, in fall 2008 the EU was involved in efforts to ensure that a planned pipeline from Azerbaijan through Turkey did not collapse as a result of agreements with Russia that will draw gas to Russia rather than through southern pipelines. See, Ahto Lobjakas, 'EU Fights For Nabucco's Future,' *RFE/RL Central Asia Report*, 7 November 2008. http://www.rferl.org/Content/EU_Fights_For_Nabuccos_Future/1338540.html China has become a much more important competitor with Russia for Central Asian gas and oil and for political influence, more broadly, than is the United States. Moreover, China represents an exploding market for Central Asian energy exports and affords local governments with an alternative to complete dependence on the Russian Federation. Moreover, as Russia, it does not make the type of political demands on political elites that have characterized U.S. policy. See Marcel De Haas, 'Current Geostrategy in the South Caucasus,' *Power and Interest News Report*, 15 December 2006; Bruce Pannier, 'Central Asia: Beijing Flexes Economic Muscle Across Region,' *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 29 May 2008; 'China/Russia: Focus on Pipelines During Medvedev Visit,' *RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty*, 29 May 2008.

³¹ 'Intelligence Brief: Poland Fumes Over Russian-German Projects: Meeting in Lithuania to Counter Russian Influence in F.S.U.,' *Power and Interest News Report*, 2 May 2006; 'Poland Wants Talks with Russia, Germany on Pipeline,' *RFE/RL Newline*, vol. 12, no. 5, part 1, 8 January 2008; Vladimir Isachenkov, 'Russia Strengthens Gas Grip,' *MiamiHerald.com*, 19 January 2008; 'Pipedreams: Eastern Europe, America and Russia,' *The Economist*, 26 January 2008, p. 50

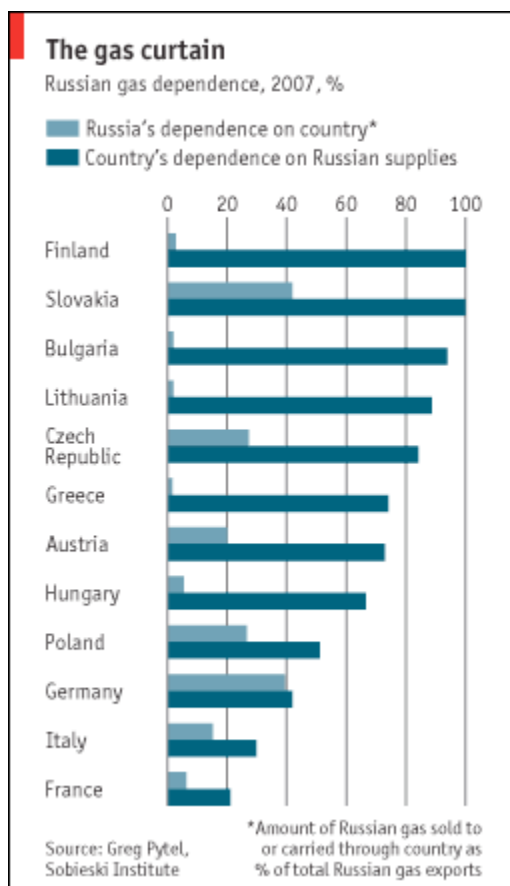
Russia has positioned itself effectively to control the production and distribution of **energy** across almost the entirety of former Soviet space and, thus, to Europe as well, as part of former President Putin's commitment to establish Greater Russia as a major global actor. The dependence on external sources for virtually all gas and oil needs of some countries in the European Union and their willingness to cut bilateral deals with Russia outside the context of a common EU policy (notably Germany), has greatly aided Russia in its attempt to employ energy as a foreign policy tool.

Poland has been especially critical of the Russian-German pipeline agreement – as Washington has also been – as part of its overall criticism of Russian policy. The two countries were engaged throughout 2006 and 2007 in a series of confrontations that included the Russian ban on meat imports from Poland and Poland's veto within the EU of the extension of the framework agreement on EU-Russian framework relations.³² The Poles strongly opposed what they viewed as Germany's willingness to capitulate to Russia, while the latter exerted unacceptably hostile pressures on EU member states.

The Russian-Ukrainian gas price dispute of January 2009, which resulted in a virtually complete cut-off of all Russian gas supplies to Central and Western Europe through Ukraine made clear that Moscow is willing to use its control over energy exports to accomplish its economic and political objectives even if this means not fulfilling its contractual obligations to third parties. The current dispute, in which Russia is demanding that Ukraine pay more than two and a half times as much for gas deliveries than it has been paying, no doubt has political as well as economic objectives.³³ The complete cutting off in mid-Winter of all gas supplied through pipelines across Ukrainian territory – a response to Russia's charge that Ukraine was siphoning off for its own use gas meant for customers further West – created serious problems for those customers. Although the European Union has attempted to mediate the dispute between Russia and Ukraine, at the date of writing gas flows were still turned off. Whether the impact of this dispute will strengthen the position of EU members like Germany that have called for "balanced" policies toward Russia to ensure stable energy supplies or those such as Poland who call for more a more assertive EU policy toward Russia is by no means clear.

³² Speaking to the press at a book-launch in Moscow in 2007, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who also heads the Nord Stream pipeline company, urged EU powers to stop backing Poland on trade and to counter US missile shield plans or risk alienating Russia. He described Poland's outstanding veto on a new EU-Russia treaty as "narrow-minded nationalism" and called the US missile scheme "politically dangerous." "For the good of Europe it's sometimes necessary to forget about the interests of individual [member] states," he said. Poland had imposed the veto in late 2006 in reaction to a Russian ban on Polish meat exports. "It is Germany's responsibility . . . to persuade the United States to abandon these plans," he added, on Washington's push to build two rocket and radar bases in Poland and the Czech Republic by 2012. Cited in Philippa Runner, 'Ex-German chancellor Warns EU on Russia Summit,' *EUObserver.com*, 10 September 2007. <http://euobserver.com/9/24729>

³³ Philip Pan, "Economy, Politics Stoke Russia-Ukraine Gas Quarrel: Deliveries Halted To European Users As Feud Deepens," *The Washington Post*, 7 January 2009; reprinted in *Johnson's Russia List*, 2009-#5, 8 January 2009; "Pipe Down: Russia, Ukraine and Gas," *The Economist*, 10 January 2009, p.p. 44-45.



Source: 'Cold Comfort: The European Union Unites in Rather Mild and Belated Criticism of Russia's War in Georgia,' *The Economist*, 6 September 2008, p. 31.

b. War in Georgia, 'Frozen Conflicts,' the 'Color Revolutions' and Human Rights

EU members also disagree among themselves on the importance of a series of issues that relate to Russia's relations with its new neighbors, as well as to human rights abuses in Russia itself. The 'frozen conflicts' about which new EU members have been most agitated relate to the Transdnistria region of Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh, and, especially the two breakaway regions of Georgia – South Ossetia and Abkhazia.³⁴ The issue of Russian support for secessionist forces in several postcommunist states, not to speak of the direct military intervention in Georgia in August 2008 in support of such forces, resonates strongly among new EU members, as does Russian economic pressure against neighboring states on numerous occasions since the collapse of the former USSR, but especially during the presidency of Vladimir Putin. Moscow has shown its willingness to impose severe economic pressures – especially by shutting off the supply of nature gas and oil – to strengthen its bargaining position in economic and political disputes with countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Estonia.³⁵ It has been this willingness to coerce

³⁴ See Jaap Ora, 'Frozen Conflicts and the EU – A Search for a Positive Agenda,' *Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Yearbook 2006*, pp. 50-58. http://web-static.vm.ee/static/failid/192/Jaap_Ora.pdf and 'Tales from the Black Sea: Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia,' *The Economist*, 5 July 2008, p. 64.

³⁵ In 2007 after the Estonian government decided to move a Soviet war memorial from the center of Tallinn to its international military cemetery Russians – in both Estonia and in the Russian Federation – mounted attacks on the Estonian government in Tallinn and its embassy in Moscow. This was followed by the cutting off of Russian oil and

and bully small neighbors that has revived serious fears among new EU members – most former dependencies of the Soviet Union -- about the prospects for their longer-term security in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia. Poland and Lithuania used their ‘veto’ power to prevent the negotiation of a new partnership agreement between the EU and Russia for more than a year and a half. At a joint meeting between the EU and Russia in May 2007, these and other issues split the two sides and precluded any meaningful agreement on issues deemed important by either side.³⁶

As Russian analyst Fyodor Lukyanov (2007) has pointed out, ‘For a long while, Old Europe didn’t want to deal with the problems of Poland’s meat or Lithuania’s oil supplies; it suggested that these countries should resolve their own conflicts with Russia.’ It is has been precisely the unwillingness of the major powers of Western Europe to support their new EU partners fully and effectively that continues to provide the opening for the United States, whose views of Russia and Russian policy are much closer to those of countries such as Poland and the Baltic states (*Economist*, 2008a).

Related to the issue of ‘frozen conflicts’ is that of the so-called color revolutions (the Orange Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and the Rose Revolution in Ukraine in 2004) that brought to power Western-oriented and semi-democratic political regimes. In both of these cases, as also in the case of Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution (2005), Moscow reacted quite negatively to the change in political forces that – for the time being, at least – reduced its ability to influence political developments in what were viewed as key components in Russia’s attempt to reestablish its political dominance in a ‘Greater Russia.’ In both Georgia and Ukraine the relationship with the Russian Federation has been extremely conflictual ever since the shift in domestic political power, culminating in the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia.³⁷ As already noted, one result has been Russia’s attempt to use its economic leverage, especially its control over energy, to influence the policies of both countries.

For the new members of the European Union, these and related matters are issues of great security concern, while for most of the countries of Western Europe they are of but secondary concern to the immediate and longer-term need to ensure adequate energy supplies for the future.

coal deliveries, a massive cyber attack that virtually closed down the information technology sector of this former Soviet colony. See, Judy Dempsey, (‘EU and NATO Seek to Quell Russia-Estonia Spat,’ *International Herald Tribune*, 3 May 2007. <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/05/03/news/union.php>; ‘Bronze Meddling: Russian Hypocrisy and Heavy-Handedness Towards a Former Colony,’ *The Economist*, 5 May 2007, p. 65; and ‘A Cyber-Riot,’ *The Economist*, 12 May 2007, p. 55.

The dispute with Ukraine in 2005-2006, which resulted in Russia’s cutting off exports of gas in the middle of winter – resulted from Gazprom’s decision to more than triple the price of gas to bring it closer to world market prices. This decision, however, emerged only in the aftermath of the ‘Orange Revolution’ which had reversed the ‘victory’ of Russia’s preferred candidate in the recent Ukrainian presidential election. Until that time Putin’s policy toward Ukraine had been based on pragmatic long-term political and economic considerations. However, with the collapse of pro-Russian political forces in Ukraine, Russia initiated a new, more coercive, approach to demonstrate to the Ukrainians that assertions of independence from Moscow’s influence would have real costs. Probably the most comprehensive examination of Russia’s use of economic power – especially its control over oil and gas deliveries – in accomplishing political objectives is that of Bertil Nygren. See his articles ‘Russia’s Relations with Ukraine and Belarus,’ in Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment*, pp. 149-164; ‘Putin’s Attempts to Subjugate Georgia: From Sabre-Rattling to the Power of the Purse,’ in Kanet, ed., *Russia: Re-Emerging Great Power*, pp.107-123; and ‘Putin’s Use of Energy Resources with Respect to CIS Countries,’ unpublished paper presented at the Seventh International CISS Millennium Conference, Buçaco, Portugal, 14-16 June 2007. See, also, Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia, passim*, and Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia’s New Imperialism*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004.

³⁶ Christian Lowe, ‘EU Snubs Russian Requests at Frosty Summit,’ *Reuters*, 18 May 2007. Reprinted in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 2007-113, www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/. Participants at the third – and seemingly most recent -- meeting of the group in May 2006 included Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine, with observers from Poland, the EU, and the OSCE See ‘Intelligence Brief: Poland Fumes over Russian-German Project,’ p. 2).

³⁷ On Russian-Ukrainian relations see Emma Stickgold, ‘Russia, Ukraine Discuss Contentious Energy, Security Issues,’ *Voice of America*, 1 July 2008. Printed in *Johnson’s Russia List*, no. 2008-125, 2 July. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/ and Yuliya Tymoshenko, ‘Containing Russia,’ *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 86, no. 3 (2007), pp. 69-82,

These views are represented probably most clearly by Gerhard Schröder, both as Chancellor of Germany, when he pushed a strong pro-Russia economic policy in the early 2000s, and today as head of the Nord Stream pipeline project meant to provide a direct link between Russia and Germany. Even with the change in government in recent years in both Berlin, to Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Paris, to President Nicolas Sarkozy, both of whom are much more critical of Moscow than were their predecessors, Western policy positions towards Russia remain more committed to cooperation and compromise than are those of their new Eastern partners in the European Union.

c. NATO Expansion, US Missile Defense, and Ex-Yugoslavia

In addition to the issues of energy dependence, 'frozen conflicts,' and Russia's assertive role towards neighboring states, other important matters cloud Russian relations with the West and divide EU member states concerning the appropriate response to be taken by the EU. Ever since the mid-1990s NATO expansion eastward has elicited very negative reactions from Russia, which views such expansion as a breach of agreements reached between the former USSR and the West at the time of German reunification and, more seriously, as a direct challenge to Russian security – and influence in what Moscow views as its legitimate sphere of influence. Although the United States was the driving force for expansion in 1997 and 2004 and remains the major advocate of the further inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO, long-term European members have been lukewarm or even opposed to further expansion eastward.³⁸

Yet, on this issue, as well, the position of the new members of the European Union and NATO differs from that of their western EU partners. Virtually all of them joined NATO as a means not only to be accepted into one of the core Western clubs, but also in the expectation of enhancing their security. They view the incorporation of countries such as Ukraine and Georgia into NATO as a strengthening of their own long-term security situation vis-à-vis Russia. Russia, for its part, continues to make clear that further movement of NATO eastward would elicit a very negative response. In his new role as Russian prime minister, Vladimir Putin has threatened to terminate Russia's 'military and other contracts with Ukrainian weapons and space facilities that depend on Moscow, if Ukraine joins the Western defense alliance'³⁹ Moreover, Russia's unwillingness to permit NATO's continued extension eastward is probably the clearest message to emerge from the invasion of Georgia in August 2008.⁴⁰ Yet, as has become clear on a broad

³⁸ See Steven Erlanger and Steven Lee Myers, 'NATO Allies Oppose Bush on Georgia and Ukraine, *New York Times* 3 April 2008, and Nuray Ibyamova, 'Eastern Enlargement and the European Union's Security Agenda,' in Kanet, ed., *New Security Environment*, pp. 97-114. It is important to recognize that the Nordic countries – especially Finland, Sweden and Norway – have indicated that the recent flexing of its military muscles by Russia -- with the resumption after more than fifteen years of naval and air patrols off the northern coasts of Scandinavia and the planting of the Russian flag at the bottom of the Arctic -- has raised concerns about their future security. See 'Intelligence Brief: Russia Reasserts Power with Thermobaric Weapons and Bomber Runs,' *Power and Interest News Report*, 8 November 2007; Herd, 'Europe and Russia'; and Jyri Häkämäies, 'Minister of Defense Jyri Häkämäies at CSIS in Washington,' 9 June 2007. http://www.defmin.fi/speeches?663_m+3335.

³⁹ See Stickgold, 'Russia, Ukraine Discuss' and Ilya Kramnik, 'Russia, Ukraine and NATO – Desperate Triangle,' *RIA Novosti*, 23 June 2008. Translated in *Johnson's Russia List*, no. 2008-120, 24 June. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/. A Russian newspaper reports that at a meeting with President Bush then-President Putin lost his temper and said: 'Do you understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state?' He continued that if the country joined NATO it would 'cease to exist.' Cited in 'Redrawing the MAP in Europe: European Security,' *The Economist*, 12 April 2008, p. 57.

⁴⁰ In a recent outline of the 'principles' underlying Russian foreign policy President Dimitry Medvedev noted both the protection of the life and dignity of Russian citizens and business community, whether at home or abroad, as well as 'privileged interests' in regions of special interest, such as Georgia. Medvedev's comments on current world affairs and on the foundations of Russian policy were developed much more fully in his meeting with participants at a conference in Moscow of the International Club Valdai. See Dmitry Medvedev, 'Medvedev Sets Out Five Foreign Policy Principles in TV Interview,' *Vesti TV*, 31 August 2008; *BBC Monitoring*. Translated in *Johnson's Russia List*, 2 September. 2008-#163; and Dmitry Medvedev, 'Transcript of the Meeting with the Participants in the International Club Valdai,' 12 September 2008. http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/09/12/1518_type63374type63376.

range of issues, the divisions within NATO and the EU permit Moscow to attempt to exploit divisions within the Western community in order to accomplish its own objectives.⁴¹

If anything, the U.S. decision to place elements of its planned missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland has generated even more fierce opposition in Moscow than have U.S. plans for further expansion of NATO membership. At every stage in the emerging agreements between Washington and its Polish and Czech allies for the location of portions of a U.S. missile defense system in Central Europe, the Russians have threatened to respond with 'military resources,'⁴² President Medvedev has made most clear that the Russian position on this issue has not shifted with the change in presidents by stating to a group of high-level Russian diplomats: 'The deployment of elements of the U.S. global missile defense system in Eastern Europe is only aggravating the situation. We will have to respond appropriately and our American and European partners have already been warned.'⁴³

Western policy toward ex-Yugoslavia, in particular the widespread support for and recognition of the new state of Kosovo, has also elicited serious Russian opposition and has, in effect, provided Russia with the justification for threatened recognition of the independence of the secessionist regions that they have supported for most of the post-Soviet period – i.e., especially Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transdnistria.⁴⁴ On the issue of Kosovo's independence the members of the EU and NATO have been far less divided than they have been on growing European energy dependence on Russia, NATO expansion, or U.S. missile defense. Yet, even here important countries such as Spain – for obvious reasons related to domestic politics – have taken a separate approach

5. The U.S. Impact on EU-Russian Relations

As should be clear at this point in the development of the argument of this paper the European Union lacks a coherent policy in its relations with Russia. Moreover, the key issues that divide the member countries of the European Union are also issues on which the United States has taken clear positions – almost always in line with those EU members that have voiced the loudest concerns about the potential or real threats to security represented by Moscow. The division is between those who recommend patience and caution in dealing with Russia and those who focus on what they view as aggressive behavior toward neighboring states. The first position has been voiced by key German political figures such as former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and former German Finance Ministry official and new president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Thomas Mirow.⁴⁵ The fact that this position coincides with the commitment of the German government to regularize long-term energy supply agreements with the Russian Federation has not been lost on those within the European Union who are more concerned by what they view as a revival of Russian assertiveness and a its potential future threat to their

⁴¹ See Gardner Hall, 'The Uncoordinated 'Double Enlargement' and Russia,' *The DiploGoat: E-Magazine for Modern East-West Relations*, no. 1 (2008).

⁴² See Arthur Bright, 'US-Russia Tensions Rise Over Anti-Missile Bases,' *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 February 2006. http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/printer_o22307A.shtml; 'Czechs Protest Over Russian Shield 'Threats',' *Reuters*, 10 July 2008. <http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USL1031756120080710>; and 'US Draws Russian Fire, Signing Missile Defence Deal,' *AFP*, 10 July 2008. http://afp.google.com/article/ALEqM5JIUNg_OKeXWgNZa1nLc5h2AqbFF

⁴³ Dmitry Medvedev, 'Medvedev: U.S. Aggravating Eastern Europe,' *RussiaToday*, 15 July. Reprinted in *Johnson's Russia List*, no. 2008-132, 15 July 2008. www.edi.org/russia/johnson/. In his State of the Nation Address in November 2008 Medvedev threatened once again to target missiles on Poland and the Czech Republic should the United States proceed with its plans for a missile defense system there. 'Russian President Medvedev's First Annual Address'.

⁴⁴ Janusz Bugajski and Edward P. Joseph, 'Seize the Opportunity with Russia on Kosovo,' *Washingtonpost.com*, 24 October 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/23/AR2007102301986.html>

⁴⁵ See Runner, 'Ex-German chancellor Warns EU on Russia Summit' and Katrin Bennhold and Alison Smale, 'New Head of Development Bank Puts Focus on Russia,' *The New York Times*, 5 July 2008.

security. To some extent this set of concerns is bringing many of the new, postcommunist, members together with the Scandinavian states in calling for a tougher approach toward the Russian Federation. Since U.S. policy toward the Russian Federation since the end of the cold war has been based, in part at least, on containing Moscow's influence, U.S. policy impacts directly on the divisions within the European Union.

As noted above, various Western and Russian analysts point to the failures of Western, especially U.S., policy makers to take into account legitimate Russian interests as an important element in what Dimitri Simes terms 'Losing Russia'⁴⁶. Richard Sakwa has gone so far as to say that the Central Europeans simply have to learn 'to live with the Russians.'⁴⁷ He develops his point in a perceptive article that notes the major asymmetries in the post-Cold War in which Russia renounced its claims to lead a competing world system, gave up much of its empire, and attempted to join the existing economic and security systems of Europe. He notes, as well, the failure of the West to respond to Russian efforts, from Gorbachev to Putin, to find a permanent settlement of the issues of the Cold War. This refusal has fed Russian paranoia and undergirds Russia's recent efforts to bully its way back into a prominent position in world affairs.

In a perceptive essay Russian analyst Fyodor Lukyanov maintains that

The problems in relations between Russia and its former satellites stem from the fact they they're very similar. Western Europe, with almost 60 years of integration behind it, has established the following truth: for purely rational considerations, historical grievances, no matter how deep they are, must not be turned into a present-day political and economic tool. The smoking ruins of Europe in the wake of the Second World War offered incontrovertible evidence of that.

Russia, the countries of East-Central Europe, and the Baltic states have not experienced this realization. The idea of revenge for the past . . . and using present-day instruments to seek compensation for historical injustices: that is the conscious or unconscious leitmotif in the policies of Moscow, Warsaw, and most other capitals in the former Soviet bloc.⁴⁸

Lukyanov proceeds to point out that, given this situation and the ability of the new members of the European Union to block Russian objectives in relations with the EU, Moscow must 'normalize relations with its former satellites,' if it is going to succeed in gaining its goals. Yet, as Lukyanov does not note – and as Sakwa has tended to downplay in his assessment of Russian policy – substantial aspects of Russian policy toward its near neighbors in the West have been based on coercion and bullying,⁴⁹ an approach hardly likely to help the Baltic and Central European political elites overcome their fears and pursue a more constructive approach to relations with the Russian Federation, even though Germany, France, Italy and others may be committed to a more conciliatory approach to Russia.

Over the course of the year, or so, from mid-2007 to mid-2008, the EU as an organization seems to have backed off from its rather stronger approach to Russia. The EU-Russian summit

⁴⁶ Simes, 'Losing Russia'; see, also, Sakwa, 'New Cold War', and Trenin, 'Russia Redefines Itself'.

⁴⁷ Oral comment made at a workshop on 'New and Old Wars: Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Territories', University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland, 5-6 July 2008. As Sakwa explained, he was referring to the fact that Russia does have legitimate security interests beyond its borders and revengist attitudes in the Baltics and Central Europe cannot be permitted to dominate the Russian-EU agenda.

⁴⁸ Fyodor Lukyanov, 'The Challenges of the New Europe,' *Vremya Novostei*, 21 May 2007. Translated in *Johnson's Russia List*, no. 2007-115, 21 May. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/

⁴⁹ The list of Soviet actions and statements during the year 2007 that one could view as examples of such threatening and bullying tactics includes Putin's ranting speech in February against the United States; threats by Russian generals against Poland and the Czech Republic should the U.S. missile-defense system be installed in their countries; a threat to abrogate the treaty on conventional forces in Europe; threats and economic and cyber attacks on Estonia which was termed a fascist menace on Russia's borders; threats to veto UN efforts to grant independence to Kosovo; military operations over Georgian territory and threats to intervene directly in South Ossetia; and others. See John Vinocur, 'Politicus: Europe Must Find Way to Handle a Harsher Russia,' *The New York Times*, 14 May 2007. The list of threats and bullying, even invasion, for 2008 is even more extensive.

held near Samara, Russia, in May 2007 proved to be a total failure, as both sides exchanged charges against one another.⁵⁰ A meeting of EU foreign ministers in September 2007 generated a consensus that ‘this is a different Russia’.⁵¹

The mood of key Western leaders both entering and leaving the June 2008 EU-Russian summit was much more upbeat than it had been a year earlier, as they seemed willing to give new Russian President Medvedev the benefit of the doubt.⁵² Yet, the ‘charm offensive’ of President Medvedev has hardly resolved the outstanding issues between Russia and the member countries of the European Union – in particular the new members who view the Russian Federation through the lens of almost half a century of Soviet domination. Moreover, Russia and the EU have quite different conceptions of the nature of a new agreement to frame their relations. The European Union prefers an Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation that spells out in detail the terms of agreement across the economic, energy, and political matters, while Russia proposed a much narrower framework agreement that relegates specifics to later follow-on agreements.⁵³ Added to the problems of reaching agreement are the impact of Russia’s August 2008 invasion of Georgia and its recognition of the breakaway republics, as well as of the January 2009 dispute with Ukraine and its implications for gas supplies to the west.

Although the meeting in late June 2008 was much more cordial than meetings between the EU and Russia a year ago, the truly central issues that divide the two – such as the demands placed on Russia by the EU as a precondition for visa-free travel between Russia and EU Europe, the nature of Russian relations with its immediate Western neighbors, the stable flow of energy resources – remain unresolved. When one adds these difference to the continuing concerns of new EU member states – often supported by policies of the United States – to the fact that any new agreement between the EU and Russia requires the approval of all twenty-seven members, one can come to the conclusion that the road to a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will not be smooth and will depend on shifts in perception about longer-term Russian intentions among the new members of the European Union.

⁵⁰ See ‘EU, Russia Clash over Democracy at Volga Summit,’ AFP, 18 May 2007. Reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2007-113, 18 May 2007. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/; Christian Lowe, ‘EU Snubs Russian Requests at Frosty Summit,’ Reuters, 18 May 2007. Reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2007-113, 2007, www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/; Hannes Adomeit, ‘Germany Had No Hope of Saving the Summit,’ Moscow Times, 21 May 2007. Reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2007-115, 21 May. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/; Vinocur, ‘Politicus’.

⁵¹ ‘Enter, Pursued by a Bear,’ *The Economist*, 15 September 2007, p. 67.

⁵² See Anna Smolchenko, ‘EU Takes ‘Leap of Faith’ in Medvedev,’ Moscow Times, 30 June 2008, reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2008-123, 30 June 2008. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/; Dmitry Babich, ‘Back to the Negotiating Table: Russia Continues to Fend for Its Interests in the Face of the European Union,’ Russia Profile, 26 June 2008. Reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2008-122, 26 June 2008. www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/; ‘Kaliningrad Dominates EU-Russian Summit Agenda,’ EurActiv, May 2008. <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/kaliningrad-dominates-eu-russian-summit-agenda/article-116446?print>; ‘EU to Forge New Strategic Partnership with Russia,’ RIA Novosti, 27 May. Reprinted in Johnson’s Russia List, no. 2008-204, 28 May 2008.

⁵³ See Smolchenko, ‘EU Takes Leap of Faith’.