

Confidential

RUSSIA

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Evgeny Buzhinsky reports from Moscow, Oleg Shakirov from Vienna:

SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE IN TODAY'S NEW GEOPOLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

ANNOTATION

Against the backdrop of events in Ukraine and the serious crisis in relations between Russia and the West, which have systemic causes, it is becoming increasingly clear that Europe's current security architecture requires reevaluation. The article's authors, Evgeny Buzhinsky and Oleg Shakirov stress, however, that the discussion should not be about a fundamental break with the current model, but correcting this system in the context of resolving the Ukrainian crisis and the changes that have taken place within Europe over the past decade.

This article seeks to provide an evaluation of the general state of affairs and to reflect the approaches the European capitals, Moscow, and Washington take to normalizing relations between Russia and the West which is the key basis needed for starting negotiations on Europe's new security architecture. The authors pay particular attention to the role played by the OSCE as a key element in the European crisis response system, and as a forum for international political dialogue. Practical challenges that need to be dealt with during this current stage are outlined, and possible avenues for activity in longer term are anticipated, including the need for an international conference in Europe that will focus on developing and adopting a mandatory convention on security in Europe.

EUROPEAN SECURITY AFTER UKRAINE: IS CHANGE INEVITABLE?

The current crisis in relations between Russia and the West has added urgency to an idea that has long been pondered - reformulating the European security architecture. Due to the strict policies adopted by the United States and European countries to the Crimean issue and the situation surrounding Ukraine as a whole, the West has essentially frozen joint activities under the Russia-NATO Council and Russia-EU. It is against this background that the OSCE has de facto become the key forum for multilateral political dialogue over Ukraine.

The Ukraine crisis tested the OSCE's ability to adequately and rapidly respond, and deliver an international presence. The OSCE's active involvement and renewed interest in it from leading Western states has thrown up broader questions over the organisation's future, and the future of European security more broadly.

It is important to note that the West's approach to the current debate over the efficacy of existing European and Euro-Atlantic tools and institutions is quite diverse. **The United States** is ready to acknowledge the existing institutions' limited capacity to prevent and resolve crises like that unfolding in Ukraine, and this chiefly refers to the OSCE, EU and even NATO. **Europe**, in its turn, continues to view NATO as the most appropriate organisation to prevent further escalation in Ukraine and similar conflicts, and the EU as the most effective tool in tackling economic aspects of crises within Europe. Overall, Europeans are ready to expand the OSCE's purview and strengthen its role in Europe, however not at the expense of NATO and the EU, especially on their ongoing projects in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Conceding that the current European security system needs an overhaul does not mean that it needs to fundamentally break with the past. This rethink involves adjusting it to factor in the key tasks involved in achieving an end to conflict in Ukraine and a broader smoothing over of relations between Russia and the West.

Clearly, the current crisis is not in either side's interests, as each would benefit from cooperation in numerous areas. In recent years, Moscow has stepped up its Asian pivot (meanwhile, not the first in Russia's history) expanding contacts with China and creating the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Albeit useful for Russia as such, it is not able, however, to fully replace cooperation with the West, chiefly with the EU. Pushing Russia away and demonising its leadership is not in the West's interests either, as it leaves it with no other options apart from seeking alternative partners in the East. Many analysts are right to think that the U.S., which is becoming increasingly concerned with the issue of *containing China*, is hardly likely to welcome a comprehensive Russia-China alliance.

So, sooner or later, all parties to this standoff must come to understand that a return to normality is inevitable.

MEETING EACH OTHER HALF WAY: APPROACHES TO NORMALISING RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST

Today, the West's approaches to normalizing relations with Russia have been rather diverse. When it comes to sanctions, EU and European countries that are associated with the EU follow the US on this issue, but there are still major differences between US and EU priorities. As to EU member countries, their policies also display some nuances depending on the depth of the political and economic cooperation with Russia. Looking at political announcements and practical steps initiated by the European capitals, it is possible to identify three groups of EU countries that propose different approaches to building *new relations* with Moscow:

- Group 1 (**Poland, Baltic states, UK, Sweden**) believe that the precondition for dialogue with Russia should be a return to the pre-crisis state of affairs in Ukraine (i.e., territorial integrity and non-involvement in its internal affairs);
- Group 2 (**Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, in some senses, Italy**) are ready to recognize the de-facto collapse of the foundations of Europe's security architecture as built after the end of the Cold War and start discussions on new models factoring in today's geopolitical realities;
- Group 3 (chiefly **Old Europe**) is ready to address the Crimean issue and, provided the conflicting parties live up to the Minsk Agreement, would be willing to launch dialogue with Russia about normalizing relations.

Broadly speaking, it was always understood in the **EU** that it would be impossible to ensure security in Europe without Russia. We now see the first indications of EU recognizing that, without Russia, it would lack strategic depth and would be unable to achieve any great self-sufficiency. Pressure on Europe over sanctions, the broadly bellicose rhetoric spouted by the U.S. Congress, has led to an increase in the expression of the view that forcing a distance between the EU and Russia benefits the US, not the EU.

From the point of view of **Russia's** national interests, the normalisation of relations with the EU must involve not only a resolution to the Ukrainian crisis, but also Brussels' recognition of some key issues:

- ***First, Russia-Europe relations must become equal partner relations, based on mutual concerns in all areas: political, economic, military. In this context, the European Commission should at least consider partnership with the EEU.***
- ***Second, it is important to strengthen trade relations. Statistics recently announced by an Austrian economic research institute indicate that the impact of anti-Russian sanctions and Russia's counter-sanctions on the EU already stands at over 100 billion Euros in losses and the loss of over 2 million jobs.***
- ***Third, Russia-Europe relations must become less ideologically driven and more pragmatic.***
- ***And finally, Russia and the EU must jointly regulate different crises that arise in their common geopolitical space.***

As for the **United States**, analyses produced by their leading think tanks increasingly often voice ideas about moving away from cooperation models in engaging with Moscow and in European security in general, and moving to a dispute resolution model for European affairs (expanding NATO, post-Soviet space, European segment of global missile defence programme etc.) while retaining a cooperative approach to solving global security problems (preventing WMD proliferation, arms control, and regional problems like Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, combating IS). Officially, the U.S. has not established its position on normalizing US-Russia relations, preferring instead to talk about the need to implement the Minsk Protocol as a precondition to any renewed dialogue.

Of course, it would be too early to talk of any return to 'business as usual' before the acute phase of the Ukraine crisis has ended. However, after the successful implementation of the Minsk Agreement, it is important that we see a gradual return to cooperation within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council and the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation programme. The halting of Russia-NATO Council activities as 'punishment' for Russia seems irrational, as its purpose, among other tasks, includes preventing and solving conflicts.

It is important also to recall that Russia and NATO have built up a significant capacity for mutually beneficial cooperation, and it would be irrational to waste

that. In the years 2002-2008 and 2010-2012, between 200 and 400 events were held as part of their military cooperation, including joint trainings in sensitive areas such as missile defence and nuclear security.

Relations with NATO could be renewed with discussions on preventing and responding to incidents at sea, in the air, and on land. Talks on the conclusion of a multilateral framework agreement in this area could be launched similarly to agreements between Russia and NATO on emergency action to rescue submarine crews in distress. Russia could also conclude a similar agreement with Sweden and Finland.

As for the current issue of deescalating situation in Ukraine, it seems that the central role here must be taken by OSCE as the only European organisation mandated to operate in Ukraine and carry out negotiations towards resolving crises in Europe.

➤ *If the parties to the conflict fully abide by the Minsk Agreements, the international community could call a high-level Europe-wide meeting under OSCE auspices that would not be confined to Ukraine conflict resolution but would also look at fundamental issues relating to European security and responding to changes on the continent over the past decades.*

OSCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN SECURITY: BUILDING THE AGENDA

Today discussions relating to European security and the OSCE's development take place as part of the *Helsinki +40* and the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security. Both are informal platforms.

- **The Helsinki +40 process** was launched by the OSCE council of foreign ministers in December 2012, ahead of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 2015. It is based around the idea of developing the ideas set out in the Astana Commemorative Declaration, and in particular the idea of a *security community*. As part of the process in 2014-2015 the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly held a series of closed events in Moscow, Washington, Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Belgrade, involving high-profile research centres (including the Russian International Affairs Council). However, the Ukraine crisis has pushed work along the *Helsinki +40* track into the background.
- The second group was set up in the wake of the deepening crisis in European security resulting from the crisis in Ukraine to prepare recommendations on the 're-consolidation of European security as a common project'. It was launched in December 2014 by Switzerland, then chair of the OSCE, in collaboration with Serbia and Germany (known as the *Troika*), and comprised European security experts from member states (Sergey Karaganov from Russia), many of whom had high-level experience. The Group's first report (dated 17 June 2015) focused on the OSCE's role in resolving the Ukraine crisis and lessons for the Organisation. The second and final report, more wide-ranging in its handling of European security, is due to be published in November-December 2015.

Group discussions and those held under the *Helsinki +40* process focus on general ideas of the future agenda for European security. This agenda should include reviewing conventional arms control in Europe. It does not formally fall under the OSCE's purview, but after the de-facto cessation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) the organisation's member states have heightened interest in renewing the regime. Given the current lack of trust, disagreement over Ukraine, and Western pressure on Russia, any return to talks over Conventional Weapons Control remain unlikely, however in the longer term this may well become a key military and political issue.

Potential outline of any future such weapons control initiative put forward by experts includes different points:

- members (all European OSCE members);
- categories of weapons to be covered (from the traditional categories seen in the CFE to drones and ship-based aviation, tactical nuclear weapons, elements in missile defence systems, cyber-weapons etc);
- option for additional sub-regional arms control agreements;
- developing status-neutral control and inspection and inspections in disputed territories;
- establishing an international centre in Europe for inspection and verification.

Alongside discussions of a future Conventional Arms Control initiative, measures to strengthen trust and security as set out in the Vienna Document are also under consideration. In 2011 a new edition of the Vienna Document was endorsed, and the next is expected in 2016. It is to include agreements reached under the Vienna Document Plus initiative, including on duration of visits to airbases and prior notification of major military initiatives put forward by Russia.

➤ *The dramatic reduction in the level of trust between Russia and the West as a result of the Ukraine crisis and against a general background of the 'militarisation' of international relations in Europe makes it particularly important to return to issues of arms control and action to strengthen trust over security in any discussions of the future architecture of European security.*

Essentially, any review of European security must include a fundamental review of the foundations of the European system - the Helsinki Accords and Paris Charter - in light of what has transpired over the past 25 years, and in preparation for an international conference in Europe, possibly under the auspices of the OSCE, to approve a binding European convention on continental order. Preparations for such a conference could include a return to the idea once proposed by the Russian President for a European Security Treaty, which if accepted in any variant would provide participants with a binding legal framework against conflict and aggression. Russia stressed that it is particularly important for it to be legally binding and subject to ratification by all states involved. In addition, it should be open to any Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian states to join, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, and to the following international organisations: EU, OSCE, NATO, CSTO, and the CIS. The Ukraine crisis has demonstrated how relevant Russia's proposal still is, and it could serve as the basis for a post-Ukrainian agreement on key elements in the new European security architecture.

Authors:

Evgeny Buzhinsky, Executive Board Chairman PIR Centre, Lt.Gen (Rtd), 2002-2009 - Head of the International Treaty Directorate, Deputy Head of the Main Directorate for International Military Cooperation of the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence;

Oleg Shakirov, PIR Centre Consultant

Editor: Yulia Fetisova

(c) Trialogue International Club: trialogue@pircenter.org;

(c) Centre russe d'études politiques: crep@pircenter.org

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As before, experts of the *Trialogue* Club International and of its partner organization PIR Center are open to an exchange of views on key international problems.

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**Chairman,
Trialogue Club
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Dmitry Polikanov