

This competition puts the reliability and transparency of Russia's domestic and foreign commercial relationships in the energy sector, including for Turkey and the other countries of the Caspian Basin, in considerable doubt. The Russian Natural Resources Ministry sent a delegation to the United States in August 2007 to calm American investors concerned in the wake of the Russneft takeover that they did not understand the rules the government uses to regulate the energy sector. That confusion is unlikely to end anytime soon.

RUSSIA AS A BLACK SEA POWER

The author highlights Russia's determination to exploit its advantages in the sphere of energy for increased global power and argues that the West needs to match this determination with clear support for countries like Ukraine and Georgia that are vulnerable. He points out that offering such countries clear prospects for membership in NATO and the EU would render Russia with no choice but to integrate with Europe. Without increased involvement of the EU in the Black Sea region, he warns, threats could grow to be intractable.

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The Black Sea's importance to the European security agenda has grown because it has become a critical route for shipping energy to Europe. But it is also vulnerable to terrorism, and proliferation due to pervasive and long-standing criminality, corruption, and smuggling. It is an arena that encompasses many critical challenges and questions: East-West rivalry over energy, the fate of the CIS, democratization of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, rising security threats such as nuclear and drug smuggling, the stalled EU-Turkish negotiations, the prospect of a renewed Kosovo crisis and the multiple security challenges in the Caucasus, Ukraine, Moldova.¹

Consequently American analysts like Bruce Jackson proclaim that Russia wages a "soft war" against Western influence in Eastern Europe, including the Black Sea zone.² But the soft war also partakes of a classical geopolitical East-West rivalry, e.g. Moscow's opposition to American military presence in and around the Black Sea and concern about Bulgaria and Romania's overall pro-Western foreign policies. Russian spokesmen view these new bases and potential new missions of U.S. and NATO forces, including missile defense and power projection into the Caucasus or Central Asia, as anti-Russian threats, especially as NATO has stated that it takes issues like pipeline security in the Caucasus very seriously.³ Potential American missile bases in Ukraine will only further intensify Russian resistance.⁴

The Context of Russia's Reemergence

Previously Europe has neglected the region.⁵ But it can no longer do so. The Black Sea littoral states are now critical parts of Europe's "near abroad."⁶ Indeed, "Europe will never be entirely secure if the Caucasus is left out of Europe's security purview."⁷ Converging recent events highlight this area's critical importance. They include constrained global energy supplies, the repeated Russo-Georgian crises that almost led to war in 2006 and which directly involved Russian naval threats in the Black Sea against Georgia, Ukraine's governmental crisis, ongoing "frozen conflicts," heightened threats of nuclear and drug smuggling, the continuing regional fragility of governments, the stagnant-EU-Turkey

¹ Stephen Blank, "Russia and Europe in the Caucasus," *European Security*, IV, No. 4, Winter, 1995, pp. 622-645; "Cocaine Traffickers Turn to the Balkans – Changing Routes," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 March 2007, www4.janes.com/subscribe/jir/doc; Molly Corso, "Georgia: A Bomb in a Baggie," *Transitions Online*, 6 March 2007.

² Bruce Jackson, "The Soft War for Europe's East," *Policy Review*, No. 137, June-July, 2006, www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3202956.html

³ Martin Walker, "NATO Means Business To Protect Pipelines," UPI, 13 October 2005; "US Missile Plans 'A Clear Threat' to Moscow: Russian General," AFP, 22 January 2007.

⁴ "U.S. Looks to Involve Ukraine in Missile Defense," *Global Security Newswire*, Nuclear Threat Initiative, 31 January 2007, available at www.nti.org.

⁵ R. Craig Nation, "Military Contributions to Regional Stability," Stefano Bianchini and Susan L. Woodward, Eds., *From the Adriatic to the Caucasus: Viable Dynamics of Stabilization*, Ravenna, A. Longo Editore, 2003, p. 33.

⁶ John Roper and Peter Van Ham, "Redefining Russia's Role in Europe," Vladimir Baranovsky, Ed., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for SIPRI, 1997, p. 517.

⁷ Robert Legvold, "Introduction: Outlining the Challenge," Bruno Coppieters and Robert Legvold, Eds., *Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution*, Cambridge, MA: and London: MIT Press, 2005, p. 29.

negotiations, and a potential new Kosovo crisis all force the major powers and security organizations to get more involved here.⁸

In many of the littoral states, the nature and stability of the state itself is at issue and/or at risk. Moreover these "compromised" states exist in an equally contentious neighborhood.⁹ From the Adriatic to Central Asia we find:

Fragility of institutions and politico-administrative apparatus; democratic deficit, absence of civil society and legal mechanism for orderly transfer of power; crisis of identity owing to religious or ethnic rivalry; inter-state, ethnic, tribal, and clan tensions; ethnic separatism; competitive involvement of major power, mechanisms for organizing and controlling aid; incomplete modernization; relative underdevelopment; social disparities; corruption; crime; founding of pseudo-states; [and] weakness of the state.¹⁰ Therefore security here comprises the interactive dynamics of compromised states and of troubled neighborhoods.¹¹

Russia as a Black Sea Power: Perceptions and Objectives

The most dynamic aspect driving Western action in the Black Sea region is Russia's emergence as an autocratic power demanding a free hand in its foreign and domestic affairs. Russia seeks to rearrange the CIS' political map and control European energy supplies. The most alarming fact is not Russia's reemergence, but rather its recrudescence as an autocratic and authoritarian power suffering from all the aforementioned pathologies. Russian analysts know and admit that Russia remains "a risk factor" in international politics even as it asserts its prerogatives.¹² Russia's unilateral neo-imperial policy in the CIS and efforts to secure permanent lodgments for influencing other East European states (mainly through energy and intelligence operations) arguably represent both the logical culmination of its autocracy and the solution to the security problems attendant upon its regression to autocracy.¹³

Russia not only demands a free hand in Eurasia, its objectives also entail renewed strategic bipolarity throughout Eurasia. While the West will comprise the EU and NATO, it demands a free hand in the East and the CIS. Russia's 1999 official submission of its official strategy for relations with the EU, made by then

⁸ For information on the Russian naval activities in the Black Sea during the October-November-2006 crisis, see, Moscow, *Agentsvo Voyennykh Novostey Internet Version*, in English, 19 October 2006, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Central Eurasia* (Henceforth FBIS SOV), 19 October 2006.

⁹ Legvold, pp. 1-36.

¹⁰ Stefano Bianchini, "Conclusions," Stefano Bianchini Ed., *From the Adriatic to the Caucasus: The Dynamics of (De) Stabilization*, Ravenna: A. Longo Editore, 2001, p. 239.

¹¹ Legvold, pp. 1-36, focuses on Georgia and the Caucasus, but we also see these phenomena in Ukraine, Moldova, to some degree in Turkey and in Kosovo. While Romania and Bulgaria are making steady progress they cannot remain unaffected by developments around them.

¹² Timofei Bordachev, "Russia's Europe Dilemma: Democratic Partner vs. Authoritarian Satellite," Andrew Kuchins and Dmitri Trenin Eds., *Russia: The Next Ten Years, A Collection of Essays to Mark Ten Years of the Carnegie Moscow Center*, Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2004, p. 120.

¹³ Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism*, Washington, D.C. and Westport CT.: Praeger Publishers, 2005; Richard J. Krickus, "The Presidential Crisis in Lithuania: Its Roots and the Russian Factor," Remarks at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C., 28 January 2004, provided by the kind consent of Dr. Krickus; Richard

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin stated that:

As a world power situated on two continents, Russia should retain its freedom to determine and implement its foreign and domestic policies, its status and advantages of a Euro-Asian state and largest country of the CIS. The “development of partnership with the EU should contribute to consolidating Russia’s role as the leading power in shaping a new system of interstate political and economic relations in the CIS area” and thus, Russia would “oppose any attempts to hamper economic integration in the CIS (that may be made by the EU), including through ‘special relations’ with individual CIS member states to the detriment of Russia’s interests.¹⁴

In December 2006 Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov advocated dividing the world between NATO and the Russian-sponsored Collective Security Treaty Organization. Ivanov argued:

The next logical step on the path of reinforcing international security may be to develop a cooperation mechanism between NATO and the CSTO, followed by a clear division of spheres of responsibility. This approach offers the prospect of enabling us to possess a sufficiently reliable and effective leverage for taking joint action in crisis situations in various regions of the world.¹⁵

Russia here frankly urged spheres of influence, creation of a security system akin where smaller states revolve around Russia and a return to the Cold War’s strategic bipolarity without its ideological rivalry.¹⁶ Ivanov’s proposal militarily parallels Putin’s 1999 submission. Russia seeks to exclude not just NATO from the CIS; it also warned the EU to abstain from promoting conflict resolution for Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁷ These policies express the widespread elite belief that the EU and CIS must be separated and are fundamentally incompatible organizations.¹⁸

Krickus, *Iron Troikas*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2006; Keith C. Smith, *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland, and the Ukraine: A New Stealth Imperialism?*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004; Tor Bukevold, “Putin’s Strategic Partnership With the West: The Domestic Politics of Russian Foreign Policy,” *Comparative Strategy*, XXII, NO. 3, 2003, pp. 231-233, “The EU, May Day and Moscow,” Stefan Pavlov, “Bulgaria in a Vise,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January-February, 1998, p. 30, Robert D. Kaplan, “Hoods Against Democrats,” *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1998, pp. 32-36 As Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said “Fuel and energy industries in the Balkans are totally dependent on Russia. They have no alternative.” “Ivanov on Foreign Policy’s Evolution, Goals,” *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press (Henceforth CDPP)*, L, No. 43, November 25, 1998, p. 13, U.S.-Slovakia Action Commission: Security and Foreign Policy Working Group: Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Slovak Foreign Policy Association, *Slovakia’s Security and Foreign Policy Strategy*, 2001, Czech Security Information Service, Annual Report 2000, http://www.bis.cz/eng/vz2000/vz2000_10.html,

Interview with Russian General Aslambek Aslanbekov,” *Trud*, (Bulgaria), April 8, 2004, FBIS SOV, October 2, 2002, Conversations with American diplomats and analysts, and East European analysts in Vilnius and Washington in May 2000, and September, 2001. (We can’t include this long a footnote – the page format does not allow for it. Could you cut to around one-thirds?)

¹⁴ Hannes Adomeit and Heidi Reisinger 2002, *Russia’s Role in Post-Soviet Territory: Decline of Military Power and Political Influence*, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Forsvarstudier No. 4. 2002, p. 5

¹⁵ Vladimir Mukhin, “The Redivision of Eurasia,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, December 4, 2006, pp. 1-2, Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis

¹⁶ Dmitri Trenin, “Russia Leaves the West,” *Foreign Affairs* LXXXV, No. 4, July-August, 2006, pp. 85-96

¹⁷ “Russia Warns EU Over Ex-Soviet Sphere of Influence,” *Reuters*, 7 February 2007.

¹⁸ Yuri Borko, “Rethinking Russia-EU Relations,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, II, No. 3, July-September, 2004, p. 171.

While Moscow wants exclusive control over these conflicts, it will not promote any solution. Instead it will freeze them to perpetuate regional instability and maintain its sphere of influence in the Black Sea and CIS. Thus Moscow’s desired policy aims directly at frustrating the project of European integration, which historically represents a great threat to Russian interests.¹⁹ A democratic coalition threatens not only Russian interests but the state itself. Hence the comprehensive denunciation of color revolutions in the CIS as merely a Western organized plot against Russia. Therefore Russia does not want to be a part of any other system or an organization that would impose standards upon it.²⁰ Turkey’s inclusion in the EU would therefore undoubtedly be regarded in Russia as a Russian defeat.

Ultimately Russia aims to frustrate European integration while preserving a free hand so that it can avoid “a European choice”, i.e. democratizing reforms.²¹ Consequently it rejects genuine integration with Europe. For example, the EU has drafted its own Black Sea program. Predictably Moscow dislikes this trend because it promotes further European integration including Turkey, Ukraine, and the Caucasus.²² As Sergei Medvedev wrote in 1999, Russia tries to limit the damage to its interests and obstruct any further European integration.

Damage limitation is a strategy that postpones Russia’s European engagement. Underlying this argument is a long-term strategic consideration aimed at the new European balance of the twenty-first century. Russia, currently in a phase of geopolitical and economic decline, must prevent the fixation of this unfavorable status quo by any treaty, agreement or security system. Russia is objectively interested in maintaining the current uncertain and unstructured security arrangement that took shape in Europe in the wake of the Cold War as long as possible – preferably until the economic upsurge in Russia expected by the middle of the next decade. Russia is therefore instinctively opposed to any institutional upgrade of European security, NATO enlargement included; it would prefer to see European security not as an institution, but as an open-ended process (much like the former CSCE; hence the current impact of Moscow on the OSCE) and would like to dissolve it in various pan-European collective security proposals, reminiscent of old Soviet designs of the 1930s.²³

Likewise, in 2002 Former Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Ivanov told an American-European-Russian forum in 2002:

At the same time, Russia is a global and Eurasian power and obviously cannot concentrate its attention exclusively on Europe. Therefore, while stressing

¹⁹ Alfred J. Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: an Interpretive Essay,” Hugh Ragsdale, Ed., *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*, Woodrow Wilson Center Series, Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 359.

²⁰ Dmitri Trenin, *Reading Russia Right*, Carnegie Endowment for international Peace, Policy Brief, No. 42, October, 2005, p. 8; “Lavrov: West Needs to Acknowledge Russia’s Interests,” *Interfax*, 11 November 2005.

²¹ James Sherr, “The Dual Enlargements and Ukraine, Anatol Lieven and Dmitri V. Trenin Eds., *Ambivalent Neighbors: The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002, p. 120.

²² “EU’s New Black Sea Policy Faces Russian Misgivings,” www.euroobserver.com, 16 February 2007.

²³ Sergei Medvedev, “Power, Space, and Russian Foreign Policy,” Ted Hopf, Ed., *Understandings of Russian Foreign Policy*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1999, pp. 46-47

our European identity we prefer to have a free hand in our policy towards and cooperation with all regions, including Asia, the United States, and, above all the CIS. Thus our relations with the EU can be expected to be only contractual, and not institutional, i.e. involving membership or association.²⁴

Russian analysts accept that Russia's answer to the problem of state weakness is a reinvigorated autocracy that inherently conducts an imperial policy Egor Khlomogorov writes that:

'Empire' is the main category of any strategic political analysis in the Russian language. Whenever we start to ponder a full-scale, long-term construction of the Russian state, we begin to think of empire and in terms of empire. Russians are inherently imperialists.²⁵

Similarly Dmitri Furman wrote that, "The Russia-West struggle in the CIS is a struggle between two irreconcilable systems."²⁶ Furman accepts the current regime's regressive ness as a link to the old regime, saying that "Managed democracies are actually a soft variant of the Soviet system."²⁷ Furman goes still farther, noting:

Our system's democratic camouflage demands partnership with the West. However, the authoritarian, managed content of our system dictates the exact opposite. A safety zone for our system means a zone of political systems of the same kind of managed democracies that we are actively supporting in the CIS and, insofar as our forces allow, everywhere – in Serbia, the Middle East, even Venezuela. The Soviet Union's policy might seem quixotic. The system of managed democracy in Russia will perish if Russia is besieged on all sides by unmanaged democracies. Ultimately it will once again be a matter of survival. The West cannot fail to support the establishment of systems of the same type as the West's, which means expanding its safety zone. We cannot fail to oppose this. Therefore the struggle inside the CIS countries is beginning to resemble the Russian-Western conflict.²⁸

Russia and the CIS in the Black Sea

Regarding Moldova, Putin early on invoked the Russian Diaspora and other ethnic minorities in an effort to truncate its independence. His justification evokes Catherine the Great or even Hitler and Stalin.

Russia is interested in Moldova being a territorially whole, independent state. But this cannot be achieved unless the interests of all population groups, including Transdnister population, are observed. Russia is prepared to participate in

²⁴ Ivan Ivanov, in Atlantic Council of the United States, *The Twain Shall Meet*, Washington, D.C., 2002, p. 37.

²⁵ Quoted in Boris Rumer: Central Asia: At the End of the Transition," Boris Rumer Ed., *Central Asia At the End of Transition*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe & Co. Inc., 2005, p. 47.

²⁶ Dmitri Furman, "A Silent Cold War," *Russia in Global Affairs*, IV, no. 2, April-June, 2006, p. 72

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁸ Dmitri Furman, "A Cold War without Words: Democratic Camouflage keeps Russia from Properly Formulating Its Real Policy in the CIS," Moscow, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, in Russian, 27 March 2006, FBIS SOV, 27 March 2006.

creating the conditions in which all residents will feel secure in Moldova. The political treaty must firmly ensure the rights of all those who reside on the territory of Moldova and who consider that Russia can be a guarantor of their rights.²⁹

Subsequently in 2003-2004 he sponsored the Kozak plan that Moldova rebuffed. One assessment of the Kozak plan observed that its institutional features were designed to provide Transnistria a veto over any legislation that would threaten the leadership. Ultimately these multiple loci of vetoes would make it impossible for the federal government to operate. In addition, the Kozak Memorandum included clauses that could be interpreted to easily dissolve the federation. For example, the Kozak Memorandum allowed for subjects of the federation to have the right "to leave the federation in case a decision is taken to unite the federation with another state and (or) in connection with the federation's full loss of sovereignty. [Thus] Moldovan integration with international organizations such as the EU could be used as a basis for the dissolution of the federation under this clause."³⁰

Finally, Moscow unrelentingly works to frustrate NATO and EU's advance into the Black Sea and Ukraine's full integration with Europe using all its instruments of power to arrest and inhibit Ukrainian reform and Europeanization.³¹ One high-ranking Ukrainian official told the author that Russia wages a constant Cold War against Ukraine.³²

Likewise, despite talk of Russo-NATO cooperation, Moscow opposed NATO participation in naval operations in the Black Sea called Operation Active Endeavor that targets at precisely the soft security threats that plague the Black Sea littoral as enumerated above. Typically Russia sought special conditions for its participation in this operation, a highly successful example of NATO members' anti-terrorist naval cooperation since 2001.

Russia had wanted to exempt its own commercial vessels from mutual inspection procedures; the lynchpin of the operation. Then it demanded that 'Active Endeavor' be governed by the NATO-Russia Council, even as it asked the alliance to pay for Russian participation. NATO rejected all these, but finally elaborated an awkward arrangement whereby the Russian Navy operates in conjunction with NATO, but not under its command.³³

Russia also reserved the right to use weapons during the operation as it would be operating jointly with but not as part of the NATO Joint Command Naples forces.³⁴

²⁹ *The Jamestown Monitor*, 18 June 2000.

³⁰ Steven D. Roper, "Federalization and Constitution-Making as an Instrument of Conflict Resolution," *Demokratizatsiia*, XII, No. 4, Fall, 2004, p. 536.

³¹ Stephen J. Blank, "The Larger Implications of Russian Policy on Moldova, Ukraine, and Belarus," Heli Tiirmaa-Klar and Tiago Marques, Eds., *Global and Regional Security Challenges, a Baltic Outlook, Tallinn*, Tallinn University Press, 2006, pp. 107-126.

³² Conversations with Ukrainian officials, Carlisle Barracks, PA June, 2006.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Moscow, ITAR-TASS, in English, January 11, 2005, *FBIS SOV*, 11 January 2005.

But when other littoral states except Turkey proposed conducting this exercise in the Black Sea, Moscow flatly refused to support it, hiding behind Turkey's opposition to it.³⁵ Moscow hid behind Ankara's insistence that the Montreux Treaty forbade using naval ships in such exercises even in peacetime even though the Russian military welcomed participating in this operation's Mediterranean dimension and warships have transited the Straits during peacetime.³⁶ Moscow's attitude is not surprising. When NATO conducted exercises with Ukraine along the Black Sea Coast in 2003, the Russian press reported Russia's opposition to those exercises because Russian military men could not accept "alien" NATO naval vessels in "their lake." Worse, since those operations' scenario postulated an anti-separatist operation, Russian officials saw this as an intimation of future NATO assistance to Georgia or Ukraine against Moscow-backed separatists in Abkhazia or Crimea.³⁷

Subsequent operations planned for the coast of Ukraine, involving an amphibious landing against terrorists, Operation Sea Breeze, were aborted after Russian-instigated popular demonstrations made it impossible for Kiev and NATO to conduct the operation. Once Operation Active Endeavor raised the issue of the Black Sea, the same concerns arose, along with the potential for internationalizing the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and tensions with Ukraine over the future disposition of the Black Sea Fleet and boundaries along the Sea of Azov.³⁸

Nevertheless Washington, perhaps trying to advance the regional security agenda without Russian obstructionism, has begun implementing its own vision of a Black Sea policy or initiative.³⁹ U.S. officials explicitly define this new policy as one that supports much of Turkey's position on Black Sea issues. While Washington would welcome Russian support and cooperation, it will proceed without it.⁴⁰

Meanwhile NATO enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia remains particularly vexing for Russia. In April, 2004 Ukraine's government signed a memorandum of understanding with NATO. It mentioned the movement of alliance vessels through Ukrainian territorial waters, including the Sea of Azov and Kerch Straits. Ukraine promised to supply NATO with all required technical, informational,

³⁵ "Russia Objects to NATO Plans for Patrolling Black Sea," www.mosnews.com, October 24, 2005

³⁶ David J. Smith, "Opinion: Turkey Needs to Let NATO Safeguard the Black Sea," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 October 2005, p. 21.

³⁷ Leonid Gankin, "Turkish Troops Landed Near Odessa With Support From Ukrainian Armored Vehicles," *Moscow, Kommersant*, in Russian, 1 July 2003, FBIS SOV, 1 July 2003.

³⁸ "Russia and NATO: No Longer Enemies But Not Yet Partners. Moscow and the Alliance Do Have Military Cooperation Possibilities. True. They Are Not Being materialized Fully As Yet." *Moscow, Oborona i Bezopasnost' Kolonka Analitika*, in Russian, June 14, 2005, FBIS SOV 19 June 2005; Vladimir, Bogdanov, "Sea of Special Significance. The Black Sea Region Is Becoming a Zone of Increasing Rivalry Among the Great Powers," *Moscow, Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, January 3, 2006, FBIS SOV, January 3, 2006

³⁹ "US Eyes Up Black Sea Region," *Jane's Foreign Report*, 1 March 2007, www4.jane.com/subscribe/frp/doc; Joshua Kucera, "The United States Develops a Strategic Plan for the Black Sea," *Eurasia Insight*, 1 March 2007.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

medical, and other assistance for the conduct of training exercises, as well as full-fledged military or peacekeeping operations under the Partnership for Peace program.⁴¹

Russia responded predictably. Russia charged that the accord violated the 2003 Russo-Ukrainian agreement on those waters that no third party vessels could navigate them without both parties' specific agreement, a statement missing from the MoU.⁴² Furthermore, unnamed sources in the Russian Ministry of foreign Affairs stated that:

Ukraine's readiness to allow its territory to be used for unspecified NATO operations without Russian permission does not accord with Article 6 of [our treaty] that stipulates, specifically, that neither side may allow its territory to be used in any way that jeopardizes the security of the other."⁴³

Subsequently Russian writers cast this issue in the light of a potential Russo-Ukrainian armed conflict.

The document gives NATO forces so called "rapid access" to the territory of Ukraine not only during military exercises, but also when conducting military operations. This means that Ukraine could become a beachhead for waging any NATO operations, including those not sanctioned by the UN Security Council. Under these circumstances rapid reaction forces of the North Atlantic alliance could be activated across the entire expanse of the European portion of Russia, and even blockade the RF Black Sea Fleet based in the Crimea until the basing term there expires (in 2017 author).⁴⁴ This analysis then cited Russian concerns about future Ukrainian pressure on the Black Sea Fleet and the transformation of the Black Sea into a NATO lake, greatly enhancing NATO's aerial and naval reconnaissance capabilities, undermining the entire concept of Russia's strategic rear and meaningful capability in the Sea of Azov or Black Sea.⁴⁵

As Ukraine has previously stated that it wants the Russian Black Sea Fleet out of its current bases in Sevastopol when the Russo-Ukrainian treaty expires in 2017, Russo-Ukrainian tensions, already strained over energy and other issues, will keep growing over the future disposition of that fleet, its assets, and infrastructures. Most recently, Putin even offered Ukraine security guarantees in return for permanently stationing the Black Sea Fleet on its territory, a superfluous but ominous gesture since Russia already guaranteed Ukraine's security through the Tashkent treaty of 1992 and the Tripartite agreement with Ukraine and America

⁴¹ "The Case of Ukraine, NATO Inches Closer," *Rosbalt*, April 22, 2004, www.rosbaltnews.com, accessed on 25 November 2005.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Mikhail Khodarenok, "The Military Program of Viktor Yushchenko," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyi Kurier*, 19 January 2005, FBIS SOV, 21 January 2005.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

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in 1994.⁴⁶ Putin's offer also came with his typically "dialectical" approach to Ukrainian sovereignty in the Crimea where he stated that,

The Crimea forms part of the Ukrainian side and we cannot interfere in another country's internal affairs. At the same time, however, Russia cannot be indifferent to what happens in the Ukraine and Crimea.⁴⁷ As one recent commentary puts it:

Moscow has the political and covert action means to create in the Crimea the very type of situations against which Putin is offering to "protect" Ukraine if the Russian Fleet's presence is extended. Thus far such means have been shown to include inflammatory visits and speeches by Russian Duma deputies in the Crimea, challenges to Ukraine's control of Tuzla Island in the Kerch Strait, the fanning of "anti-NATO –in fact anti-American– protests by Russian groups in connection with planned military exercises and artificial Russian-Tatar tensions on the peninsula.⁴⁸

Russia is augmenting its capabilities for such covert subversion by instituting a substantial program whereby it gives soldiers and officers in the Transnistrian "Army", which occupies part of Moldova, Russian military service passports and rotates them through elite Russian officer training courses called Vystrel at Sonechegorsk, the Russian Combined Arms Training Center there. The subversive implications of this program should be obvious to all observers.⁴⁹ Therefore Kiev excludes the stationing of any foreign troops on its territory.⁵⁰

Moscow is still more outspoken toward Georgian membership in NATO, especially as it believes Georgia wants to provoke it into a war over South Ossetia and Abkhazia and Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili arouses a reaction in the Russian leadership akin to that triggered in America by Fidel Castro. Russo-Georgian relations are so bad that an armed clash is neither inconceivable nor a remote possibility despite a recent uptick in relations.⁵¹ In the last six months we have seen armed Georgian actions against local insurgents, Georgian arrests of Russian agents who were planning a coup, Russian economic sanctions against Georgia, Moscow's deportation of Georgians from Russia, Russian sanctions against Georgia, Russian-sponsored talk of invoking a Kosovo precedent to detach Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia, and Russian-backed referendums in those two provinces in favor of independence.

The Russo-Turkish Rapprochement

Therefore, and given the continuing signs of imperfect democratic control over the military in Turkey, and the stagnation of Turkey's drive for membership in the European Union, the current Russo-Turkish rapprochement is not unexpected.

⁴⁶ Vladimir Socor, "Putin Offers Ukraine "protection" for Extending Russian Black Sea Fleet's Presence," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 30 October 2006.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Reuben F. Johnson, "The Expansion Process Has Begun," *The Weekly Standard*, XII, No. 4, 10 October 2006.

⁵⁰ Moscow, *Agentstvo Voyennoykh Novostey, FBIS SOV*, 26 October 2006.

⁵¹ Stephen Blank, *Bracing for Conflict: Russia and Georgia in South Ossetia*, *Eurasia Insight*, 25 September 2006.

While Russian energy exports to and through Turkey are a factor, equally important is a shared resentment and suspicion about European and American motives and policies, especially regarding the Black Sea and the Middle East.⁵² But there is also, as observers note, a shared congruence of perceptions about key issues in contemporary world politics.⁵³

We have known for some time that those forces in Turkey that are suspicious of, if not hostile to membership in the EU raise the specter of a Turkey oriented more towards its Middle Eastern and/or Russian neighbors.⁵⁴ Although this Turco-Russian rapprochement is not the typical pattern, it does recall the 1920s and 1930s when both were weak or excluded from Europe (in Moscow's case by deliberate choice) and their rapprochement made sense. Simultaneously Moscow's intense campaign to win influence in Greece through energy deals and arms sales also suggests the revival of Moscow's ancient dream of being the main international actor in Southeastern Europe. Meanwhile, the similarities between present conditions of disarray and the loss of vision and leadership in Europe and the United States, themselves factors bound up with the war in Iraq, and international relations in the interwar period should give us all pause.

The Energy Factor

Energy is Russia's most strategic weapon, not only to increase state and major firms' revenues but also to destabilize regional governments and coerce them to remain part of a Russian-dominated bloc – hence the constant energy battles and repeated use of energy and other sanctions by Russia against Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states. These policies generate considerable anxiety among local governments that Russia will use this weapon to hinder reforms and the consolidation of Eurasia into a secure democratic region.⁵⁵

Reports by Russian and Ukrainian media suggest that Russia is attempting to coerce Ukraine. They report that the agreement to provide Ukraine with gas at well below market price of 130 dollars per tcm (thousand cubic meters) was conditional and may be for one year rather than the five years originally reported. In return Ukraine must hold a quick referendum on joining NATO, which would probably be defeated; allow the Black Sea Fleet to stay in Crimea at least through 2017; keep buying gas through Gazprom's subsidiary Rosukrenergo (a company with very shadowy ties) through 2011; and get Turkmen gas exclusively through Russia. Thus it must not try to change its current price for Gazprom for transporting gas through Ukraine to Europe.

⁵² Fiona Hill and Omer Taşpınar, "Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded," *Survival*, Spring, 2006, XLVIII, NO. 1, pp. 81-92; Fiona Hill and Omer Taşpınar, "Turkey on the Brink," *Washington Quarterly*, XXIX, No. 3, Summer, 2006, pp. 57-70.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Suat Kınıklioğlu, "The Anatomy of Turkish-Russian Relations," Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2006.

⁵⁵ Mircea Marian, "Basescu Accuses Russian Energy Monopoly," Bucharest, *Adevarul Internet Version*, in Romanian, November 2, 2006, FBIS SOV, 2 November 2006.

Other sources state that Ukraine is ready to pay Russia for keeping favorable gas prices by “assisting” Russian state companies to buy shares in Ukrainian aviation and energy industries.⁵⁶

Similar trends are cited in Russo-Serbian ties. Apparently Serbia stopped privatization of its oil industry lest this antagonize Russia, which intends to make Serbia the center of the Balkans for the distribution of Russian gas. It also was feared that Russia might withdraw support for Serbia’s position on Kosovo.⁵⁷

Finally, the new Russo-Bulgarian-Greek Burgas-Alexandropoulos oil pipeline that would take Kazakh oil through Russian pipes to Burgas and then down to Alexandropoulos underscores the complex economic and political rivalries dotting the region and Russia’s use of energy to establish hegemony in the CIS. Russia controls 51 percent of the Burgas-Alexandropoulos oil pipeline project and the other two partners have 24.5 percent each. Their motives are obvious, becoming major players in the energy field and gaining regular oil supplies, large transit fees, and opportunities for jobs and investments. But Moscow’s agenda is broader and more strategic. It recently intensified pressure to conclude this long-discussed project because of Turkey’s continuing restrictions on tanker trade in the Bosphorus through which one-third of Russian oil flows.

While Ankara invokes environmental security, this policy forced more shipments through the Baku—Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that bypasses Russia and which Moscow will not support. The new project will relieve pressure on the Bosphorus and bypass Turkey. As it uses Kazakh oil, Moscow will maintain pressure to ensure that this oil only reaches markets through its routes and keep Kazakhstan dependent upon it, just as it seeks to do with Turkmen gas. Third, Washington is sponsoring a huge competitive infrastructural plan for the Black Sea that would link Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey, which has made clear its ambition to be a key regional distributor and pivot in the global energy trade, and the Balkans while bypassing Russia.⁵⁸

Conclusion

These examples highlight the intertwining of energy and security issues and Moscow’s determination to exploit that fact. But these examples also validate

⁵⁶ VladimirOpen Source Center, “Moscow Makes Stiff Demands on Ukraine for Cheap Gas,” *FBIS SOV*, 27 October 2006.

⁵⁷ Belgrade, Kurir, in Serbian, 25 October 2006, *FBIS SOV*, 25 October 2006.

⁵⁸ Igor Tonberg, “Russia to Transport Oil Through the Balkans,” *RIA Novosti*, 18 March 2007; “U.S. Works in Europe to Create Alternative to Russian Gas Supplies,” www.mosnews.com, 16 March 2007; Andrei Kolesnikov, “Putin Confirms the Energy Map,” Moscow, *Kommersant*, 16 March 2007, *FBIS SOV*, 16 March 2007; Athens, *Ta Nea*, in Greek, March 15, 2007, *FBIS SOV*, 15 March 2007; Sami Kohen, “Is Turkey Being Bypassed?” Ankara, *Milliyet*, in Turkish, March 19, 2007, *FBIS SOV*, 19 March 2007; Yeoryios Dhelatik, “Putin’s Pipeline Ultimatum,” Athens, *I Kathemerini, Internet Version*, in Greek, 22 March 2007, *FBIS SOV*, 22 March 2007; “Burgas-Alexandropolis Pipeline and Kazakh Oil,” *Eastweek* No 12 (77), 22 March 2007, www.osw.pl; M.K. Bhadrakumar, “A New Dividing Line in Europe,” *Asia Times Online*, www.atimes.com, March 23, 2007; Vasily Zubkov, “New Oil Pipeline to Bypass Turkish Straits,” *RIA Novosti*, 4 September 2006.

Tesmur Basilia’s observations that for many CIS countries “the acute issue of choosing between alignment with Russia and the West is associated with the choice between two models of social development.”⁵⁹ Russia wants an external analogue of its domestic system, where it can do as it pleases and could reproduce and project outward its autocracy. This is obviously unacceptable to local governments and the West but Moscow will persist until local governments and the West decisively rebuff it. The best answer to Russia is eventual acceptance of states like Ukraine and Georgia (but not only them) into the EU and NATO. Foreclosing Moscow’s imperial option ultimately leaves it no choice but to integrate into, not beside, Europe.

Meanwhile local and Western states must undertake and support local reform. This means crafting a viable EU energy policy and increased involvement in Black Sea issues to attack regional threats. Not only is the security environment becoming more unstable as the security agenda broadens,

There is no specific ‘regional security any more. Today any special national or even regional security arrangements are virtually irrelevant. Both the threats and our responses are global. While certain specific regional security concerns remain, their management can no longer be national or even regional. More importantly, these regional issues are overshadowed by the new global and domestic security threats facing the entire OECD community.⁶⁰

These remarks encapsulate the regional security agenda. All interested governments must grasp their larger responsibilities and a broader vision of them than before. Otherwise the problems they inevitably face in the future will be bigger and more intractable. The Black Sea is Europe’s frontier and if the frontier is ablaze, the center will soon be burned as well.

⁵⁹ Tesmur Basilia, “Eurasian Commentary,” Jan H. Kalicki and Eugene K. Lawson, Eds., *Russian-Eurasian Renaissance?: U.S. Trade and Investment in Russia and Eurasia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003, p. 166.

⁶⁰ Tomas Ries, “The New Security Agenda,” Erko Mikkola, Ed., *The Future of Multilateral Security Cooperation in the New Security Environment*, Helsinki, National Defense College, Department of Strategic and Defense Studies, 2005, p. 7.