Human Rights and Foreign Policy Discourse in Today's Russia: Romantic Realism and Securitisation of Identity

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Viatcheslav Morozov
Associate Professor of European Studies
School of International Relations
St. Petersburg State University
e-mail: morozov@dip.pu.ru

Most people writing on the subject recognise that within the Russian discourse, the concept of human rights is used somewhat differently compared to Western Europe or the United States. However, the nature of these differences is yet to be properly studied. It is not enough just to say that 'the Western notions of human rights undergo certain transformations when transplanted to the Russian soil. At a superficial glance, the post-Soviet notions of human rights are identical [to the Western ones], but upon a more curious consideration their content turns out to be somewhat different' (Chugrov 2001:3). The essentialist concept of 'the Russian soil' as different from the Western one is of little help since it takes cultural differences as given, and thus all the researcher has to do is to register the differences in political practice, while the explanations are known in advance. More sophisticated essentialist approaches do no more than provide labels for the cultural features (e.g. 'nominalism' of the Western culture and 'collectivism' of the East – see Panarin 1999), but are unable to account for the interaction of these two fundamental principles in the Russian political process. As far as foreign policy studies are concerned, there is also the handy realist option of reducing the differences to an assumed national interest, which, of course, in itself is a social construct that is to be studied, and not a conceptual tool for research of other matters.

This paper employs discourse analysis to investigate the ways in which the notion of human rights is interpreted on the domestic political scene since the beginning of the NATO military campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999, and some consequences of these interpretations for Russia's self-definition vis-à-vis the outside world. The aim is not to provide a full account of the differences between the understanding of human rights in Russia and the 'classical' liberal doctrine, but rather to demonstrate how the concept is treated within the dominant foreign policy discourse, how it interacts with other fundamental concepts, and how new meanings and structures are produced in this process.

My argument is that the main paradigm of the dominant Russian foreign policy discourse today is romantic realism – a methodological position that claims to be able to find out 'real'

motives for political action, but views international politics first and foremost against the romantic nationalist background. Consequently, human rights is almost universally interpreted as no more than a disguise for 'real' political goals of the Western leaders but, on the other hand, these presumed political goals are no less idealistic than the idea of universal human rights.

Secondly, the notion of human rights is involved in the process of constructing a border between 'us' and 'them' along the national lines, which in itself amounts to the construction of a community around the Russian state. A nation is understood here rather in political than in cultural or ethnic terms: the case is not always that simple in the Russian discourse (cf. Morozov 2001:18–21), but this assumption appears to be valid for the purpose of this paper. I then proceed to explore the philosophical background of the romantic realist paradigm as represented by Alexandr Panarin, one of the leading conservative political philosophers and geopolitical thinkers. The choice of Panarin's work as a main source is justified by his unique position in the Russian academic world – being the head of the Department of Political Science of the Moscow State University, he occupies a top position in the academic hierarchy of the discipline, which is also reflected in the number of books and especially textbooks on political theory and geopolitics he has published. His writings arguably represent the most coherent expression of this philosophical trend and, perhaps as a consequence of this, it seems to me that Panarin's works explicate many key assumptions that underlie the contemporary Russian foreign policy discourse.

The analysis of Panarin's writings makes it obvious that the discourse in general, and in particular the statements about human rights securitise the identity of the Russian society by making it a referential object of a security discourse. Hence, the border between 'us' and 'them' that is being constructed within the discourse is reinforced and allows for no in-between position. Securitisation of identity is not irreversible, yet, as will be shown by the analysis of the post-September 11 Russian debate, the discursive structures shaped during the previous high tide of securitisation are always there, ready to be employed if new tensions arise. Besides, the treatment of the notion of human rights in the paradigm of romantic realism has proven so effective that the patient is by now rather dead than alive, meaning that very few people would now subscribe to the idea that human rights protection may be a 'real' motive for

international political action. The consequences in terms of discrediting human rights as a political platform have been enormous and hardly reversible.

The scope of the paper is limited to the dominant foreign policy discourse. This means, firstly, that the main focus will be on the statist thought, most powerful in today's Russia, and that all the marginal viewpoints – totalitarian as well as liberal ones – are almost entirely left out. Secondly, only the points relevant for understanding of the current Russian foreign policy are taken into consideration. While selecting the texts, I take as a starting point the position of authoritative speakers (Milliken 1999:233) of the dominant discourse, those possessing social power to define the foreign policy agenda (cf. Buzan et al. 1997:31–32), i.e. politicians and diplomats occupying top positions in the state hierarchy. Among countless other texts on foreign policy (mostly written by analysts and journalists) I select those which are compatible with the official position, share its basic assumptions and are arguably based on the same deeper discursive structures (see Wæver 2002:33–42). I recognise the danger of narrowing down the sample, excluding important viewpoints and thus misinterpreting the discourse, but it seems to me that my interpretation works for a vast majority of Russian texts in the field of international relations, and I tend to think therefore that my research is validated (cf. Milliken 1999:234) Accordingly, the paper is based on the analysis of the professional publications of the Russian diplomatic and international studies community, such as *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'* and *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, on the official publications of the Foreign Ministry and the newspaper articles, primarily in the influential daily *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, very popular among the foreign policy analysts and decision-makers.

Finally, a reservation is to be made about the images of political space employed in this paper. I mainly use the term 'the West' to denote the Other as it appears within the Russian discourse. Although 'Europe' or 'the civilised world' may sometimes be used as synonyms in the texts to which I refer, these terms are not entirely interchangeable, each has a distinct meaning, sometimes overlapping with others, while at other junctures building a hierarchy. I deliberately abstain from analysing the content of those notions, having simply accepted them at their face value. Since this paper concentrates on other concepts and discursive practices to which a

single and impregnable West is a given, I believe this methodological position to be legitimate.

Human rights in the paradigm of romantic realism: approaching the problem

The year 1999, and specifically the wars in Yugoslavia and in Chechnya, brought about significant changes in the ways in which Russian foreign policy was conducted, and even more substantial transformation in its legitimation at home. One of the most characteristic public pronouncements on the issue of human rights in the international context was made by Natalya Airapetova in her articles in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, published during 1999. The last article (1999b), which appeared on 10 December (the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), was aptly entitled 'Russia needs defence against human rights defenders'. In her highly emotional statements, Airapetova makes a number of charges against the human rights movement in Russia.

First of all, human rights activists are accused of trying to disguise their material interest beneath the idealistic declarations. Basically what they are interested in is the Western money, and they are ready to criticise their government if they are paid well enough. Subsequently, however, it turns out that cash is not the only source of inspiration for the proponents of individual freedoms: they are also motivated by 'pathological and forthright russophobia and hatred to their own country'. Among the main aims, accordingly, are not only the personal enrichment, but 'the disintegration of the country and its friendly occupation by the "civilised countries"' (1999c).

Not every analyst, especially in the academic circles, would perhaps agree with such an extreme interpretation of the Western goals. Yet nearly every one would at the time subscribe to the idea that the West, using the Russian human rights movement as a sort of a fifth column, is cynically pursuing geopolitical ends by anti-Russian 'propaganda'. 'The war in Kosovo has demonstrated the double standards of the US and its allies', writes Sergei Rogov (1999b), the Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada of the Russian Academy of Science. 'Hard pressure put upon Russia aims at making it accept the Western rules of the game, agree for a role of a secondary importance'.

Russian diplomatic leaders, including the Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, shared this view. According to a statement by Ivanov on 27 March 1999, the main factors to blame for the events were the activity of the Albanian terrorists and the NATO's desire 'to extend its presence in the Balkans'. President Milosevic is responsible but for the excessive use of violence against the terrorists, with civilian population suffering as a result. The charges of genocide and the 'myth of a humanitarian disaster' were needed only to prepare the intervention, whose final aim was to colonise the Balkans. 'Therefore, while defending today Yugoslavia's right for sovereignty, we are also defending the future of the world and of Europe against the most recent form of colonialism – the so called natocolonialism' (I. Ivanov 1999b).

Thus, the concern about human rights and the undertaking to protect the Albanian population are no more than a cover for the 'real' goals pursued by the West. A key observation to be made here, however, is that it proves very difficult to find a solid *realist* explanation for the war in Kosovo. This is perhaps why the only rationalisation outside the abstract geopolitical constructs was to suggest that the 'real' goal of the United States in Kosovo was to undermine the euro and to prevent 'a massive return of dollars into the USA [that] would have lead to its irreversible destabilisation and degradation' (Deliagin 1999:53). This idea has been treated almost as a self-evident truth by the foreign policy experts and journalists alike – it was, for instance, mentioned by Airapetova (1999a) as early as April, and it immediately resurfaced again in the interpretations of the Macedonian conflict of 2001 (KM.RU 2001). The idea about the financial reasons for the US action in Kosovo is picked up by Vladimir Kruzhkov of the Russian Foreign Ministry Fourth European Department, who gives an additional reason for the American involvement: 'to impede the development of a European defence structure and to consolidate Europe on the basis of NATO, where the Americans play the first fiddle' (1999:26). Kruzhkov also suggests an explanation (so visibly lacking in Deliagin's account) for Europe's participation in the affair: the fear of the Albanian immigration. Natalia Narochnitskaya (1999:24) offers a purely geopolitical explanation, which, in a word, consists in an image of the West forcefully moving eastwards.

With all these facts being postulated, however, it is still not clear which are the final aims of this geopolitical game, and why, for example, immigration was being prevented by a costly military

campaign that was likely to generate a flow of refugees. The picture becomes much more transparent when Deliagin starts to ascribe to the American nation some intrinsic qualities and intentions to rationalise the apparent disrespect to its allies in Europe, which inevitably follows from his assumption about the 'real' US goals: 'There is a nuance fundamentally important for the understanding of the USA: for it, the primary relationship is not that of alliance, but that of competition. Being a superpower, it considers alliance as an instrument that allows it to hold back its junior partners' (1999:56).

Kruzhkov turns to essentialist explanations as well. He asserts that the 'fundamentalist consciousness' of the Western policy-makers leads to their 'fanatic realisation of the idea of justice' in the spirit of violence which was described as distinctive for the Romano-Germanic cultural type by a nineteenth-century Russian scholar Vladimir Danilevskii (Kruzhkov 1999:22–23, see Danilevsky 1871). '[…] The North Atlantic coalition uses moral rhetoric to conceal its real egoistic goals', Kruzhkov continues. And those goals, common for the Atlantic community, in his opinion are 'in the first place, the removal of the political leadership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, suppression of the Serbian national self-consciousness and the establishment of a puppet regime. […] In the second place, it is economic expansion by means of establishing control over a new market of a cheap working force and a marketplace [for Western goods]' (1999:25).

The assumption of sheer cynicism lurking behind any kind of political rhetoric is thus applied by the Russian foreign policy analysts in an obviously inconsistent manner. Some degree of idealism is recognised for the human rights activists and Western governments – if only of *false* idealism. Instead of their declared idealistic aims to protect rights and freedoms of the individual, and to promote democracy in Europe, they are in fact using these ends as a means to achieve another idealistic goal: to dismember Russia and to subjugate it to the West. The analysis thus stops short of being fully in keeping with the orthodox realist claim to occupy the position of an 'objective observer', capable of explaining politics as driven exclusively by interest. As demonstrated by Palan and Blair (1993), realism in international relations is itself deeply rooted in the German philosophical idealism with its theory of the nation and the state. However, as the link between romantic nationalism and the Russian IR seems to be particularly close, *romantic realism* seems to me the best term to designate this intellectual phenomenon.

Romantic realism may be viewed not only as an intellectual trend, but also as a discursive practice producing and reproducing the common sense of the society (cf. Milliken 1999:237–238). The claim that the main goal of NATO's intervention in the Balkans has been the protection of the Albanian minority against genocide has been nearly unanimously mocked by the Russian media and politicians. The rare call for consideration, issued by Boris Orlov, a senior researcher at the Institute for Scientific Information (INION), and published in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, was provided with a sarcastic editorial comment and met with a up-front rebuff from other analysts. Orlov did not approve of the 'insolent bombings of a sovereign country', he just called for understanding of the Western leaders who had, in his words, fallen into 'Milisevic's trap', facing 'a totality of problems for which the world democratic community has no effective, convincing and, most importantly, moral response' (Orlov 1999). Orlov was immediately accused of naïve faith in the virtue Western policy-makers: 'Come on, who needs those ill-fated Albanians […]? What is being decided here are the problems of geopolitics, of the spheres of influence, of NATO enlargement, of taming Europe and Russia. How in it possible in one's right mind believe that anyone defends here the main value of the liberal democracy – human rights?' (Zamiatina 1999). And in order to conclusively turn the solemn pronouncements of the NATO leaders into a mockery, President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky is quoted: 'Bill had wished to prove to Hillary that he is capable not only of oral sex with an intern […], but of initiating the events of global significance' (Zamiatina 1999).

It is very important to note the dismissive language of Zamiatina's retort to Orlov: it clearly purports the opinion that the sincerity of the Western politicians is something so incredible that it cannot be seriously discussed. One thing to point out here is the obvious link of this way of thinking with the Soviet tradition of vulgar Marxism, which demanded from any researcher to uncover the 'real', 'material' (i.e. economic) interests behind any political move. This reductionist legacy has proven very difficult to overcome: most of the Russian analysts would argue that to explain a political phenomenon means to tear down its ideological cover and to expose its 'real' driving force. However, the meaning of the 'real' has become somewhat less certain since the end of the vulgar Marxist monopoly: now, geopolitical explanations, in fact popular even in the Soviet time despite the official denouncing of geopolitics as an 'anti-science',

have become sufficient in themselves, with no need to reduce them even further to economics.

Anyway, whatever are the reasons, the discursive practice of dismissing the declared motivation of the West as a mere pretence has proven strikingly effective. Even such authors as Ida Kuklina, very critical of both Milosevic's policy and the Russian government's conduct in Chechnya, still take the predominance of the covert motives for the Kosovo campaign for granted. This is evident from her repeating – as a matter of course – the romantic realist clichés that the war in Kosovo has demonstrated that for the apparently democratic states 'human rights protection outside their borders can serve as a means of directly achieving purely political goals, of expansion of their influence', that 'the realisation of the military-political tasks is only disguised with the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (2000:23)

As this section has demonstrated, romantic realism is an analytical approach that aspires to unveil the 'real' motivation behind declared idealistic goals, but this 'real' motivation proves to be no less idealistic than one that is allegedly used as a disguise. On the other hand, and most importantly, romantic realism is a discourse that produces and reproduces the common sense of the society, which in our case consists in the attitude towards human rights and other liberal ideals as tools used by cynical Western politicians to promote their 'real' aims. There are other links between the romantic realist discourse and romantic nationalism, which will be explored in the next section.

The border between 'us' and 'them': the construction of a community

Another attribute of the Russian foreign policy discourse, that is perhaps even more important than its realist claims and their consequences, is the border between 'us' and 'them' that this discourse draws, thereby constructing a community. Not all of 'us', of the entities on 'this' side of the border, are equally identified with: 'we' in this discourse is wider than the Self that is being constructed through this border-drawing. This seems to be a usual case for reasons explained by Wæver (2002:24–26). The discourse, being essentially modernist in its nature, constructs the community in

national terms, with the 'we' grouping being centred around the position of the Russian state.

Thus, in Natalya Airapetova's texts, the division between 'us' and 'them' goes strictly along the national lines. The money that the human rights advocates allegedly aspire for, comes from an alien source: 'the entire Russian [human rights] "movement" to a man is maintained by the West' (1999b). In a book published by the Moscow Military Institute, Kharichkin accuses some leading Russian politicians of a 'pro-American' position, which in effect means they are splitting up their country: 'Following the advice from the West, they expect nothing dangerous if […] the trends towards Russia's breakdown take the upper hand, and several dozens of [new] states emerge in its place. The most important […] in their view is that those states are democratic' (1999:207–208). The liberals, according to Airapetova, while standing for 'their' interests (for the Kosovo Albanians, the Chechens etc.), at the same time totally neglect the plight of 'our' people (the Serbs, and first of all the Russians). 'It is astonishing, but there has been not a single statement from the human right activists and organisations after the terrorist acts in Moscow, Volgodonsk and Buinaksk' – Airapetova (1999c) writes, referring to the explosions in the three Russian cities in September 1999 that killed several hundred people.

Needless to say, this is a very peculiar interpretation of the human rights movement's mission. It seems to be greatly at odds with the 'classical' human rights discourse that was, to be sure, present in Russia even in 1999, but existed on the margins of the public debate. One of the most significant 'blind spots' of the dominant discourse, evident from the above quotation, was its disregard to the fact that the very idea of *human* rights, in the original paradigm, implies that it should be applied to all people regardless of their nationality (as well as sex, age, race etc.). There is, however, one point of difference between the two discourses that usually evades explication – either because it looks self-evident for the observer, or because the entire notion of individual rights is alien to a particular way of thinking. The point is that the main body responsible for the protection of human rights and freedoms is of course the state, while human rights NGOs are supposed to step in when the norms are violated *by the state*, and the individual therefore is left without protection. A certain 'anti-statist bias' of the human rights movement is therefore determined by its role as a counterbalance to the state power in a democratic system: 'The very idea of defending human

rights rejects the cult of an almighty and innocent state' (Ikhlov and Pononmariov 1999). And, of course, it is not for the movement to interfere in the domains where the state institutions for the protection of the individual have historically been developed at their best – such as the matters of criminal justice – *unless* the state violates individual rights *either* by action *or* inaction.

This distinction is very well recognised by Ida Kuklina: '[I]n place of the old dichotomy, which divided the world into "us" and "them", emerges a new one, in the form of an opposition between the Power and the Man, which is a natural outcome of globalisation. […] In a globalised world, the use of armed force by the state is increasingly shedding off its function of protecting against external aggression, against "a stranger", and turns into a means to affirm the interests of the global elite by exterminating part of the mankind' (2000:24, 26). The last assertion may sound as a radical libertarian statement even by the Western standard; on the other hand, Kuklina is not free from conceiving of the Russian human rights activists as of blind admirers of the West. 'Many of them continue to appeal to the West as to a supreme and just judge' (2000:24), writes she and continues with a rhetorical question: should the human rights activists oppose the state or, 'in an orgy of human rights violations at the world stage […], *submitting to the appeal of the liberal values*, once and for all choose the side of the powerful and defend everything that comes into the world from the West / Norh?' (2000:27, emphasis added). It may be argued that this curious interpretation of 'the liberal values' by actually a very liberal author, once again, demonstrates the strength of the dominant discourse and its effectiveness in depicting the human rights movement as alien and subversive. Even if Kuklina does not share the fear of the allegedly subversive role of the movement, she still perceives it as part of a single and obstinate West and thus, perhaps unwillingly, plays her part in drawing the border between 'us' and 'them', with the human rights activists as the fifth column[1].

The extent to which this border has become sedimented as a discursive structure may be well illustrated by the habit of Russian social scientists to evaluate the writings of their colleagues on the

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[1] It should probably be noted that the most influential Russian human rights NGOs never expressed an unreserved support for the NATO campaign. Some of them even criticised the bombings, but all were united in their condemnation, first, of Milosevic's regime, and second, of the nationalist hysteria that the war has provoked in Russia (see, for example, Memorial 1999a, 1999b).

basis of nationality, which sometimes leads to a complete confusion in terms of paradigms. Consider, for example, the following set of names: Huntington, Fukuyama, Thomas Friedman, Giddens, Rosenau, Paul Kennedy, Roland Robertson, Bauman… Sergei Zemlianoi (2002), a researcher with the Institute of Philosophy in Moscow and also a relatively liberal author, mingles them together just because they happen to hold British and American passports, while Britain and the US are, of course, the two 'patrons of globalisation'. If this is the starting point for reading, it comes as no surprise that the global democracy, together with Internet, hi-tech, multinational corporations and supranational organisations are unthinkingly classified as 'domains of the USA', while human rights are put in a strict opposition to nation state and categorised as one of the manifestations of globalisation[2].

There is a vast range of sources (not all of them can possibly be quoted here) that enables one to reconstruct in detail the content of the two groupings – 'us' and 'them' – as they are shaped in the discourse. 'Us' is centred around the official position of the Russian state which, 'while saving the Russian society from the filth of terrorism', is fulfilling its 'obligations before the international community in the field of human rights protection' (Putin 2000), striving for 'the restoration of constitutional legal order, rule of law, human rights, normalisation of social and economic life in the Chechen Republic' (MID RF 2000b). To be sure, the Chechen civilians were also among 'us' and in urgent need to be protected against 'bandints [that] have launched a real war against the entire population of Chechnya' (Putin 2000). The Serbian population of Yugoslavia, and especially of Kosovo, is positioned along the same lines. At the times when the confrontation between Russia and the West hit the highest point, 'us' seemed also briefly include such states as China and Iran, which readily declared Chechnya to be Russia's internal affair (e.g. Gornostaev and Reutov 1999, A. Ivanov 1999). As shown in the last section, some international organisations are found now and then among the 'family members', only to be expelled at the next turn of Russia's international fortunes.

'Them' were first of all the Albanian, Chechen and other terrorists. The Chechen separatists in particular are dehumanised by

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[2] To be fair, Russian academics do try to publicly demonstrate that this kind of argument is fundamentally flawed – see, for example, Mirskii's (2002) description of Fukuyama's standing in the Western debate. However, I would insist that the first way of thinking is much more part of the mainstream than the second one.

incriminating them 'national and regional discrimination, hostage-taking, slavery and slave-trade, murder, rape, public executions' (Putin 2000). On the other hand, the stability of association between the word 'Albanian' and such labels as 'terrorist', 'militant', 'extremist' in the Russian media speech has even prompted an intervention on the part of the Albanian ambassador in Moscow (see Vukaj 2001). Then comes the US and their European allies, guilty of, firstly, directly or indirectly supporting the terrorists, secondly, of human rights violations during the Kosovo conflict, thirdly, of infringements of the international norms in their internal conduct. By declaring a 'Jihad' on Russia over Chechnya, *Kommersant* wrote, 'the leaders of the West end up in the company of the No. 1 international terrorist Usama bin Laden' (Mikhailov 1999). 'One can give lessons of democracy and human rights only in case one follows them in one's own practice', the Foreign Ministry said in its reaction to the State Department report on the world human rights situation in 1999. The message is that the US, with its own record of 'applying capital punishment, racial discrimination and anti-Semitism' had better remain silent (MID RF 2000a). Parliamentary Assebmly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is also dominated by the parliamentarians that 'continue to live and think within the stereotypes of the Cold War and double standards […] to derive their information from the deceitful propaganda spread out by the Chechen terrorists and their patrons' (MID RF 2000b). Important part of the Other are the Central and Eastern European countries, trying 'to get their revenge against Russia for all the insults of the USSR times' by 'teaching Russia how to be democratic' (Chubchenko 1999). Especially cynical and 'anti-Russian' are, of course, the Baltic States, and among them Latvia and Estonia – the states that perpetrate 'systematic and large-scale violations of the rights of dozens of thousands of [their] residents'[3] (MID RF 2000a). Finally, as demonstrated above, the Other also includes the fifth column personified by the human rights activists – the still widespread habit of systematically putting the Russian word *pravozashchitniki* between quotation marks dates back to 1999.

The degree of binarisation that the Russian discourse reached in 1999 is perhaps best illustrated by the argument that, had Russia not possessed of its nuclear arsenal, it would have shared the fate of Yugoslavia. 'You and me, the Russian citizens (*rossiyane*), who were we in that ill-fated Chechen war? According to NATO's logic,

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[3] The accusation refers to the mainly Russian-speaking residents who have been denied the right to acquire citizenship of those respective states in the early 1990s.

we should have been destroyed together with Boris Yeltsin only because we have elected him' (Zamiatina 1999). This is a clear manifestation of a securitising discourse, but this aspect will be dealt with in the following section. What is important at this stage is that such an opinion presupposes a greater degree of solidarity with the position of the Russian government than with any other possible stance: a community can consequently be conceived of only in national terms. Even before the second Chechen war and the stigmatisation of the Chechen separatists that came with it, there was no question for the Russian authors which side to choose: 'our' Yeltsin is by default better than 'their' NATO. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that the Kosovo campaign was explicitly and successfully used as a justification for the 'anti-terrorist operation' in Chechnya later in 1999 . For instance, an article discussing the threat of economic sanctions against Russia in December 1999 featured a picture of destroyed buildings with the caption that read: 'This is neither Chechnya nor Grozny. This is Pristina after the NATO bombings' (Gornostaev and Reutov 1999). The final phrase of the same article was no less straightforward: while Europe is 'yelling about respect for human rights thousands kilometres from EU borders', the European politicians forget about the fact that 'the same rights of the Serbian population are violated just round the corner in Kosovo'. Thus, while the Russian state was, within this discourse, right in bombing the Chechens because they were part of 'them', NATO was wrong in bombing the Serbs because they were part of 'us'.

Moreover, while criticism of the government's actions from within the national community may be allowed, any outside interference is unwelcome or even threatening. The Russian reply to the outside critics of the second Chechen campaign may be summarised with the following words of Dmitrii Gornostaev (2000): 'Russia will herself come to grips with those who in the ranks of her army has violated the laws of war. [...] Russia has done her business and knows better than others which mistakes she has committed in the process'. In the language of diplomacy, this statement would amount to the advocacy of the principle of non-interference – one of the bulwarks of the Russian foreign policy in its opposition to the West. In the Russian discourse sovereignty is indeed a very securitised principle, but the binarisation of Self – Other relations should not be overlooked. The reduction of the content of the discourse to the defence of sovereignty would be incorrect if only because such a

framework would be unable to account for the Russian attacks against human rights violations in the Baltic States and in the US.

To sum up, in 1999 the Russian foreign policy discourse drew a very clear line between 'us' and 'them', which is presented as the border of a 'natural' political and spiritual community. This discourse is probably a part of a very solid discursive structure that has been forming for centuries and is therefore very difficult to change. The dominant discourse relies upon this structure and at the same time reproduces and strengthens it by repeating its basic defaults (opposition between Russia and the West, 'naturalness' of an ethnic and national identity as opposed to the false ideological community of the liberals etc.) and by using emotional language to depict the aggressive and violent acts of 'them'. The critical voices are this marginalised and made irrelevant by ascribing to them a Western identity: being a part of the violent Other, they have no right to interfere in 'our' affairs. In the next section, I will consider the manifestations of these deeper layers of the discursive structure in Russian political philosophy and theoretical geopolitics.

'Postmodern Eurasianism' and securitisation of identity

Romantic realist paradigm is theoretically elaborated in the writings of the conservative Russian political philosophers like Alexandr Panarin. In his books, he combines the anti-rationalism and the promotion of naturalness, characteristic of the philosophy of life, with the advocacy of diversity and tolerance in terms clearly borrowed from the postmodern intellectual trends, in what Patomäki and Pursiainen (1999:72) call 'a postmodern version of Eurasianism'.

References to post-modernity as an epoch when the Western civilisation became aware of its own limits are not uncommon for contemporary Russian romantic nationalist literature (see, for example, Maliavin 1995). Upon a more thorough examination, though, one can see that there is not so much postmodern about contemporary Eurasianism, and very little new in general. Most of the ideas discussed today, including the concern with diversity, can be traced back to Nikolai Trubetskoi's 1920 work 'Europe and Humanity', in which he, in particular, argues that cosmopolitanism is no more than a version of chauvinism, but with the global ambitions (see Trubetskoi 1920:1–6, cf. Neumann 1996:112–115). Moreover,

'postmodern' Eurasianism is deeply rooted in Hegel's teleological conception of history and his understanding of the nation as an organic community that achieves the purpose of being through the state.

Thus, as distinct from most of the ideologues of post-modernity, and in line with the 'classical' Eurasianist doctrine, contemporary Russian philosophical conservatism comprehends the variety in terms of cultures, nations, civilisations – not of the individuals. Politics, according to Panarin, 'is not only a procedure for the assertion of certain group interests or […] for the achievement of balance between them; it is, beyond doubt, also a procedure for the detection of collective interest of the nation as a single organism' (1999:106–107). Consequently, the conservatives condemn the Western liberalism as a 'nominalist' paradigm, inadequate 'in comprehending politics as a sphere of common good and common interest' (Panarin 1999:108). Their verdict on the West reads: 'The dominant of the individual interest corresponds to the very normative and logical structure of this civilisation, based on social nominalism, on the notion of the society as a sum of sovereign individuals', pursuing their own interests and having no regard to the tasks of the society as a whole. What follows is a rhetorical question: '[…] Is a society capable of surviving, if its members preserve the ability to co-organise and to overcome internal and external chaos only in the spirit of practical purpose-oriented rationality, being already unable to organise around certain ideals?' (Panarin 1998:23–24). The answer is, of course, the centuries-old diagnosis about the imminent degradation of the West.

However – and here we depart from Hegel, – even in decay, the West is no less dangerous for the non-Western civilisations because of the Westernisation project, which is defined as 'the dissemination of the Western values, institutes and life style in the entire world, due to the exchange of goods, information and culture, in part as a result of the Western hegemony, as well as of the activity of the local "Westernisers"' (Panarin 1999:8). (Note, by the way, how 'the local Westernisers' are again depicted as a fifth column, subverting a healthy body of the society from the inside.) Westernisation, in turn, is dangerous not only as such, but because of the global entropy it brings with itself:

> […] The Western civilisation, politically and economically dominant in the world, works as a reductionist system, decreasing the socio-cultural and life-building diversity of the

world in course of the all-pervading Westernisation. The very concept of Westernisation presupposes the existence of one and the only subject of history – the West. […] This theory does not see the problems, connected with the entropy, with the exhaustion of the sources of human energy in the world (Panarin 1998:50).

Entropy is dangerous because

The Western project of technical transformation and taming of the world obviously needs to be corrected from the points of view that have been commended to us by other cultures and civilisations. Consequently, cultural diversity is a vitally indispensable reserve of the mankind, a guarantee against a dangerous one-dimensionality of 'progress', which can become suicidal (Panarin 1999:173).

On the other hand, the threat of entropy is nothing less than a threat to the *identity* of the community in question: the meaning of history, according to Panarin, 'consists in preserving the identity of a given subject – of a people' (1998:48). This is a clear case of the process that the Copenhagen School has described as 'securitisation of identity'. When one describes Westernisation as a threat, societal identity plays the role of the referential object of a security discourse, and thus, the danger of entropy is perceived as an existential threat to the society itself. If the West is allowed to succeed in its universalising project, the society will cease to exist. From this point of view, it does not matter that 'entropy' brings no physical threat to individual human beings – everyone of us may be alive and well, but 'we will no longer be us' (Buzan et al. 1997:23).

Securitisation of identity leads Panarin to work out a Manichean image of the world as a field of eternal 'confrontation of the values of the Good and the Evil' (1998:29), where the 'good' actors (peoples / nations / civilisations) are struggling to defend their 'historical freedom', 'the right for historical creation' (1998:30) in the face of the marching forces of Westernisation, i.e. entropy. Working out a defence against the threat to identity, Panarin introduces the notion of *sobornost'*, loosely translated as conciliarism: 'Non-corpuscularity, non-ruggedness, *sobornost'*' (Panarin 1998:37, emphasis added) are requisites for victory in this global struggle.

Iver Neumann (1996:34) traces the notion of *sobornost'* back to the works of a nineteenth-century Slavophile Ivan Kireevsky and defines as 'rule by a collective mind'. However, the concept's roots might go deeper into history, and its meaning is not that

straightforward[4]. Without attempting to consider the genealogy of the term, which deserves a separate study, suffice it to say here that it also includes a profoundly anti-liberal idea that the value of the individual is a product of his/her belonging to a community, and first of all to a nation. A natural corollary is the belief in collective responsibility of the entire group for the conduct of its members. The notion of collective – as opposed to individual – responsibility is apparent in many of the above quotations, and especially in the idea that all Russian people are not only responsible, but may be punished and killed for the offence in Chechnya.

Conversely, *personal* freedom and *intra-societal* diversity becomes within this worldview a threat, an instrument used by the Evil to subvert and defeat the Good[5]. For the sake of preserving societal identity, the values of liberal individualism, including the notion of human rights, can and should be discarded. According to Panarin, human rights ideology is one of the foundations of the US hegemonism. It allows the US as the only superpower 'to legalise its interference in the affairs of other states', 'the dismantling of another's sovereignty, which irritates it as such – as incompatible with its self-proclaimed role at the head of the entire world's affairs' (1999:180). And while allowing for 'sympathy' with the victims of human rights violations (1999:181), Panarin nevertheless insists on describing all Western attempts to protect those victims in other parts of the world as policy of double standard.

There is no doubt that Alexandr Panarin's writings provide a much deeper insight into the conservative way of thinking than any of the texts discussed earlier. Indeed, it may even seem that, while sharing the basic Heglian notions that history is made by peoples / nations / civilisations rather than by individuals, Panarin's 'postmodern

[4] The term is still mainly used by the representatives of the romantic nationalist tradition (see, for example, Maliavin 1995:313). However, the definitions produced by romantic nationalists, I would argue, can be valid only within the same discourse. Consider, for example, the following definition by another nineteenth-century slavophile Alexei Khomiakov: 'a free and organic unity, whose living origin is the God's blessing of mutual love' (quoted in Panarin 1999:17). Alexandr Panarin cites this definition in his textbook intended for secondary schools, but an obvious incompatibility between Khomiakov's language and Panarin's own mode of reasoning as a political scientist forces him to add a simplifying explanation: the unity in question 'implies the model of society organised as a church commune'.

[5] This fear of internal diversity is particularly evident in comparison with the position of the Russian pro-Europeans, which celebrate diversity of all kinds and even are prepared to see the Russian Muslim regions join the Muslim population of Europe (including the Balkans) to 'constitute Muslim elements of a Greater Europe' (Trenin 2001:301).

Eurasianism' differs from romantic realism in being an openly idealistic, spiritualist teaching, which interprets political action as an outcome of the struggle between the Good and the Evil. Such an approach seems to leave space for sincere motivation even on the part of an evil actor: one can honestly believe in universal liberal values and, acting accordingly, contribute to the expansion of entropy in the world. However, the concluding paragraph of Panarin's chapter on nominalim in politics clearly demonstrates that he himself feels it necessary to build a bridge across this gap and not to drop out of the romantic realist discourse. The inability of the Western liberals to comprehend the common interest, Panarin writes,

> by no means entails their inability to defend their national state interests. Here, as in many other cases, the tricks of the *double standard* are in operation: something that is declared reprehensible and intolerable in reference to the others, is allowed to oneself. […] In a word, the Western 'masters' of a theory […] treat it with more creative freedom and less restraint. And our adepts of alien theories feel an inferiority complex, a constant fear of being in fault and getting a low mark (Panarin 1999:108, emphasis added).

It may be questioned whether this quotation as such does not look extraneous to the substance of Panarin's philosophy, but this does not concern us here. The fact that Panarin consistently stresses 'double standard' of the West 'whenever it comes to the plurality of cultures' (1999:174, see also pp. 177–181) proves that, the sophistication of his approach notwithstanding, he is just unable to accept the possibility that the Western liberal politicians may be sincere in their rhetoric about human rights and liberal values. As already pointed out, he also supports the image of the fifth column by portraying the members of the 'liberal international' in the non-Western countries as 'increasingly unprincipled and shameless propagandists of the American mission, stubbornly ignoring the evidence of the imperial aspirations of the power which they have set about to serve' (1999:181).

It appears that Panarin is even ready to pay the price of being inconsistent in his interpretation of world politics: if, indeed, the Western politicians are good in protecting *their* national interest, it cannot but mean that, at least in this respect, they are acting on the side of the Good, not the Evil, by strengthening their national culture and thereby resisting entropy. This inconsistency, in turn, implies

that for Panarin, as well as for romantic realists, the evilness of the West is the starting point, an axiom that needs no proof, while the much-feared entropy is no more than a victory of 'them' over 'us', which – quite common to all nationalists – is portrayed as a victory of the universal Evil over the universal Good. Hence, it may be argued that Panarin's writings are no more and no less than a more elaborate part of the same romantic realist discourse, with its assumption of cynicism and eagerness to construct a community on the basis of national borders. Or, to put it differently, the structures of the romantic realist discourse prove to be stronger than the universalist moves that Panarin seems to undertake.

While Alexandr Panarin concentrates on developing theoretical framework of 'postmodern Eurasianism', there is no lack of similar ideas in the field of empirical IR studies. Here, the romantic realist discourse is best represented – perhaps in a more mordant form – in the works of Natalia Narochnitskaya, one of the leading conservative IR scholars in Russia. The war in Yugoslavia is considered by Narochnitskaya as an attempt to destroy the previous world order, established as a result of the Second World War and confirmed by the Helsinki Final Act: 'Ideologically, it was based on the recognition of the world's multiformity and of civilisations with their own criteria of good and evil, and of parity and co-existence of the two universalist ideas, communism and liberalism' (Narochnitskaya 1999:19). After the fall of communism as one of the two mutually balancing ideologies, there are no more barriers on the way of an absolute universalising Westernisation, which would inevitably result in totalitarian uniformity (entropy in Panarin's terms):

> […] The USA on the threshold of the third millennium is in need of a universalist idea, and it declares a 'world government' through some kind of the Brezhnev doctrine: protection of democracy and human rights is a common cause of the international community. It is difficult to oversee the fact, that the philosophy of liberalism is perverted here into the most totalitarian system of views, which does not tolerate any other values alongside itself (1999:20).

From the point of view developed in the writings of conservative Russian political philosophers and IR scholars, the principle of non-interference is thus less a matter of convenience in arranging internal affairs according to one's own preferences, than a deep historiosophical concern for preserving societal identity and, in the end, the diversity of cultures and civilisations in the world.

This is basically why any detailed explanation along the classical realist lines is redundant within the romantic realist approach. The Manichean image of the world as an arena of struggle between universalising Evil and conservative Good does not require a calculation of costs and benefits. The realism of the conservative Russian writers parts ways with pragmatic realism of the Anglo-American IR studies after having stripped the *Realpolitik* of its ideological camouflage. This school of thought heavily relies on geopolitics as a method of analysis, but is much closely associated with romantic nationalism in its relentless concern for the preservation of a national / societal identity: '[…] A strategic condition for [Russia's] stability is **the detection and preservation of the societal identity**, whose most important component is an identification by the society of itself as a single whole, separated from the rest of the world' (Deliagin 1999:59, emphasis in the original). 'Vigorous imposition of the values of the Western civilisation in Russia […] is able to seriously hamper the development of the national self-awareness of the Russian citizens and presents a threat to the national security of Russia as a self-sufficient state, a separate superb civilisation', Kharichkin (1999:86) claims. Note that despite the use of the 'technical' term 'national security' that in the mainstream IR tradition usually refers to the state, such attributes as 'self-sufficient' and '*separate* superb civilisation' clearly point out that it is the cultural borders that come under threat and thus societal security, not state security is in question.

The notion of *sobornost'* is crucially important for this way of thinking: it acquires a normative value as a call for the *internal* consolidation of the good forces in the face of the evil challenging 'us' *from the outside*. It is also much more critical of the alleged cynicism of its opponents than both the 'traditional' realism and 'classical' geopolitics – exactly because its proponents claim to pursue idealistic goals themselves and develop an explicitly value-laden framework for analysis. The highest value within this framework is the identity of the Russian society, which is seen as threatened by the universalist project of Westernisation, and thus turned into a referential object of a securitising discourse. Russia's identity, on the other hand, ought to be preserved not only for itself, but as a safeguard against entropy threatening humanity as a whole.

The romantic realist idea thus has a universalist appeal. With its roots in old Russian messianism, romantic realism claims to be able

to provide a universal opposition to liberal globalisation, although from an outsider's point of view this opposition is certainly locally based. The fact that some actors at the world stage (the US / the West / NATO) have assumed (or shall we say usurped?) the right to 'pose as the representative of humanity as such' (Neumann, forthcoming) has provided the Russian conservative writers with additional justification for their claim to stand as the representatives of the universal Good. Fortunately or not, this position can have at best extremely limited appeal outside the *Russian* discourse – by the very nature of its *nationalist* foundations. However, its consequences for the future of the Russian society can hardly be overestimated. In the romantic nationalist discourse, Russia's identity is actually not protected, but *produced and reproduced*. The romantic realist discourse, as any case of identity politics, produces the Self and the Other (Neumann 1993:350) through drawing an entrenched border between 'us' and 'them' along the national lines, and loyalty to the Russian state becomes the key factor in placing an individual on either side of the border.

Within this framework, security becomes a discursive form through which the 'extremely unstructured universe' of the post-Cold War world is being structured and governed, right in the way anticipated by Ole Wæver (1995:75): 'We do not yet know the units – they have yet to be constructed through the discourse on security; we do not know the issues, and the threats – they are to be defined in the discourse on security; we only know the form: security'.

The nature of units constructed within the romantic realist security discourse predetermines the nature of the issues and the threats. When peoples / nations / states or other collective entities are assumed to be the only subjects of the world history, when they are anthropomorphised and ascribed the collective consciousness and purposefulness, the trap of social Darwinism is very difficult to avoid. The entire world is then seen as an arena of a zero-sum game with nations as players and the world dominance as the stake. In the post-Cold War world, which is becoming 'post-national', such a worldview gives a clear reason for a security discourse about identity. The war in Kosovo has indeed shown that in the eyes of the allies there could only be one Europe, where national interests are to be subordinate to international responsibilities, while Serbia was treated as a deviant case that symbolised Europe's old self (Joenniemi, forthcoming). In the romantic realist discourse, on the contrary, national identity is a clear priority; it still cannot do without

a clear border between Self and Other and uses the terms of the 'old Europe' ('Serbia's right for sovereignty') to defend this distinction. The fact that the allies did not try to conquer Serbia but rather to 'cure' it is nevertheless interpreted as a proof of Western arrogance and intolerance to difference ('natocolonialism'). And hence, while neither Serbia nor Russia are able to resist the attempts to destroy their identity by force, internal consolidation against the external enemy becomes the only next logical step. When 'our' identity is threatened, 'we' have to forget about the issues that are potentially divisive for 'our' community, and perhaps even sacrifice individual interests of everyone of 'us' to the higher goal – to keep the identity of 'us' intact. Consolidation is important as a means for the survival of Russia, writes Kharichkin (1999:206–207), and paradoxically comes to a positive view of 'the events in Yugoslavia' that 'created prerequisites for the consolidation around the idea of condemning the USA and its allies' (1999:207).

Kruzhkov (1999:27) hints at the possible aims of consolidation by offering in effect an apology of authoritarianism:

> [B]eing inculcated in the state organism, the elements of liberalism can lead to serious social and political cataclysms. The freedom can be abused both by criminal groups and by aggressive foreign forces. […] Therefore, the self-preservation instinct can demand that the state leadership move away from the 'rules of the game' offered by the stronger side and limit for a certain time some political rights and freedoms.

Human rights is not simply redundant within such an agenda – it is to be opposed as a threat to the internal cohesion of the community. The same logic is valid for the freedom of the press: 'In view of the fact that the media [belong to] the sphere of national security of Russia, […] it is necessary to prevent by legal means the conduct by the media of anti-state propaganda, to guarantee their activity for the benefit of Russia's state interest' (Kharichkin 1999:235). Kharichkin's praise for the Russian media campaign against the NATO action in Yugoslavia as an model for media acting in the 'state interest' is yet another confirmation of the importance of international background for those worshipping against democratic rights and freedoms.

One surprising conclusion from this analysis seems to be that Russian romantic realism remains much closer to the Hegelian sources of realist paradigm than realism of the Anglo-American IR. Palan and Blair (1993:396) insist that 'the organic theory of the state

[…] not only attributes an inherent will to the state, it also stipulates the subordination of internal strife to this will. […] It is thought that the state would be able to play down parochial interests and thus maintain homeostasis because individuals are able to see in it a higher ideal'. This is definitely what Panarin calls for, and what is an ideal relationship between internal and external politics for Narochnitskaya: '[P]oliticians may argue about whatever they like, but as soon as it has to do with national interest, all are instantly united, diverging only in means, but not in goals' (2002).

On the other hand, it is interesting that many proponents of 'postmodern Eurasianism' seem to be conscious and even uneasy about possible political consequences of the paradigm. Thus, Vladimir Maliavin (1994:83–84; 1995:308) claims that Eurasianism and Slavophilism should remain ideals free of any 'projection to the empirical reality of history and society', and, after Georgii Florovskii, characterises the 'ideologisation' of these two philosophical schools as their 'Fall' *(grekhopadenie)*. Mikhail Titarenko (1998:110–112), on the other hand, blames Slavophilism for its excessive emphasis on the *Russian* nationalism, and claims that Eurasianism is the only school offering a truly tolerant, inclusive notion of community. However, the starting point remains the same: while the 'human sociality' is prioritised, individual autonomy and freedom are banished into the internal, spiritual life (Maliavin 1995:313, cf., for example, Ilyin 1949/1993:63–64).

However, romantic realism discards liberal values not only because it promotes collectivism, but because it indulges in security politics. Security discourse presupposes, apart from the description of an existential threat, providing extraordinary means to handle it (Buzan et al. 1997:21–26). Such defence is offered in the form of rejecting human rights and other liberal principles as being of secondary importance in comparison with societal identity. The success of this securitising move is evidenced by the almost complete expulsion of human rights as a valid framework for analysing international affairs. No-one actually denies that human rights is an important and positive concept, but 'at the time of trouble' it deserves 'our' attention only as long as we want to keep good relations with 'them'. At the level of practical politics, the indifference of the Russian public to the second Chechen war is perhaps the best proof of identity securitisation being successful. However, there are also some nuances in the ensuing foreign policy discourse that deserve to be studied in some detail.

Ebbs and tides of securitisation

One feature that definitely distinguishes the dominant foreign policy discourse from its more extreme – and more consistent – edges is the fact that most of the Russian commentators are not prepared to build an insurmountable wall between 'us' and 'them', between Russia and Europe / the West / 'the civilised world'. The prospect for Russia 'to find itself in the backyard of Europe' (Rogov 1999a) was one of the key concerns of the Russian political elite in 1999. My hypothesis would be that the securitising romantic realist discourse clashes here with much deeper discursive structures within the Russian society, that have to do with Russia's self-perception as a European nation. In Russia, as in many other countries, '[i]t is a crucial part of any foreign policy vision […] to imagine a Europe compatible with a vision of the nation/state in question' (Wæver 2002:25–26, quote from p. 25). The urgent desire to avoid complete exclusion from Europe is certainly one of the main driving forces behind Moscow's strained attention to internal conflicts in other European countries. The criticism against other governments changes the position of Russia within the discourse: instead of a state waging a brutal war in Chechnya it becomes an ordinary country having some problems with terrorism – *just as* many others. Appreciate, for example, the following subtitle of a newspaper article about the devolution in Northern Ireland: 'Criticising Moscow for the war in Chechnya, London is likely to leave it no chance for reciprocity' (Fokina 1999). The author describes the position of the Russian authorities as making no distinction between the British policy in Ulster, on the one hand, and the Russian conduct in Chechnya and the Serbian actions in Kosovo, on the other hand.

As a result, at each turn of international political process there are some entities in the outside world that play the role of threats within the securitising discourse, while there also exist others with whom Russia (as constructed within the discourse) is ready to identify, thus preventing an entire isolation. This is especially evident in the changing attitude toward various European organisations, in which Russia has sought an 'equal partner' status. Even the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe – according to the viewpoint almost universally shared in Russia, the cornerstone of the

European security system – seemed for a while to be out of favour with the policy-makers in Moscow. On the eve of the Istanbul summit (18–19 November 1999), when Russia came under harsh criticism for the new offensive in Chechnya, the Russian press was warning that 'The USA wants to turn the OSCE into a tool to pressurise Russia' (Gornostaev 1999a) – a statement that can be perhaps be translated into Panarin's terms in the following way: the West is taking over control over one of the institutional embodiments of diversity in international politics, this is a victory for entropy and thus a clear threat to Russian identity. If this line of reasoning is continued, one will come to the conclusion that if the takeover cannot be prevented, Russia should withdraw from any constructive participation in this institution in order to defend itself from the Westernising interference. Indeed, there were rumours suggesting that the Russian delegation was ready to foil the planned signature of the European Security Charter – one of the strategic aims of the Russian diplomacy during the previous several years (Tregubova 1999).

Then came the powerful discursive move by President Yeltsin, who exercised an already familiar binarisation, using 'terrorists' as the Other. '[A] lasting peace in the Republic of Chechnya and the so called 'peace talks' with bandits is not the same. And I ask everyone not to be mistaken on this point. There will be no talks with bandits and murderers!' (1999) – these tough words, quite probably, changed the mood at the conference. And although the Russian delegation did not succeed in getting the summit to condemn, as Yeltsin bluntly put it, '[t]he aggression of NATO lead by the USA against Yugoslavia' (another borderline between the Good and the Evil), the final document of the meeting was really not as tough to Russia as expected. The preventive condemnation of the OSCE in the Russian press slumped, and the reputation of this institution in the framework of the Russian debate was saved.

After it turned out that the outcome of the summit could have been interpreted as a success ('Russia has defeated the West in the Istanbul game', run one of the headlines, Gornostaev 1999b), Russian diplomats and commentators returned to the old tactics of playing up their standard agenda and discarding the charges against Russia as a fiction. This 'peacetime' agenda even included own preferences in the field of human rights: first of all the problem of the Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic countries, and secondly, the suffering of the civilian population caused by the NATO air

strikes against Yugoslavia. Director of the Department for pan-European cooperation of the Russian Foreign Ministry Vladimir Chizhov, writing on the outcome of the Istanbul summit, emphasises that '[f]rom the point of view of Russia, respect for human rights is a major aspect of the OSCE's activity', and goes on to praise 'the activity of the Organisation on the issue of the respect for the rights of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic countries'. He continues by condemning those 'wishing to quite simply "forget" the war in the Balkans, by substituting the Kosovo theme – a real source of concern for the OSCE – with criticism against Russia in connection with Chechnya' (Chizhov 1999:39–40).

In the final analysis, this process has made possible such statements as the one made by the president-elect Vladimir Putin on 13 April 2000, that the OSCE might play a more prominent role in the former Soviet republics and in Kosovo (RFE/RL 2000:14 April). Moscow sees the value of being an OSCE member: the organisation still has a chance of remaining on 'our' side of the border, in the domain of diversity and tolerance. Yet potential danger of the OSCE turning into a tool of Westernisation is still taken seriously by the Russian diplomats: as deputy Foreign Minister Evgenii Gusarov said in June 2000,

> there is direct evidence of the attempts to convert the OSCE into a mechanism for interference in the internal affairs of some member states, into a kind of a 'democratiser' of the European periphery, as well as into a tool for the expansion of the Western influence, including the implantation of the behavioural stereotypes and values of the Western European civilisation in the entire OSCE space (Gusarov 2000:93).

This statement is obviously a part of the securitising discourse about identity discussed earlier. It assumes an aggressive and expansionist Other (the West), which aims at imposing its own cultural practices upon other nations. If this policy is not resisted, all the other civilisations of the OSCE space will be submerged into the Western European one. It means that the identity of the Russian society may be threatened by the OSCE. Thus, although Gusarov's presentation was focused on a positive programme of the Russian activity in the OSCE framework, securitisation is always waiting in the wings.

More mixed feelings prevail in Russia about the Council of Europe, which as late as in early 1999 was still presented as an organisation Russia could deal with. Speaking at a press-conference

summing up the international developments of 1998, Igor Ivanov (1999a) did not fail to mention that the year had been earmarked as the Year of Human Rights by a presidential decree, and that the fundamental conventions of the Council of Europe had during that period entered into force in Russia. In the article honouring the Council's 50th anniversary, Ivanov affirms with a great satisfaction that 'Russia has but benefited from its membership in the CE' (1999c:4), and goes as far as to call for a stricter control 'over the fulfilment by the states of their obligations ensuing from their membership in the CE' (1999c:6). The reason for this legal activism becomes clear in the subsequent phrase, which again raises the issue of the non-citizens in Latvia and Estonia. The Council of Europe thus stands as one of the most important fora at which Russian foreign policy goals are to be pursued, clearly on 'our' side of the border while the Other is in this case personified by the Baltic States.

Then came the war in Chechnya, and the decision by the PACE on 6 April 2000 to divest the Russian delegation of the voting rights and to propose the expulsion of the Russian Federation from the Council. The events were presented to the domestic audience along several main lines: first came the efforts to downplay the importance of the Council of Europe, second, the assurances that there are more significant and friendly partners to deal with in Europe, third, the attempts to represent the Assembly's decision as a cynical anti-Russian act.

In this response, the main features of romantic realist discourse are manifest once again. By denying any importance of the Council of Europe, the Russian debate decisively rejects the values embodied in this organisation: thus, while the human rights and fundamental freedoms are not discarded altogether, their significance for international politics is dismissed. There are, instead, more 'real' goals to be achieved through international cooperation – such as more favourable conditions for the Russian exporters on the European market or mutual assistance in combating international crime. These were the issues discussed at the third session of the EU–Russia Cooperation Council in the following week after the controversial PACE voting (I. Ivanov 2000), and they were very much publicised in the Russian media under the headlines like 'The EU is in more friendly mood than PACE' (Katin et al. 2000).

However, despite this reference to pragmatic goals, while denying any 'good' idealist motives behind the PACE vote, the Russian commentators once more failed to explain the decision with purely realist reasons. Finally, it comes to quite simplistic statements in the vein of the following: 'Anyone who felt like it, has tried to offend Russia in the last half a year' (Gornostaev 2000). The decision by PACE is a result of the work of the anti-Russian forces, represented by 'a whole group of deputies, adversely programmed in advance, especially from the Baltic countries, Holland, Britain, Hungary', as well as by Sergey Kovalev, the only dissenter within the Russian delegation who spoke and voted in favour of expelling Russia (Gornostaev and Katin, 2000). The UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson, who reported to the Assembly on her trip to Ingushetia and Chechnya earlier in the same month, also 'took an anti-Russian position already before her trip to the Caucasus' (Gornostaev 2000). In all these statements the anti-Russian bias of the West is so much taken for granted that it does not have to be explained. There is, once again, a clear border between 'us' and 'them' which is *assumed* within the discourse and *reproduced* through this silent assumption.

The non-rational character of this anti-Russian bias is evident from the fact that the diplomats, 'the people who prefer to take weighed decisions, not based on emotions' (Gornostaev and Katin 2000), are much less inclined to censure Russia – this refers both to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and to the representatives of the European Union's troika. Thus, Europe, as represented by the PACE, is 'hypocritical', but at the same time idealistic in a false, anti-Russian way.

The refusal to accept the Western human rights rhetoric as having anything to do with 'real' politics is not limited in scope to the Russian statements about the wars in Kosovo and Chechnya. The 2001 conflict in Macedonia was immediately put in the same conceptual framework: if the Macedonian leaders do not obey, the journalists prophesied, the West will bomb them – or perhaps someone else. 'It is not important whom to bomb, the point is to bomb. This should cause fear and respect' (Gornostaev 2001). There is a number of even more remote examples where the same logic is in operation: compare, for instance, the following statement about the possible consequences of the presidential elections in Belarus, published by *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on the memorable day of 11 September 2001: 'Actually the preservation of the status quo in

the [Belorusian] republic is beneficial for the West. In this case one can continue with the habitual policy of "struggle for freedom, democracy and human rights". This is much easier and not so costly, as the support of the victorious opposition [might be]' (Polevoy et al. 2001). Another article, published in May of the same year, features an image of cynical Austrian politicians employing such slogans as human rights and humanitarian crisis prevention in order to militarise 'the mind of the Austrian society' and to psychologically prepare it to use military force outside the country's borders (Petrov 2001).

It may seem, though, that the discursive structure of the Russian society has undergone dramatic changes in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001. The tone of most statements about the West has indeed become much more amiable, and superficial analysis may even show that there is a greater degree of consensus about the values usually labelled 'Western' or 'European', including human rights. However, a closer look at the discussion shows that instead of re-evaluating the significance of liberal values for international politics, the dominant foreign policy discourse has gone to re-assert the Russian position at the world stage, while the position itself has not changed. It is the West that is allegedly has taken up a new attitude towards Russia, and this change has confirmed that the Russian cause has been a just one – the border between 'us' and 'them' was simply pushed westwards, with the result that the West, as it were, has become more 'Russian', and not vice versa. Boris Piadyshev, editor in chief of *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*, has been perhaps most explicit in his reading of the situation: commenting upon President Bush's statement in the US Congress on 20 September, Piadyshev wirtes: 'The most pleasing were the words that the terrorists have to be stopped, curbed and killed everywhere' (2001:6). The Russian slang verb *zamochit'* (to kill), used by Piadyshev, is a clear reference to President Putin's infamous September 1999 speech, in which he promised to put terrorists down everywhere, even 'in the loo'. By such a clever translation of George W. Bush's words, the author actually makes a claim that the American president has come to approve the words of his Russian colleague on Chechnya – and, apparently, the policy of the Russian state towards the rebel republic.

The new border between 'us' and 'them', being drawn in the post-September 11 world, sets the terrorists against the rest of the world.

Against this background, the new assertiveness of the Russian discourse consists in presenting Russia as the centre of struggle against the new violent Other, while the West is faced with a choice in a manner strongly resembling the new favourite formula of President Bush: 'either you are with us, or your are against us'. This was, for example, the basic point made by Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov when he, speaking in Rome at the conference of NATO defence ministers, has done his best to present Russia as the first victim of the 'present-day terrorism', and the Russian campaign in Chechnya as the first fight against this evil, which initially the Russians were fighting on their own. Therefore, if today 'somebody [like PACE, the State Department in Washington or the Foreign Office in London] still finds it beneficial to render "hearty welcome" to representatives of the Chechen terrorist groups […] all the talking about our unity and solidarity may remain "empty words"' (S. Ivanov 2002). The message is quite straightforward: either you accept that Russia's conduct in Chechnya is right and refuse to deal with separatists, or you become one of them, end up on the other side of the border separating the Good from the Evil.

Ambassador Vadim Lukov (2001:21) makes an even more explicit claim to the same effect: 'The operation in Afghanistan should after all open the eyes of the Western politicians at the actual underlying reasons of the current events in Chechnya. Now, only the inveterate russophobes can keep referring to the Chechen militants as a "national liberation movement"'. Note how this statement not only asserts the alleged transformation of the position of the West, but also pre-empts any objections by classifying all the remaining opponents of the Russian policy as 'inveterate russophobes'.

In the light of the above, it should be understandable why the persistence of the Western leaders in demanding a peaceful solution to the Chechen conflict was met first with surprise, and then with disappointment. The January 2002 session of PACE was closely monitored by the Russian media. Most of the reports interpreted the Assembly's hearings on the Chechen question as a bothersome obstacle to be overcome, while the Russian conduct in Chechnya in itself was acceptable by default. *Kommersant* has grasped the Russian mood when it printed one of the reports from Strasbourg under the headline 'Russia has passed the session/the exams' (Sysoev 2002a, in Russian a play of words, *sessiya* meaning also exam time at the universities). It is interesting that even this stubbornness of the West has raised no doubt about human rights

being just a ideological camouflage: it was interpreted as a sign of the West drifting back after a short honeymoon in its relations with Russia. 'Very soon, after the first shock [of 11 September] had passed, the thesis about the necessity and irreversibility of the new approach to terrorism began to be slowly but steadily removed into [the field of] political rhetoric, less and less connected with the practical international actions' (Simonov 2002). And President Putin, together with other top Russian officials, again had to explain to the 'slow-witted Europeans' the link between the Chechen terrorism and Al-Qaida (Simonov 2002, see also Sokut 2002, SPb vedomosti 2002).

The initial reaction of Russian press to the beginning of the trial of Slobodan Milosevic in the Hague followed the same pattern. It is interesting to note that while the comments on the eve of the trial were generally balanced and composed (Petrovskaya and Vukelich 2002, Kiseleva 2002, Sysoev 2002b), after the beginning of the hearings the tribunal was immediately and nervously accused by some newspapers of bias, politicisation and acting in American interest (Petrovskaya 2002a, 2002b, Yusin 2002). This sudden U-turn could perhaps be taken to mean that as no new 'post-9-11' discursive structure had been formed in the Russian society, the romantic realist discourse had never been substituted by anything else. The journalists were thus unable to conceptualise charges against Milosevic and the Serbian state in any other terms than the same nationalist opposition of 'us' versus 'them', the Serbs and the Russians versus the West.

The analysis of the dominant Russian foreign policy discourse at the several stages of its evolution after the war in Kosovo demonstrates a profound consistency and continuity. Despite all the fluctuations its basic features remain the same. First of all, the discourse persistently mocks the idea that the liberal values may be a driving force in international politics: the contention that human rights rhetoric is nothing more than a cover for other goals figures here as a common sense. Secondly, an important feature of the discourse is the shifting border between 'us' and 'them', between the good and evil forces, which, despite all its fluctuations, always puts the Russian state and/or the Russian people at the centre of the 'good' world. Accordingly, any criticism of Russia's conduct on the most sensitive issues – such as, first of all, Chechnya – leads to an immediate repositioning of the border, so that the opponent becomes part of the Other that is distinctive first of all by being anti-

Russian. This discursive practice results in an increasing self-assertion of the Russian foreign policy elite at the time of 'peace' (when, as in the end of 2001, the Russian policy makers feel supported by the international community), or in the increasing securitisation of identity at the time when Russia comes under strong criticism (as in late 1999) or just under a renewed scrutiny (as in early 2002) on the part of international organisations. While the importance of securitisation of identity changes with the ups and downs of Russian foreign policy, it remains, however, the enduring feature of the discourse always present at least at the background of its key statements.

Conclusion

A comparison of the statements on human rights and related issues made by the Russian foreign policy makers and analysts with the writings by conservative political philosophers demonstrates a remarkable similarity of arguments. This substantiates a suggestion that contemporary Russian foreign policy is conducted and legitimised by people whose way of thinking is close to the romantic nationalist school of thought, which emphasises the values of statehood and internal consolidation in the name of *sobornost'* (although the term itself is used mainly by the more conservative wing within this camp). As a result, the dominant foreign policy discourse in Russia is framed by a paradigm that might be termed romantic realism. On the one hand, its proponents claim to be able to lay bare the 'real' motives of political action, obscured by the idealistic rhetoric that political actors use in order to conceal the reality. On the other hand, these 'real' driving forces of political action cannot possibly be reduced to pragmatic aims of an actor in the classical realist paradigm. They are much better understood within a Manichean view of the world as an arena of eternal struggle between the Good and the Evil. The prophets of romantic realism accuse their opponents of pursuing evil goals while concealing them behind good words. Accordingly, they claim to pursue 'good' idealistic goals themselves and develop an explicitly value-laden framework for analysis.

In the post-Cold War world, and especially after Kosovo, this discourse increasingly takes on alarmist overtones, warning about the imminent danger of Westernisation that is going to blur all

borders and, consequently, to obliterate all identities. Romantic realism sees no difference between a threat to a community's borders and a threat to its identity. Identity thus becomes securitised, which brings about calls for internal consolidation at all costs. As a result, human rights is described not only as an ideological smokescreen that is used by cynical Western politicians, but as a kind of a Trojan horse offered by the West in order to subvert the society, to hinder its internal consolidation and separation from the outside, and finally to colonise and dissolve in course of total Westernisation. Viewed in this way, human rights comes to be interpreted as a weapon of the universal Evil in its struggle with the universal Good.

There is no doubt that universal human rights, enforced by means of military 'humanitarianism', is indeed a global project aimed at destroying borders or at least making them more permeable to a certain kind of values. Whether this project threatens the variety of cultures and communities in the world is an open question, and there is no denial that some of the observations made by the romantic nationalists cannot be simply dismissed as irrelevant. In fact, romantic realism needs exactly this type of liberalism as the key opponent. By identifying liberal values exclusively with this mechanical, universalist – or even imperialist – liberal ideology, romantic realism successfully marginalises other liberal discourses and secures its dominant position.

Another, and even more important, explanation for the dominant position of this discourse is certainly a historical one. Johan Matz (2001) has shown how after the break-up of the Soviet Union, in a situation of acute identity and foreign policy crisis, Russian foreign policy makers chose to define Russia as 'the Continuer-state' of the USSR and thus as a great power, and how this immediately made them vulnerable to the securitising challenge of the nationalists. This identity, fixed in the discursive structure as early as 1992–1993, predetermined the defensive nature of the foreign policy discourse: if, indeed, Russia is simply the present-day USSR, it is a weakened and weakening USSR. The identity crisis is continuing and provides plenty of openings for securitising practice.

At a time when securitisation of identity reaches its peak, as in 1999 – early 2000, the division between 'us' and 'them' in the Russian discourse becomes binarised and leaves no space for a third position: either you are with us, or you are against us. However, securitisation in itself is a reversible process: when

relations with the US and Western Europe improve, the fear about losing identity gives place to the desire to be part of the 'civilised world'. At the same time, securitisation does have its irreversible consequences. One of them is the discursive structures that are ready to be employed again once the Russian society feels disappointment about its relations with the West. The *rapprochement* between Russia and NATO after the terrorist attacks on the United States did not signify a change in those discursive structures but, rather on the contrary, strengthened them even further since, in the Russian interpretation, the Russian position remained essentially the same, while the West has joint Russia in its struggle against terrorism. The retreat of securitisation has thus provided an opportunity for a reconfiguration of political space (West becomes partner of Russia), but left in place the meanings and reference points valid for the securitising discourse. When Russia again faced Western criticism for its conduct in Chechnya, those meanings immediately became operational, and the rebuilding of the border started anew. It could, therefore, be suggested that while securitisation and desecuritisation are two opposite processes, a reversal of securitisation does not necessarily lead to a desecuritisation in identity politics.

Patomäki and Pursiainen (1999) argue that the notion of cosmopolitan democracy can accommodate the Eurasianists' concern with cultural diversity while at the same time not allowing for the gloomy Huntingtonian vision of a 'clash of civilisations'. However, the analysis of the ways the notion of human rights figures in the Russian foreign policy discourse seems to prove that even in the 'postmodern' Eurasianism societal identity appears as a referential object of a security discourse. Romantic realism treats the very basic liberal democratic values as subversive, and is inclined towards rejecting individual freedom at the national level for the simple reason that it hinders internal consolidation against the external Other. Whereas the claim is that societal identity is in danger, a very special sort of identity for Russia is actually being forged within this discourse. Russia of the romantic realists is a society where individual freedom is sacrificed for the sake of internal cohesion. It is obvious that cosmopolitan democracy presupposes democracy at the local level as its basis, and it is therefore difficult to see how the Eurasianist and other nationalistic discourses in Russia can be reconciled with the democratic agenda.

This paper has deliberately concentrated on positing the problem rather than on looking for solutions. However, I am aware (not least from my own experience of lecturing abroad) that by simply describing the discourse as it is one risks to contribute to the othering of Russia in the (Western) European discourse, to promote the desire among Russia's neighbours to increase their security by isolating and ostracising Russia as 'non-European' and 'uncivilised'. Therefore, I would like to emphasise that we can and ought to look for the ways of getting the Russian society out of its defensive isolation. We ought to do this if only because isolation from Europe can only make the Russian society feel even more insecure and the Russian policy less predictable and potentially aggressive. It was indeed the feeling of insecurity during the Kosovo campaign that produced proposals to help Yugoslavia with military means. We can do this exactly because one of the key nightmare scenarios figuring in the Russian discourse is isolation from Europe. Russia badly needs to feel itself part of Europe, even if it is still too proud of itself to agree for a position of an apprentice in the European workshop (cf. Neumann 1999:107–112). There must therefore be a common ground for interaction that could bring about desecuritisation. It is these lines that should be explored in search for a mutually acceptable settlement that would both secure individual rights and freedoms of the Russian citizens and reconcile Russia's strong feeling of national identity with the outside world.

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