Russia's Challenge to the European Security Order

by Jeffrey Mankoff

In Brief: For the first time since the Cold War the West is facing a truly systemic challenge. The question is no longer how far to the East Euroatlantic integration will extend, but whether the existing degree of integration can be maintained. Responding to Russian efforts to weaken the pillars of European security will be among the most significant challenges facing U.S. and European diplomats in the years to come. The immediate task lies in ending the conflict in Ukraine on terms that meet Western (and Ukrainian) interests while deterring additional Russian military actions in Europe. The bigger, longer-term challenge lies in managing relations with a Russia that no longer conceives of itself as a partner in upholding the security of Europe, and in designing rules and institutions for this dangerous new era.

For Europe and the United States, the Ukraine crisis has made it clear that many of the assumptions governing European and Euroatlantic security for the past two-plus decades no longer apply.[1] The most significant casualty of the Ukraine conflict may be the belief that Russia would eventually accommodate itself to the European and Euroatlantic security order that emerged from the ashes of the Cold War, and was based on the progressive expansion of liberal norms and institutions that Moscow did not fully embrace. Russia always struggled to find its place in that order, but as long as neither Russia nor the West could conceive of any alternative, the two sides appeared doomed to a kind of grudging cooperation. Recent years have shown that Russia, at least, is beginning to conceive of an alternative, and no longer accepts the universality of the rules and institutions underpinning the post-Cold War European security order. By questioning the legitimacy of these rules and institutions while actively promoting its own alternative models, Russia has begun laying the seeds for a return to systemic competition with the West, analogous but not equivalent to the Cold War.

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1 For a good recent overview, see Eugene Rumer, "Russia and the Security of Europe," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 Jun 2016, http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/russia-and-security-of-europe-pub-63990.

Western partners need to accept that Russia is a strategic rival and the old arrangements cannot be dusted off. The good news is that the Euroatlantic West is in a stronger position today than it was for most of the Cold War, when Moscow had hundreds of thousands of troops in Europe and client states around the world, and was supporting Leftist insurgencies across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Russia's ambitions today are modest in comparison. And while Russia is increasingly defining its confrontation in ideological terms, Putinist ideology — with its strong overtones of Russian nationalism — will never have the global appeal of Marxism-Leninism. Nor can today's Russia cut itself off from the global economy, or build an alternative to it. Much as Russian President Vladimir Putin would perhaps like to insulate Russia from Western influence, autarky is not a realistic option. Russia's exposure to globalization, in turn, gives the Euroatlantic community significant leverage that it never had with the Soviet Union.

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Conversely, the Euroatlantic states have a harder time today focusing on Russia as a security threat. Even in Europe, Moscow is no longer the top foreign policy challenge. Russian efforts at revisionism are benefitting from the internal difficulties European states, and the United States, face, and that they will have to address as they seek to check the Russian challenge.

Integration, Expansion, and the "Russian Question"

Throughout history, Russia has hovered on the edge of Europe. In some eras, including the time of Peter the Great and the post-Napoleonic period, Russia embraced a fundamentally European identity. At other times, as in the messy aftermath of the Crimean War, Russia retreated from Europe, nurturing a belief in

its own unique, sometimes messianic role. The Cold War saw Europe split in two, with a Soviet-dominated Europe in the East and a largely democratic, Atlanticist Europe in the West. The end of the Cold War fed expectations that this division could be erased and a new Europe "whole, free, and at peace," in the words of former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, would replace the nuclear-tipped standoff that had prevailed for the previous four decades.[2]

The architects of this newly reunited Europe always assumed that it would include Russia. They struggled, however, with the question of how to fit Russia into the institutional edifice they were constructing, which was, after all, built on foundations inherited from the Cold War era.

In 1989, the states of Central and Eastern Europe regained their sovereignty, but Russia lost an empire. In the process, Russia itself went from being at the center of its own geopolitical bloc to the periphery of the bloc created by its rivals. In that sense, the Russian challenge to the European security order has much to do with a perception among Russia's political and security elite that the rules and institutions governing security in Europe are illegitimate because of the peripheral role they assign to Russia itself. Such complaints are hardly new; indeed, they stretch back to the very first years of the post-Cold War era, a time when Russia still appeared to be on the path of democratization and was largely pursuing a foreign policy that emphasized cooperation with the West. Only now, however, is Russia in a position to mount a direct challenge to those arrangements.

It is worth remembering that post-Cold War Europe essentially comprises an extension of rules and institutions devised by and for the non-Communist states of Europe while the Cold War was still going on. The European Union, created in 1992 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, was built on agreements

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2 George H.W. Bush, "A Europe Whole and Free: Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz," 31 May 1989, http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga6-890531.htm.

hammered out over the course of four decades by leaders of key Western European states. NATO, meanwhile, emerged in the late 1940s precisely as a tool for the confronting the Soviet threat to those same states.

As Mary Elise Sarotte has shown, U.S. and European diplomats made a conscious choice to use the institutions inherited from the Cold War as the foundation for the new post-Cold War order, rejecting other options in the process.[3] They had good political and strategic reasons for doing so, but one consequence of that choice was that the "Russian Question" — where the Russian Federation fit in Europe's new architecture — remained unresolved.

In practical terms, grafting existing institutions onto post-Cold War Europe required expansion to take in new members, as well as a reconfiguration of missions to focus on the new challenges of the 1990s and 2000s. Membership in either the EU or NATO was never a realistic option for Russia however, even though officials and analysts (including, at different points, both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin) raised the idea.[4] Expansion to include Russia was not realistic, but expansion without Russia left Europe still bifurcated, and became a source of tension once Russia had recovered from the shock of the Soviet collapse.

The attempted solution was a Europe of concentric circles. At its center was a "core Europe" comprised of states that were already members of the Euroatlantic community at the moment when the Soviet Union fell. Next was an intermediate circle of Central and Eastern European states that aspired to, and were

eventually granted membership in, both the EU and NATO. Russia and its post-Soviet neighbors were in the outermost circle, assumed to be part of a "wider Europe" that shared common interests and values with the others but remained outside institutional Europe.

An alphabet (and acronym) soup of institutional linkages emerged to connect "core Europe," potential new member states, and the "wider Europe" that included Russia plus its post-Soviet neighbors Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine (as well as, in some configurations, the South Caucasus and/or Central Asia). These included NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), Permanent Joint Council (PJC), and NATO-Russia Council (NRC), along with the EU's Common Spaces, European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), and Eastern Partnership (EaP).

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For most states in Central and Eastern Europe, these arrangements served as an intermediate stage on the path to full membership, while for the post-Soviet states, they were an alternative to full membership. By the middle of the 2000s, though, states like Georgia and Ukraine were seeking full integration; these efforts would prove to be the source of the most significant clashes between Russia and the West.

While new member states received the full complement of rights and obligations from the EU and NATO, they — unlike the founding "core" members — had little if any say in what those rights and obligations would be. New members had to be rule-takers, acceding to rules and obligations they had no hand in designing.

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3 Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton, 2011). Sarotte argues that, given the speed with which events were unfolding on the ground, diplomats did not have the opportunity to design new institutions from scratch, much to the chagrin of those, like Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who wanted to start with a clean slate. Institutions like the Federal Republic of Germany's Basic Law, the European Community (forerunner to the EU), and NATO not only existed, they had proven their worth in enabling the West to bring the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion.

4 Hannes Adomeit, "Inside or Outside? Russia's Policies Towards NATO," Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Working Paper, 1 Jan 2007, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/NATO_Oslo_ks.pdf.

For many states in Central and Eastern Europe, the lure of membership in the world's largest trading bloc and most potent military alliance justified whatever compromises such an approach required — especially for states that still viewed Russia as at least a potential threat. For Russia itself though, having to be a rule-taker as a condition of gaining entrée to Europe always rankled. Moscow refused to participate in initiatives designed to bind non-member states more tightly to institutional Europe, such as the EU's Neighborhood Policy, in large part because doing so would have required accepting a status equal to that of the smaller states of Central and Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, and adopting rules and regulations it had no hand in writing. Such an approach was not in keeping with the view of Russia as a Great Power to which most members of the Russian elite adhered.

Another way in which new members differed from the founding states was that existing members would be able to sit in judgment over their domestic political orders, since the invitation to membership in both the EU and NATO was contingent on aspirants undertaking a host of political and economic reforms. The EU and NATO thus became expressions of shared values as much as shared interests, to a greater degree than had been the case during the Cold War.

Even though the NATO charter claimed the alliance was "founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law," the adherence of several member states to those ideals was questionable at best for much of the Cold War.[5] As long as the Soviet threat existed, NATO prioritized the geostrategic goal of deterring Soviet aggression over attempts

to promote a shared vision of domestic order — beyond guarding member states against Communist takeovers. With the end of the Cold War, the normative element of European integration became more prominent, especially for new members.[6]

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The unforeseen downside of this approach was that it made it made values and ideology a source of international contestation once the glow from the "end of history" moment had faded, above all in Russia. The more Russia struggled to give form and substance to its own democratic transition, the harder it became to fit Moscow into a system of European security that emphasized shared democratic values. Russia's failure to make a clean break with its imperial past also fed a vicious circle, in which fear of renewed Russian aggression made the prospect of European integration attractive to an ever larger swathe of states in Central and Eastern Europe, including, eventually, some of Russia's post-Soviet neighbors, whose European aspirations then became a source of insecurity in Moscow.

No Problems with Neighbors?

Russia never embraced NATO or EU expansion, but for the first decade-plus of the post-Cold War era it largely accepted it. Once discussions about NATO and, more recently, EU expansion moved beyond the former Warsaw Pact states to include Soviet successor states like Georgia and Ukraine (the Baltics were always in something of their own category), Russian reactions turned from "calmly negative" to openly

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5 NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," 4 Apr 1949, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm. Among those NATO members with dubious democratic credentials were Turkey (under military rule 1960-65 and 1980-83, and which experienced military coups followed by a return to civilian rule in 1971 and 1997); Greece (under military rule 1967-74); Cyprus (briefly under military rule in 1974); and Portugal (under Antonio Salazar's quasi-fascist *Estado Novo* until 1974). During the transition from the 4th to the 5th Republic in 1958, France also teetered on the verge of military rule, with the army threatening to take power unless Charles de Gaulle were appointed to the presidency and a new constitution drafted.

6 NATO's 1995 Study on Enlargement set out criteria that aspiring members would have to meet, including a commitment to OSCE principles on dispute resolution, "economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility," as well as "appropriate democratic and civilian control" of the military — criteria that some existing members struggled to meet. NATO, "Study on NATO Enlargement," 3 Sep 1995, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24733.htm. Turkey suffered the latest in its long line of military coups in 1997.

hostile.[7] Even if the term "near abroad" had fallen out of official discourse by the 2000s, Russian elites continued to view the post-Soviet states as fundamentally distinct from states in the "far abroad." In part, the distinction was about historical legitimacy, with Putin and other senior Russian officials openly questioning the reality of states like Ukraine and Kazakhstan.[8]

NATO and EU efforts to integrate these states while leaving Russia on the doorstep appeared to challenge Russian influence and Russia's standing as a Great Power. They were portrayed in Moscow as a continuation of Western efforts to roll back Russian influence that had existed since the Cold War. As much as European and U.S. officials argued that expansion into the post-Soviet region was not about Russia and not directed against Russia, their claims never received much credence in Moscow.[9]

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If Russia could not actually join the EU and NATO, new mechanisms would need to be developed to bind Moscow to those institutions, and ensure it retained an interest in their success. Both organizations came up with compromise solutions that gave Russia some kind of institutional tie short of full membership. What was lacking from these agreements, and what Moscow most wanted, was veto power, or at least significant influence over decision making.

Instead, solutions like NATO's Permanent Joint Council still left Moscow negotiating with a united bloc. The NATO-Russia Council, inaugurated in 2002, was designed to address this concern to some extent, but Moscow still complained that it was unable to prevent the alliance from acting in ways that were damaging to Russian security and that, moreover, the council itself could be suspended in moments of crisis, as indeed it was following the war in Georgia and again after the annexation of Crimea. Russia was also handicapped by its inability to work effectively in multilateral settings and a preference for focusing on bilateral ties with the leading European powers, above all Germany, but also France and Italy, even as Brussels took on more and more responsibility.

Other proposed remedies involved Russia agreeing to abide by European rules that it had no hand in writing, as did other states in Europe's outer circle. That approach, Russia argued, was unacceptable for a large state like Russia that did not nurse membership ambitions. Even in the 1990s, these concerns limited Russian willingness to participate in European structures. They affected Russian views of the 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU, and still more of the 2004 European Neighborhood Policy. Relations thus came to be based on the principle, first articulated by then Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, of "everything but institutions."[10] In other words, Russia and Europe would strive to work closely together, but they would eschew formal integration. Yet because Russia did not identify its interests with those of NATO and the EU, it could, and

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7 А.В. Келин, "Спокойно негативное отношение к расширению НАТО [Calmly negative reaction to NATO expansion]," Международная жизнь [*International Affairs*], 31 Dec 2003.

8 "Блок НАТО разошелся на блокпакеты [The NATO bloc separated into bloc fragments]," Коммерсант [*Kommersant*], 7 Apr 2008, http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/877224. Farangis Najibullah, "Putin Downplays Kazakh Independence, Sparks Angry Reaction," RFE/RL, 3 Sep 2014, http://www.rferl.org/content/kazakhstan-putin-history-reaction-nation/26565141.html.

9 Сергей Караганов, "Европа: можно ли избежать поражения? [Europe: Can it avoid defeat?]" Российская Газета [*Rossiskaya Gazeta*], 18 Feb 2015, https://rg.ru/2015/02/19/karaganov.html.

10 Vladimir Putin, "The article by Vladimir Putin '50 Years of the European Integration and Russia' is published today in the European media," The Kremlin, 25 Mar 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/37692.

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frequently did, view their actions as running counter to its own interests, even as Western leaders believed they were acting on behalf of the wider Europe that included Russia.

The best example was NATO expansion, which was sold to Russia in part on the argument that a larger NATO would create a zone of stability around Russia's borders, something that Western leaders told their Russian counterparts was actually in Moscow's own interests. That argument rested on the assumption that Russia prioritized peace and prosperity around its borders over other objectives such as maintaining strategic depth against NATO forces and preserving the links between its own bureaucratic-oligarchic elite and those of its post-Soviet neighbors. Similarly, the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama raised the prospect of building a joint NATO-Russia missile defense architecture, arguing that Iran's growing ballistic missile capability posed a threat to Russia equal to, if not greater than, the threat it posed to NATO member states. The effort foundered because neither side fully trusted the other — NATO was unwilling to create a "dual key" system requiring both sides' approval before launching an intercept, while Russia was unwilling to accept NATO assurance that a system whose operation it could not veto would not pose a threat to its own deterrent capability.

Some officials in the United States, Europe, and Russia recognized even in the early 1990s that NATO expansion could potentially poison relations with Moscow and set back efforts to build the undivided Europe that still seemed possible at the time.[11] However the administration of former President Bill Clinton came to believe, correctly, that expansion would ensure stability in Central and Eastern Europe and help consolidate the democratic transitions underway

in the former Warsaw Pact states. Subsequent U.S. administrations and their European allies would make the same case with regard to Georgia and Ukraine. It rested on the assumption that, since Russia was also presumed to be an aspiring democracy and member of a wider European community, the circle could be squared, expanding NATO (and later, the EU as well) while preserving strategic cooperation with Moscow.

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Western officials also pointed to the evolving threat environment to argue that NATO itself was no longer the same institution it had been during the Cold War, and that, consequently, it was no longer focused on containment. Of course, NATO's move to "out of area" operations did not reassure Moscow either, especially when those capabilities were deployed against states and regimes that Russia supported, notably that of Yugoslavia's Slobodan Milošević in 1999 and Iraq's Saddam Hussein in 2003.[12]

While cooperation did continue, the expansion of Western institutions into areas that had been part of Moscow's sphere of influence during the Cold War while Russia had no prospect of joining these institutions itself resulted in what Russian officials and analysts see as a still-divided Europe. As Putin remarked in January 2016, "25 years ago the Berlin Wall fell, yet the division of Europe was not overcome;

11 Andrei Kozyrev, "Partnership or Cold Peace?" *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1995, (99), pp. 3-14. "Opposition to NATO Expansion," open letter to Bill Clinton signed by 50 leading figures in U.S. foreign policy, 26 Jun 1997, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997-06-07/natolet.asp. See also James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Brookings, 2003), pp. 183-85.

12 Since 2010, Russia's military doctrine has explicitly termed "the desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions ... and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc" as dangers to Russian security. "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation," 5 Feb 2010, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf.

invisible walls were merely moved further to the East."[13]

One Europe or Two?

If the problem bedeviling Europe's security architecture since the end of the Cold War has been the inability to figure out where Russia fits, one solution would be to build new agreements and institutions that would more explicitly include Russia, returning in some form to the idea of one united Europe that emerged at the end of the Cold War. Another would be to accept that Russia sits outside of "Europe" more or less entirely, and structure relations with Moscow on essentially Westphalian, balance-of-power terms.

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Absent a new strategy, greater Europe appears to be splitting in two, between a liberal Europe that remains committed however tenuously to the post-Cold War consensus and a "Eurasian" Europe where illiberalism is gaining ground in tandem with Russian influence. As a report from the Russian International Affairs Council noted in 2014, the post-Cold War period saw "on the one hand, the policy of expanding and strengthening the Western/North Atlantic space (and the creation of a Greater Europe through its expansion) and, on the other, the impossibility of including Russia in this 'Euroatlantic' model of a Greater Europe and the growing Russian opposition to the West's growing pressure."[14]

Dating back to the early years of the Cold War, Moscow has long favored the idea of a single European architecture stretching from the Atlantic to the Urals, or beyond.[15] This approach always implied a Europe for Europeans, with the United States pushed to the sidelines, and at least safe for — if not dominated by — Soviet-style Communism. Unsurprisingly, the United States, and most mainstream European leaders, rejected the Soviet vision of a pan-European security architecture that included Moscow while excluding Washington.

Calls for a united Europe received new life with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, followed by that of the Soviet Union itself. Soviet and Russian leaders had not ceased calling for a single, undivided Europe, and Russia's seeming embrace of liberal politics at the end of the Cold War appeared to remove the contradiction between a united Europe and a liberal Europe. Amid the spirit of optimism surrounding the end of the Cold War, voices in multiple countries echoed Bush's call for a Europe whole, free, and at peace (and with a strong U.S. presence). The Central and Eastern European states of the old Warsaw Pact clamored to rejoin the European home from which the Cold War had expelled them.

For a time at least, Russia appeared set to join as well; even as relations worsened during the Putin years, Russia's European ultimate path into Europe was rarely questioned. Echoing language first used by Leonid Brezhnev, in April 1987 Mikhail Gorbachev called for a "common European home," a term that was later included in the joint declaration issued following Gorbachev's June 1989 meeting with West German

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13 Геворг Мирзаян, "Я не друг и не невеста: Почему Путин не поехал в Мюнхен? [Not your friend and not your bride: Why Putin did not go to Munich]" Эксперт [*Expert*], 13 Jan 2016, http://expert.ru/2016/01/13/ya-ne-drug-i-ne-nevesta/.

14 Дмитрий Данилов, "Европейское пространство безопасности: украинский разлом [Europe's security space: The Ukrainian fault line]," Russian International Affairs Council, Jul 2014, http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=4102#top-content.

15 In early 1954, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov proposed a "General European Treaty for Collective Security in Europe" that would reduce the United States (along with the People's Republic of China) to the status of observers. Among other provisions, Molotov's proposal would "ban any coalition of alliance" (read, NATO) that contradicted the treaty's provisions. Diplomats in the room guffawed, with one later scoffing that the Soviets were proposing something with "long furry ears and sharp white teeth." See "Plan with Furry Ears," *Time*, 22 Feb 1954. I am grateful to Constanze Stelzenmüller for the reference.

Chancellor Helmuth Kohl in Bonn.[16] Former Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, among others, favored building a new framework for European security on the base of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).[17] In the years before Putin's return to the Kremlin, Moscow called for a common economic space encompassing all of Europe (including Russia), as well as the United States, and Putin himself discussed creating a Greater Europe.[18] One of Dmitry Medvedev's most notable initiatives as president was his 2008 call for a new treaty on European security that would also include Russia, and that Moscow would have a hand in drafting.[19]

These initiatives never gained traction in part because of Russia's inability to move from abstract ideas to concrete proposals, much less to address the real concerns that other European states (not to mention the United States) had about Russian intentions. Unsurprisingly, the United States and its allies viewed the main objective of such proposals as sidelining or tying down NATO, limiting U.S. influence in Europe, and ensuring Russia the ability to veto decisions about the use of force it did not support.

Still, the failure of core European states and the U.S. to seriously engage these proposals exacerbated the dilemma over Russia's place in the Euroatlantic architecture. Medvedev's European security initiative, which included efforts to constrain NATO's ability to use force, was a good example: it was widely scorned and left to languish in a bureaucratic talking shop at the OSCE.[20] Its fate embodied precisely the dilemma Western leaders faced. Moscow clearly had revisionist motives in advancing the idea of a new European security order that would diminish the role of NATO and the United States, but refusing to seriously engage only reinforced the widespread Russian narrative that the United States and its European allies were not interested in working with Russia on an equal basis, and were instead wedded to a concept of Europe that either excluded Russia entirely, or, at best, consigned it to a subordinate role.

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Europe or Eurasia?

Partially in response to their inability to convince their Western counterparts of the need to build a more inclusive European security model, Russian officials have in the past several years moved to promoting an alternative "Eurasian" bloc of states capable of interacting with institutional Europe on an equal footing.

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16 See Milan Svec, "The Prague Spring: 20 Years Later," *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1988, 66(5). "Joint Declaration signed by Federal Chancellor Kohl and president Gorbachev 13 June 1989," *Survival*, 1989, 31(5): pp. 462-465.

17 Yevgeny Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, trans. Felix Rosenthal (Yale, 2004).

18 Nikolas von Twickel, "Lavrov Pushes Trade with Europe, U.S." *Moscow Times*, 11 Dec 2008. Sergey Karaganov, "Europe and Russia: Preventing a New Cold War," *Russia in Global Affairs*, 7 Jun 2014, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Europe-and-Russia-Preventing-a-New-Cold-War-16701.

19 The goal of a new European security treaty, which Medvedev first raised in a June 2008 speech in Berlin, was to "resolve questions regarding the indivisibility of security as well as the problems of arms limitations in Europe." See Дмитрий Медведев [Dmitry Medvedev], ''Выступление на встрече с представителями политических, парламентских и общественных кругов Германии [Presentation at a meeting with representatives of German politics, parliament, and society],'' The Kremlin, 5 Jun 2008, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/320. After much prodding and criticism that it was not offering concrete proposals, Moscow released a draft treaty in November 2009. The draft specified that decisions taken by existing "alliances, coalitions, and organizations" (read, NATO) should not negatively affect the security of any signatory to the new treaty, and established a mechanism of compulsory consultations, conferences, and "extraordinary conferences" to provide recourse in the event some signatories perceived others' actions as a danger to their own security. See "Проект договора о европейскои безопасности [Proposal for a Treaty on European Security]," The Kremlin, 29 Nov 2009, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152.

20 Jeffrey Mankoff, "Reforming the Euroatlantic Security Architecture: An Opportunity for U.S. Leadership," *The Washington Quarterly*, Apr 2010, 33(2): pp. 65-83.

This turn to Eurasia includes official emphasis of thinkers stressing Russia's Eurasian destiny, including Nikolay Berdyaev, Lev Gumilev, and Ivan Ilin.[21] The concrete embodiments of this strategy are the Eurasian Economic Union on the political/economic side and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) on the security side. The origins of both, notably, go back to well before the period of open confrontation with the West inaugurated by the Ukraine crisis, but have been to varying degrees repurposed in recent years to form the core of a more centrally managed Eurasian space centered on Moscow, and whose influence Russia would like to see extended further to the West as well.[22]

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This new approach in some ways echoes the calls of Gorbachev, Primakov, and others for a pan-European security space. Yet instead of creating a single wider Europe that transcends Cold War-era divisions, the post-2011 Putin approach seeks to restore components of Cold War-style bipolarity, with Russia at the head of a bloc comprised of Soviet successor states capable of interacting on an equal basis with the institutional Europe of the EU and NATO.

This vision of Eurasia is, on one hand, a kind of greater Russia, where smaller post-Soviet states remain locked in a subordinate political and economic relationship. Certainly the major ideologues of Eurasianism, like Moscow State University Professor Aleksandr Dugin, describe Eurasian integration in these terms.[23]

On the other hand, Putin also discusses his Eurasia as an analogue to the institutional Europe from which Russia is excluded. Putin claims that the new organization was based on the 40-year experience of European integration and was designed to parallel the EU in institutional terms. In Putin's view, the new union should therefore interact with the EU on an equal basis, creating "a single economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans."[24] Similarly, Moscow long urged NATO to establish bloc-to-bloc relations with the CSTO, though NATO repeatedly declined, preferring to engage CSTO members bilaterally through individualized partnership agreements.[25]

21 Charles Clover, "Lev Gumilev: Putin, passion, and power," *Financial Times*, 11 Mar 2016. Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, "Ivan Ilyin and the Ideology of Moscow's Rule," *Foreign Affairs*, 20 Sep 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2015-09-20/putins-philosopher.

22 The EEU first became a priority during Putin's campaign for re-election to the Kremlin in 2011. It was, though, an outgrowth of earlier efforts at post-Soviet integration, including a customs union dating back to the 1990s and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), which came into existence in 2000. The CSTO was founded in 2002, on the basis of the 1992 Tashkent Treaty.

23 Anton Barbashin and Hannah Thoburn, "Putin's Brain: Alexander Dugin and the Philosophy Behind Putin's Invasion of Crimea," *Foreign Affairs*, 31 Mat 2014, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-03-31/putins-brain. The influence of these ideologues on actual policy should not, however, be overstated. See Marlene Laruelle, "Eurasia, Eurasianism, Eurasian Union: Terminological Gaps and Overlaps," PONARS Policy Memo, Jul 2015, (366), http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm366_Laruelle_July2015.pdf.

24 Владимир Путин [Vladimir Putin], "Совещание послов и постоянных представителей Российской федерации [Meeting of ambassadors and permanent representatives of the Russian Federation]," The Kremlin, 30 Jun 2016, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52298. See also Владимир Путин [Vladimir Putin], "Новый интеграционный проект для Евразии – будущее, которое рождается сегодня [A New Integration Project for Eurasia: A Future Being Born Today]," Известия [Izvestia], 3 Oct 2011. While some Western commentators accepted the logic of this position, the EU as a whole rejected the idea of establishing formal relations with its Eurasian counterpart, which seems more an expression of Russian geopolitical ambitions than an effort to peace and prosperity among its members. See Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, "The New European Disorder," European Council on Foreign Relations, 20 Nov 2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_new_european_disorder322. For a rebuttal, see David J. Kramer, "Why Europe shouldn't cooperate with Russia's economic bloc," *Politico*, 17 Dec 2015, http://www.politico.eu/article/why-europe-shouldnt-cooperate-with-russias-economic-bloc/.

25 Yulia Nikitina, "How the CSTO Can, and Cannot, Help NATO," PONARS Policy Memo, Sep 2013, (285), http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/Pepm_285_Nikitina_Sept%202013.pdf.

Increasingly, the push to create an organized Eurasian space subject to Russian influence has also encompassed an ideological component, with Moscow using the specter of European "decadence" as an argument for its post-Soviet neighbors to throw in their lot with institutional Eurasia instead of institutional Europe — hence the prominence in Russian official discourse regarding anti-LGBT propaganda and related appeals to "traditional" values.[26]

Most of the states targeted for inclusion in this new Russia-centric Eurasia are other post-Soviet states that have similar political institutions to those found in Russia and that Moscow wants to keep in its geopolitical orbit. Yet Russia's approach to Eurasian integration is somewhat fluid, and various non-post-Soviet states are from time to time mentioned as potential members or partners of the Eurasian bloc.[27] Russia is also attempting to link its Eurasian bloc to China, including through participation in Beijing's One Belt One Road strategy, as well as through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This wider geographic scope implies a Russia that sees itself as being fundamentally, even ontologically, less European. Even if the bulk of Russia's economic and demographic weight remains located in Europe, the idea, articulated by leading Russian strategists in recent years, is to accelerate the shift of global power away from Europe and the West, while building up Eurasia as a newly consolidated region capable of standing

on its own alongside or even against the transatlantic West.[28]

At the same time, Moscow is working to undermine liberal Europe from within, largely through support for populist, Far Right, and anti-systemic political forces. While it would be a mistake to exaggerate the effectiveness of Russian strategy in this regard, Europe's own malaise — exemplified by years of stagnant economies, surging migrant flows, terrorism, and "Brexit" — provides fertile ground for Moscow's revisionist efforts. Together, Russian revisionism and European malaise interact to form the kind of fundamental challenge institutional Europe has not faced in its post-1991 history.

> ## Moscow is working to undermine liberal Europe from within.

The effort to extend at least elements of Eurasia beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union aims in part at rallying much of the non-Western world against the West's perceived dominance of international institutions not just in Europe, but at the global level. As part of this process, Moscow also supports the creation of new, non-Western centric international institutions such as the SCO, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and others. Lacking resources and specific plans for implementation, none of this represents a coherent strategy. It also falls short of what the Soviet Union attempted during the era of decolonization, for instance, but shares a similar motivation in terms of challenging the perceived institutional and ideological monopoly held by the West.

26 Timothy Snyder, "Edge of Europe; End of Europe," *New York Review of Books*, 21 Jul 2015, http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2015/07/21/ukraine-kharkiv-edge-of-europe/. Vladimir Putin, "Address to the Valdai International Discussion Club," 19 Sep 2013, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243.

27 Kenneth Rapoza, "Putin Seeks to Include China, India, Iran in Fledgling Eurasian Union," *Forbes*, 20 Jun 2016, http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2016/06/20/putin-seeks-to-include-china-india-iran-in-fledgling-eurasian-union/#7634cc1d5641. "Vietnam Signs Free-Trade Agreement With Russian-Led Economic Union," *Moscow Times*, 29 May 2015, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/vietnam-signs-free-trade-agreement-with-russian-led-economic-union/522691.html. Evan Gottesman, "An Israeli Pivot to Eurasia?" *The Diplomat*, 2 Dec 2015, http://thediplomat.com/2015/12/an-israeli-pivot-to-eurasia/.

28 See especially Oleg Barabanov and Timofei Bordachev, "Toward the Great Ocean, or the New Globalization of Russia," Valdai Discussion Club, Jul 2012, http://vid-1.rian.ru/ig/valdai/Toward_great_ocean_eng.pdf.

This new Eurasian bloc has thus far failed to live up to Russian hopes. Even Russia's closest post-Soviet partners have been reluctant to go as far down the road to integration as Moscow had hoped. New supranational bodies, in particular, have proven unpopular and difficult to set up. Ties among Eurasian states remain largely bilateral. Most gallingly, several post-Soviet states that Moscow wants to include in its Eurasian bloc remain very much attracted to the idea of closer ties with the EU and NATO; while Russia, for instance, used its status as the guarantor of Armenia's external security to block Yerevan's effort to sign an EU association agreement in favor of membership in the EEU, Armenia continues working on an accord with Brussels that it hopes will be an association agreement in all but name.[29] And of course, the Ukrainian people responded to Russian efforts to strong-arm former President Viktor Yanukovych into abandoning the EU association agreement he had negotiated by rising up and overthrowing him. Whatever problems the European Union faces — and they are legion — it continues to have a strong appeal in many of the countries Russia is trying to win over for its own multilateral integration project.

Conclusion

For the first time since the Cold War, then, the West is facing a truly systemic challenge, not in what was once condescendingly termed the Third World, but in Europe itself. The question is no longer how far to the East Euroatlantic integration will extend, but whether the existing degree of integration can be maintained. For a variety of reasons, Moscow has pursued an actively revisionist approach to Europe's security architecture at a time when the transatlantic community faces a range of other challenges, notably a surge of migrants from Syria, fears of jihadist terrorism, and a populist backlash against the post-1945 European project as such. Russia's Eurasian ambitions may not

29 Andrew C. Kuchins, Jeffrey Mankoff, and Oliver Backes, "Armenia in a Reconnecting Eurasia: Foreign Economic and Security Interests," Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jun 2016, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160622_Kuchins_AmeniaReconnectingEurasia_Web.pdf.

be the biggest problem Western leaders face, but they represent an additional, probably long-term challenge. As a result of this cascade of difficulties, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, the West is playing defense. Notwithstanding efforts to shore up weak spots in the transatlantic order, the model of European and Euroatlantic security based on the progressive extension of liberal institutions dating from the Cold War may be approaching its limits, both geographically and conceptually.

> [The EU] continues to have a strong appeal in many of the countries Russia is trying to win over for its own multilateral integration project.

Responding to Russian efforts to weaken the pillars of European security will be among the most significant challenges facing U.S. and European diplomats in the years to come. The immediate task, of course, lies in ending the conflict in Ukraine on terms that meet Western (and Ukrainian) interests while deterring additional Russian military actions in Europe, especially against a NATO member state. The bigger, longer-term challenge lies in managing relations with a Russia that no longer conceives of itself as a partner in upholding the security of Europe, and in designing rules and institutions for this dangerous new era.

Of course, Russia's shift from passive malcontent to active revisionist coincides with a crisis of confidence within the transatlantic community spurred, in part, by fading memories of great power conflict and diminished confidence in liberal political orders at home. In some ways, those challenges are more existential because, unlike Russia, they originate at the core of the Euroatlantic community itself. Europe and the United States need to focus above all on reinvigorating the

ideas and institutions that make the West what it is. The very seriousness of the crisis facing Europe represents something of an opportunity to go back to first principles, since merely tinkering around the edges is unlikely to be sufficient.

If the existing approach to peace and security in Europe has run out of steam, where do Europe and the United States go from here? Beyond deterrence of Russia, which NATO has again taken up, how can the Euroatlantic community re-establish a sense of common purpose? What can it do for and with the countries in the outer circle of European integration? And ultimately, on what basis can it build a more stable relationship with Moscow?

> ## How can the Euroatlantic community re-establish a sense of common purpose?

Perhaps, like an alcoholic, the first step for the transatlantic community is merely admitting the existence of the problem. The current model, based on perpetual extension of Euroatlantic institutions to the East, is approaching its limits. Russia has become an actively revisionist power advancing its own competing model of domestic politics as well as regional order. Strategic competition has returned to Europe. Recognizing the nature and scale of the challenge is critical if the Euroatlantic community is to rediscover a unity of purpose.

Whatever challenges the post-Cold War order faces, Western leaders should recognize that it has been phenomenally successful at resolving disputes between neighboring states, avoiding major conflict in Europe, establishing democratic political systems, and, in most places, promoting economic development (the current eurozone crisis notwithstanding). The continued attractiveness of the Euroatlantic model and member-

ship in transatlantic institutions on the part of states like Ukraine, even as support for the EU and NATO wavers among many member states, testifies to everything the architects of the existing order got right. Any effort to accommodate Moscow that involves accepting Russia's violation of the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris, and other foundational documents of the post-Cold War order; or that acknowledge an equivalence between democratic, voluntaristic Western institutions and Russian-led bodies comprised of authoritarian states and whose membership depends on coercion should remain beyond the Pale. The West, in other words, needs to stand firm on Ukraine, keeping sanctions in place as long as Moscow refuses to fully implement the Minsk-II ceasefire and signaling a willingness to impose serious additional costs should the ceasefire collapse.

At the same time, Western leaders should recognize the return of systemic competition with Moscow and be prepared to make the case, including to their own publics, for the virtues of the existing order — and be willing to commit the resources necessary to both defending it and making it work better. If the West truly does face systemic competition with Moscow, it is imperative to show that the West's system remains preferable. That case will be more plausible if the European states, in the first instance, can more effectively grapple with the migrant crisis and adopt policies that promote economic growth. Developing a coherent narrative about the stakes, and maintaining transatlantic consensus in the process, are critical as well.

As far as Russia is concerned, it is time to put aside the assumption that Moscow will be a true partner for Euroatlantic institutions. The United States and its European allies should accept that Russia is now a strategic rival in Europe, and take steps to actively limit Russian political, economic, and indirect ("soft power") influence, while remaining open to transactional cooperation on issues of mutual interest. A good start would be to ensure the decisions NATO made

at its 2016 Warsaw summit are fully implemented, including with regard to rotational troop deployments to the Eastern flank and for member states to increase spending on defense. Refocusing on deterring Russian aggression is important not only for its own sake, but perhaps more importantly, as a way of building confidence in transatlantic institutions on the part of frontline states. Looking forward, Europe ought to focus on ensuring the transparency of Russian financial flows, both investments and support for political parties, quasi-NGOs, and other political organizations.

Options for states like Ukraine and Georgia are, of course, more limited. However, the Euroatlantic community should continue to deepen cooperation (including on security and defense), while remaining committed to the principle that the door to NATO and the EU remains open, even if prospects for actual membership are limited for the time being. The United States and its allies should ensure Russia abides by existing agreements, including the Minsk-II ceasefire, not to mention accords like the Helsinki Final Act, and ensure Moscow pays a high price for violating them. It should also resist Russian calls for a "Helsinki-2" or similar arrangements that would water down existing commitments or institutionalize the redivision of Europe in exchange for the promise of greater Russian compliance.

Over the longer term, Russia's own limitations and the contradictions inherent in its approach to Eurasian integration are likely to give the United States and its European allies an opportunity to again play offense — if they can get through the current period of crisis. Russia faces social and economic stagnation, caused less by low oil prices or Western sanctions than by a system based on rent-seeking, clan politics, and crony capitalism. That model holds little appeal outside (or, for that matter, inside) Russia, and is incapable of turning Moscow into the core of a new regional order. Russia's putative partners, even those that want and need good relations with Moscow, will continue looking for the exit from Eurasia, remaining in Russia's

> Russia's own limitations and the contradictions inherent in its approach to Eurasian integration are likely to give the United States and its European allies an opportunity to again play offense.

orbit only insofar as *force majeure* compels them to do so. Their own national aspirations will act as a check on Russian efforts to turn bodies like the EEU and the CSTO into true analogues for Euroatlantic institutions. Russia itself will be unable to develop its economy without opening up and again seeking some kind of accommodation with the West (as Moscow has discovered over the past two years, partnership with China, while helpful, is not an adequate substitute).

Even if Putin's Russia does not follow the USSR onto the ash heap of history, the transatlantic community has reserves of strength that Russia lacks. Its own challenges are real, and need to be addressed, but are not of an extent to require accommodation of a revisionist Russia within Europe. Whether the return to strategic and systemic competition with Moscow could have been avoided is, at this point, a question of mainly historical interest. For contemporary diplomats in both the United States and Europe, the principal question is what to do about a Russia that has set itself outside the transatlantic community and seeks to roll back many of the gains of the past 25 years. Their most important tasks lie at home.

About the Author
Jeffrey Mankoff is deputy director and senior fellow with the CSIS Russia and Eurasia Program.

About the Foreign and Security Policy Program
The Foreign and Security Program (FSP) at GMF comprises a stream of activities furthering objective analysis and debate on geopolitical questions of transatlantic concern. The program spans regional and functional issues, from NATO affairs to energy security, including challenges and opportunities in Europe's East, the strategic environment in the Mediterranean, and the role of Turkey as a transatlantic partner. .

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