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RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS

OF FUTURE EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

For the past three-four years the debate in Russia (in political and economic circles) on the problems of European security has focused on NATO enlargement. It is not an accidental development for it is attributable to a desire, either conscious or unconscious, to avoid coming to grips with real problems, rather than to genuine concern over the country's security.

In considering the situation, it should be recalled that Russia took a fairly relaxed view of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme when the idea was first suggested in late 1993. At that time the Russian military and political establishment believed that the programme would be something of a "waiting room" which Central and East European countries and Russia would enter and where they would stay for an indefinite period because nobody was going to ask them into the "parlour" of NATO proper. It was not until the PfP Framework Document was published and Partnership for Peace actually launched, in January 1994, that the Russian press mounted a massive anti-NATO campaign. Many of the Framework Document's provisions went against the grain of the Russian military-political establishment and particular concern was expressed over paragraph 3 of the Document which calls for transparency in organising and planning national defence, in developing military budgets and ensuring democratic control of defence forces.

In general, the question of NATO enlargement has spawned many myths and illusions which are skilfully exploited by Russian politicians. For

many Russians, especially those of the older generation, the problem of interaction with the West is above all psychological.

To a large extent, Russia's foreign and security policy is influenced by Russian cultural tradition. In past centuries, social and political tensions were always connected with the country's lagging behind the West technologically. The recognition of this gap was seen as proof of the need to draw on the West's achievements to modernize the Russian economy. At the same time, however, Russia has always feared the negative influence of Western values on society and culture, an attitude that limited the scope for cooperation.

In the mid-1990s, the problem of formulating foreign and security policy and of participating, first of all, in the future European security architecture seemed to become a most relevant issue for Russian society. A closer look at recent Russian and Soviet history explains this development. Since the end of the Soviet period, Russia has been challenged by the problem of its identity and its place in Europe and the world. The loss of its former international status and territories meant national humiliation leading to political disorientation for many Russians. The debate on foreign and security policy focused on the range and manner of relations with the West, preservation of Russia's special status, and balance between European and Asian orientation.

The way Russian society reacted to the reformist attempts by Gorbachev and Yeltsin was similar to that of the 19th century. Russia's special role in world history, the country's function as a bridge between the East and West, was and still is an important issue.

Doubts are voiced as to whether Russia should imitate Western

models and rely on Western aid, and fears are expressed about the corrupting influence of Western culture.

The Russian history every time when the country did follow the way of modernization immediately in the society was open a discussion on negative Western influence on Russian specific values.

Actually the image of the West as a hostile subject has always been present in the history of Russian state. The subject of confrontation between the catholic west and Orthodox Russia became an important factor of identification for Russian culture and also determined the isolationist foreign policy of the state. Russia's self-identification process was based on the antagonism of "we" and "they", this dichotomy has continued to exist latently in mass consciousness and is revised in the situations of social and spiritual crisis.

During different stages of Russian history the image of hostile West took and takes concrete forms: Poles, Swedes, Germans, USA, NATO, etc. Those concrete forms reflected major interests of Russian foreign and security policy.

What is interesting to stress here - in Soviet period in time of Gorbachev the defenders of hard-line communism always accused the opponents of being "agents of foreign powers".

Outbursts of hatred towards the West and foreigners often occurred during periods of socio-economic and political development, they are marginal to mass consciousness. Most of Russia's attempts to be integrated into Europe or to "enter" Europe by means of transformation had an opposite result. They strengthened negative attitudes towards the West and initiated isolationist tendencies in the political sphere.

In the mid-19th century attempts of reforms had negative reaction in the society, it was based on a distinctive disappointment about so called "betrayal" by the West, which was effected to recognize Russia as a European country for its efforts to save the continent from Napoleon. As a type of compensation for this disappointment, the myths of Russia superiority and specific cultural influence were supplemented with the messianic idea. Later the image of Russia "saving Europe" from enemies - from Tatars, Napoleon, German fascism - and the West "betraying Russia" became one of the main images in Russian mass consciousness. These images have reflection in the present day system of values and play an important role in social, political and cultural process.

Soviet leaders always manipulated with the negative image of the West and thus justified a certain foreign, security and domestic policy.

After the Second World War, having in mind the rising of the bipolar world, the conflict between Russia and the West entered its final form in the mythology of the inevitable confrontation between the socialist world and western imperialism. Two main systems of western imperialism were USA and NATO. This phenomenon existed on two levels - in official propaganda and in the system of mass attitudes. The confrontation between "socialist" and "capitalist" worlds, between Russia and the West included both isolationist and messianic elements.

In the period of "perestroika" and after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet system in Eastern Europe, in the field of international relations the perceived position "Russia against the West", which served as a background for Russia foreign policy for centuries, was replaced by the formula "Russian democrats together with the democratic West against

communists". But the new opposition, popular among cultural and political "elites" was never fully accepted at the mass level. Good relationship of Russian "democrats" with the West failed to contribute to changing the image of the West from negative to positive; moreover it produced an opposite result. And the first political figure who suffered from this tendency was M.Gorbachev, after August 191 - A.Kozyrev, E.Gaydar and the team. That means that all Russian politicians who tried to construct a constructive cooperation with the West were accused for neglecting so called Russian national interests.

During the processes of reforms negative mass attitudes towards the west did not only disappear, but they were supplemented by the confidence that it is a "duty", an "obligation" of the West to support Russian reform. This attitude again provoked feelings of disappointment concerning "the betrayal" of the West in the mid-1990's. Once again the west was accused to not accept Russia's role, who saved the world from the communist danger. In combination with other historical myths these feelings served as a background for revival of the mid-19th century psychological situation. In the past the elites compensated their disappointment with the idea of Russia being a "select country" At present, after NATO enlargement, the elites speak about "loss of confidence" in the relationship with the West. Having in mind the identity crisis in Russia we are witnesses of the beginning of a process of partial self-isolation which could, under certain circumstances, lead to rather dangerous tendencies in Russian domestic and foreign policy.

Three Schools of Thought

Now, as then, there are three schools of thought in society on Rus-

sia's place in the world and its foreign policy. One advocates moving closer to the West and Europe, the second urges renouncing strong links with the West in favor of the so-called Eastern alternative, the third supports a balance between East and West in order to take advantage of links with both, while preserving a distinctive Russian identity. In political terms, these positions can be attributed respectively to the views of liberal reformers, national conservatives, and moderate nationalist centrists.

Pro-Westerners are convinced that the successful development of relations with the West is inseparable from the process of liberal reform in domestic politics and economics. They call for the country's integration into Western economic and political institutions such as G-7, the European Union (EU), the Western European Union (WEU), or NATO.

Anti-Westerners pursue the goal of reviving Russia's grandeur by renouncing Western models of development and asserting Russia's special mission in the world. They regard the signing of the Founding Act between Russia and NATO and Russia's involvement in the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP) program as a betrayal of its national interests. And they blame NATO's opening to the East to be a result of intrigues by anti-Russian forces in the West. They fear that foreign policy aimed at integrating Russia into Western institutions will relegate the country to a second-rate power and will insult Russia's national dignity. The economic might of the West is seen as a means of controlling Russia, and security cooperation as an instrument of interference in her internal affairs.

For anti-Westerners, forging a stronger relationship with NATO and other Western institutions in the field of security is not an issue, as such an option would allegedly be a capitulation.

As opposed to this extreme trend, moderate nationalist positions hold that Russia, owing to its geographic position and cultural heritage, has to strike a balance between the East and West. Russia's natural task is seen as assuming the role of a bridge in the Eurasian region, representing, among other things, the interests of Russians living in the countries of the CIS and in the Baltic States. This trend is not anti-Western, but seeks to draw attention to the problem of securing Russian national interests in the East. Its adherents believe that cooperation with Western institutions in the field of security represents a deal, a concession to the West in exchange for cooperation with the EU, which they welcome and support.

Although the latter trend is gaining ground in the debate on the direction of Russian foreign and security policy, its adherents (just like the liberal democrats until recently) do not dare speak out openly on the position regarding cooperation with Western institutions in the field of security, especially regarding the problem of NATO enlargement.

According to a survey conducted by the Russian Independent Center for Social and National Problems in June 1997, 12 percent of the respondents favored a close relationship with the West in order to achieve success in market reforms, 22 percent expressed their belief in a renaissance of Russia as a great power and called for a specific Russian way of development, 18 percent believe in the return of socialism, and 15 percent consider themselves centrists and pragmatics and favor contacts with the West and at the same time with Asian and Islamic countries.¹

As for the Westernizers and the radical national conservatives, they

¹ The June 1997 survey covered 13 regions and more than 2,200 respondents. See *Obshchaya gawta*, no. 30, 1997.

are losing public support. The former because of the plight of the Russian economy popularly associated with commitment to the Western development model. The latter because the younger generation does not want to see itself cut off from the West on ideological grounds.

Russian foreign and security policy's perceptions including those of future European security architecture, reflects and is affected by the fact that the country is experiencing a complex process of political, economic, social and - last but not least - psychological transformation. Previous values and behavioral patterns as well as political and economic structures are destroyed and discredited. New ones are only emerging. The collapse of Soviet system and ideology as a result has an identity crisis in the society and a nostalgia about the past as well as an increasing desire to come back to the stable and quite conditions which existed in the past.

Contrary to the changes experienced by Russian society in the period since the beginning of reforms. The dimension of foreign and security policy seems least affected by these developments. Historically evolved geopolitical concepts in terms of border areas, strategic lines of communication, spheres of interest continue to play an important role.

The discourse concerning Russia's national interests and, as consequences, Russian foreign policy reflects the impact of Soviet and even Tsarist traditions. In this connotation, Russia's relationship to "Europe" and "the West" is still one of the most debated topics among political and intellectual elites: Is Russia an integral part of Europe? Or does it belong to one of the centres of gravity located in Asia? Or is it a specific category?

Foreign policy decision-making is still not an open and democratic process. Only gradually it begins to involve Parliament, political parties, re-

gional elites, the mass media, independent political and economic groups. Russian foreign policy is less guided by any "great idea" than by interests of a relatively small group or groups of officials. Long-term strategies seem to matter less than the influence of those political figures who are close to the president. As the debate on NATO enlargement has shown, rhetoric does not necessarily make policies which tend to be reactive (but not proactive) rather than to take certain measures.

The political mentality of Russian society is divided. Norms and rules which members of society, including elites, recognize and observe are different.

If we analyze Russian and Soviet history we can see three elements of continuity which exist and even dominate the domestic debate on Russia's national interests, Russian foreign and security policy goals: first - the concept of Russia's missionary idea; second - the country's specific geopolitical situation and third - its ambivalent relationship with the west. These three factors have always played an important role in shaping Russia's perceptions of security in the past, the same picture we can observe today.

Russia's missionary idea was closely linked to the idea of "Moscow being the third Rome" introduced by the Orthodox cleric in the 16th century. In the Soviet period the USSR foreign policy was a continuation of the imperial tradition and expansionist by its character. After 1917, ideology was dominant and served a basis for justification for foreign and security policy behavior aimed at maximizing the sphere of influence. After the World War II expansionism meant not only the spread of communist ideology throughout the world, but increase of Soviet presence in different regions of the world.

At present influential political forces among Russian political, military and intellectual elites call for a common approach or ideology or concept of foreign policy aiming at restoration of Russia as a great power. The debates on so called "national idea" or "Russian idea" demonstrate that these ideas are connected with imperial ambitions of a centralist state.

The second important element of Russia on security perceptions reflects the country's specific geopolitical situation. In this connotation one must have in mind that the national self-image was shaped under a fear of being encircled and threatened externally. After the negative and even traumatic experience of Tatar-Mouglul rule, Napoleon invasion and fascist aggression Russia (the Soviet Union and again Russia) has been hard to defend its frontiers. The experience of destruction and foreign rule resulted in a perceived need for buffer zones. All Russian and Soviet leaders the extension of Russia's borders as an act of self defense, not aggression.

But what was interesting - the periods of expansion and defense depended not only on Russia's domestic strength but also on the situation inside neighboring countries. In case of power vacuum in neighboring states Russia and the USSR tried to expand.

At present, when Russia is in the period of political, economic, military and social weakness, elites try to compensate it by arguing in the categories of "geopolitics". When they speak about Russia as "great power", they shared perception that huge territory is the most important factor of the "greatness". Geographical categories guarantee Russia's role and influence in the world and are perceived to be not dependent on economic and military situation.

A "geopolitical self-identity" ignores the situation when small countries without enormous natural resources can achieve a global significance and reputation. But the problem is that while Russia's political elites claims "greatness" for their country relying only on a geopolitical concept, the state is losing control over its territory and actually is lost.

The relationship with the West has always been an important and disputed issue. Since the beginning of the 19th century the defenders of the reforms, social progress and enlightenment, were labeled as "Westernizer". Their opponents - defenders of conservative, reactionary, so called genuine Russian values - were called Slavophiles. Soviet leadership has always tried to fight against Western (capitalist) values. Today the West is accused to be responsible for Russia's economic decline. Conspiracy theories have a certain tradition in Russia and are a part of society's long-term memory. In contrast to the short period of Russia's western orientation after August 1999, the myth of the west is used to express a difference or to show a distance from Western Europe and the USA.

The ambivalence of Russia's approach to the West is proved by the fact that that the greatest majority of Russians are in favor of cooperation with the west, but at the same time they accused the USA and Western Europe to degrade Russia to a second-rate power, to exploit Russia's weakness, etc. The conclusion is the following: in their private life Russian people are much more pragmatic than in the cases when they speak about ideas of great-power status and ideological pictures of their country's enemies.

All these elements are integral parts of the debate on Russia's rational interests, of a dispute on problems of national identity and destiny of

Russia in a broader sense. The expression "national interests" entered the official political terminology at the end of 80's, that means in the period of Gorbachov who tried to liberate foreign policy from old ideology. The introduction of this "Western" terminology was a symbol of the new foreign and security policy. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union the expression "national interests" became a slogan of conservative nationalists who saw a great challenge from the West, Western liberal values.

An important element of the traditional Russian political culture is the idea of the state representing an end in itself rather than serving the interests of the society. The lack of a unifying national idea has been always perceived as a threat to the interests of Russia, its integrity and sovereignty.

The political elites are united in their strong belief that Russian foreign and security policy must aim at regaining and consolidating "great power status". All of them recognize the uniqueness of Russian power and culture, but at the same time there is no common understanding of what a "great power" is and where the special Russian role and special Russian way will lead. Some of them perceive it as restoring the former Soviet Union, the others - as rebuilding the country on the basis of democracy, rule of law, civil society, free market economy. There are some political figures who perceive "Russian way" as active participation in global affairs, the development of international cooperation on the basis of equality and partnership with other world centres, but the problem is that they don't understand adequately the concept of partnership and see it as an immediate support of all Russian initiatives.

The ambivalence of Russian attitude towards the west, inadequate understanding of the concept of national security interests are the basis for

the approach while Moscow continue to combine pragmatic cooperation with holistic definition of Russia's international position. Despite the country's weakness its foreign and security policy is oriented towards a "great power" status. As the debate on NATO enlargement shows, Russia still tend to place its own interests above security considerations of former Soviet republics and former East European satellites.

Russia's ideas in the field of foreign affairs and security policy contrast with its present military potential and its complicated social and economic situation. Current Russian foreign policy (Russian position in Kosovo crisis demonstrated it very clearly) reflects the domestic situation and internal crisis of the country. A brutal and changing rhetoric is an expression of a complex of inferiority and a high degree of uncertainty. All these make Russia an unreliable partner in international and European affairs.

This excursion in the field of national character and a certain type of political culture and orientation determined by historical development, geographic factors and types of political thinking can permit to understand better why we are witnesses of a new wave of nationalism with anti-Western face.

Rising Nationalism

The fact that moderate foreign policy options seem to be most popular without playing an important role in official policy making is a paradox of Russian domestic politics. The most likely explanation of this paradox is the nature of nationalism in post-communist countries. The groundswell of nationalism is the result of an inability of political institutions to develop and implement measures that would meet the society's real security interests in the economic, political, military, and cultural spheres. Manipulating such na-

tionalistic tendencies (rather civic than ethnic) is the most effective way of gaining political power and preserving control over the population.

The former communist leaders-turned-nationalists exploit the population's fears and tend toward chauvinism in order to pursue their own agendas. The power they gain in this way is essentially authoritarian. In the struggle for power, the use of nationalism leaves no place for true pluralism or for a multiparty system. Many parties opposing the nationalists are forced to rely on nationalist slogans. Parties and groups refraining from nationalism are branded as unpatriotic and traitors, finding themselves on the sidelines of political life.

In the period of transition from planned to market economy, nationalism seems to increase almost as fast as the political institutions lose control of that process. Nationalism in Russia is a consequence of rapid introduction of market forces in a non-market economy, *i.e.* a consequence of economic challenges to which political leaders cannot respond adequately. Under these circumstances, nationalism plays several political roles. Entrepreneurs use it to create and protect a national market and at the same time to expand into international markets. Representatives of the old elite use it to justify their desire to revive a surrogate of the old system. For the masses hurt by the results of economic shock therapy and lack of state protectionism or social security, nationalist propaganda provides an answer as to whom to blame.

Extremist nationalists exploit their policies favouring price control, ending ethnic conflicts by force, restoring the military might of the former USSR, support for the military-industrial complex, strengthening the executive branch of government, and strengthening the nation-state in order to

shield the Russian people from alleged harmful foreign influences, especially from the West. Adherents of moderate nationalist positions urge that Russia maintains its independence from Western assistance, insist on its special rights and interests, and keep up its military posture in order to repel a latent threat allegedly coming from Western countries. At the same time, they call for an alliance with the West to counterbalance perceived threats from Japan and Asia.

Meanwhile, reform-minded democrats refrain from raising the issue of nationalism, hoping that liberal ideas will prevail among the masses. This digression concerning the nature of nationalism in Russia partially explains the attitude of different political forces towards formulating foreign and security policy as a whole and towards interacting with Western institutions in the field of security.

The political spectrum

As to how NATO enlargement was perceived by various political forces in Russia, it should be noted that the top political and military leadership assumed that the process is aimed against Russia and that Russia's national interests require it to be resisted. This attitude owes much to emotion because there is a sense that in recent years the West has offended Russia by withholding unreserved support for all the domestic and foreign policy actions of its leaders, while the enlargement of NATO adds downbeat tones to the melody of Russian national humiliation. However, Russia's "No" to enlargement carries little weight with the West. These feelings are aggravated because many Russian political leaders feel that the US and Germany are trying to limit Russian interests in Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central

Asia.

All the major Russian political parties and blocs currently oppose NATO enlargement on the grounds that the majority of Russian citizens are presumed to be suspicious of NATO's plans. The Russian "Westernisers" who take a neutral or positive attitude towards the process, do not at present play an important political role. They include above all the liberal democratic leaders: Yegor Gaidar, Irina Khakamada, Konstanitin Borovoi, Sergei Filatov and Valeriya Novodvorskaya.

But the national consensus against NATO enlargement is an illusion or a myth to which many Russian politicians and analysts have wittingly or unwittingly fallen prey. They seem to confuse the relative consensus among the State Duma deputies and some decision-makers outside the Duma with a "public" consensus. This is purely wishful thinking.

What do the opinion surveys conducted by the Russian and Western organisations indicate on this question?

In a survey conducted by the All-Russia Centre for Public Opinion Research (VisIOM) in December 1995, only 0.7 per cent of respondents expressed concern over NATO enlargement. Russians are far more worried about the fate of the Russian diaspora abroad (10 per cent), the profligate trade in natural resources (14 per cent), restoring superpower status to their country (61 per cent) and regaining national dignity (77 per cent).²

According to a joint survey of foreign policy specialists conducted by VisIOM and the Moscow branch of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the first half of 1996, 9 per cent of the respondents were in favor of Russia joining NATO, 10 per cent believed that NATO enlargement would not harm Rus-

² VisIOM Survey, December 1995, published in *Segodnya* newspaper, 10 February 1996.

sia's security interests, 30 per cent felt that it ran counter to Russian interests and 2 per cent said that NATO enlargement would help to strengthen Russia's security".³

In December 1996 the Russian Public Opinion Foundation conducted a nationwide poll in 56 communities in 29 regions, territories and republics, covering all economic and geographic zones of Russia. The respondents were asked the question, "What policy should Russia pursue with regard to NATO?" The answers were as follows:

1. Russia should obstruct NATO enlargement: 31 per cent.
2. Russia should itself become a member of NATO: 22 per cent.
3. Russia should agree to NATO enlargement in exchange for a good treaty on cooperation with the NATO countries: 10 per cent.
4. Russia should not obstruct NATO enlargement: 2 per cent.
5. Don't know: 35 per cent.⁴

In general it appears that the debate initiated in Moscow does not worry the Russian provinces very much. The regional leaders hardly ever comment on the subject as they are more concerned with resolving more tangible problems: how to get money from the federal budget to pay wages to their electorates, how to establish viable trade relations with foreign firms and so forth.

Even allowing for the polls not being fully representative and for the contradictory results of some of them, sociological surveys show that there was no national consensus on the question of NATO enlargement to the East which Russian politicians like to talk about.

³ Russische Aussenpolitik 1996 im Urteil von aussenpolitischen Experten, SINUS/VisIOM Survey, Moscow/Munich, May 1996

⁴ Survey by the Public Opinion Foundation, 7 December 1996, Moscow

The political paradigm

The Russian debate on foreign and security policy, future European security architecture, the role of NATO, and the logic of European integration processes reveals the inability of political institutions to meet adequately the challenges to security in a general sense of the word. It also manifests a certain type of strategic culture shaped under the influence of some philosophical and cultural factors, such as the messianic role of Orthodoxy, as well as important economic and geopolitical factors, *i.e.* lack of clear borders in East and West, abundance of natural resources but inability to make effective use of them, or the geopolitical position between Europe and Asia. As a result of these factors, the real or imagined existence of a common enemy justifies increased military spending, and the mentality of a beleaguered fortress allows a national consensus to emerge without addressing the real domestic problems in the political and economic field. This explains the behavior of Russian politicians at present. There are hardly any realistic assessments of Russia's real interests in a changed world where use of military force, geopolitical expansionism, and imperial attitudes are counter-productive, outdated forms of international behavior.

The disintegration process within the Russian Federation is likely to be accelerated by the short-sighted policy of applying military force to solve social and economic problems (as has been done in Chechnya) and exerting military-political pressure in the post-Soviet area (Abkhazia, Moldova, Tajikistan). It is a dangerous simplification to brand NATO a "common enemy" of the former Soviet republics, because it opens its doors to countries of Central and Eastern Europe which strive for protection against a formerly

aggressive "great power." "Great power" attitudes will also consolidate anti-Russian forces in all the former Soviet republics, harm the country's economic development, and jeopardize reform in all areas. Russia's interests are best served by cooperative approaches to security matters, including close cooperation with relevant international institutions, *i.e.* NATO, the OSCE, EU, and the Council of Europe, to overcome the Cold War stereotypes and come up with valid answers to the new challenges to security in the broadest sense which already confront the international community.

Economic groups and foreign policy

Increasingly, Russian monopolists, first of all in the field of oil and gas, are influencing formulation of foreign and security policy. Some of them, such as Gazprom and Lukoil, have already determined the directions of their expansion abroad and the directions and forms of foreign policy which can serve these interests. For instance, the so-called Union Treaty with Belarus primarily serves the interests of Gazprom, which is interested in a regular functioning of the pipeline crossing the country and going into Europe. Gazprom wants good relations with the Ukraine and Moldova as well.

At the same time, Gazprom is interested in preserving a civilized image of Russia in the West. As long as close business relations with Islamic countries does not undermine the company's reputation in the West, Gazprom is interested in maintaining good neighborly relations with Southern and Islamic countries. Yet the company has little chance to extend its activities to transport gas from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan via Iran and Turkey. As long as the company can rely on its intimate relationship with high Krem-

lin representatives, it will not allow foreign investments beyond its control, especially on the crucial Tyumen market.

As far as petroleum companies are concerned, they are not as influential as Gazprom, since they lack leverage on the former Soviet republics. During the first years of its existence as an independent state, Russia could not manage without oil pipelines, ports, and oil-refining factories located in CIS and Baltic countries. Besides, the former Soviet republics can realize basis alternative instruments and ways of providing to the market. To a certain extent, this explains why Russia has not officially accepted economic sanctions against Latvia during the so-called political crisis in spring 1998.

Lukoil is interested in external expansion towards West and South. The company already controls 40 percent of oil products sold in Baltic states and more than 30 percent of imported oil products in Moldova. Lukoil has constructed auto-refueling stations along the line from Western Siberia to Western Europe. In Azerbaidjan, the company participates in three out of five of adopted Caspian projects. There is an agreement with Iraq concerning exploitation of Western Kurna, one of the biggest crude oil deposits. Work can start only after the end of the UN sanctions against Iraq, this being one of the reasons why Russia calls for cancellation of those sanctions. Thus the relations with Baltic states, Islamic states, as well as CIS countries are very important to Lukoil. In comparison with Gazprom, the relationship with the West is less significant, as it does not have projects which depend on Western investments. The Rosneft' and Slavneft' oil-companies have the same orientation.

The regional agenda

The debate on foreign and security policy initiated among members of Moscow's political elite does not worry the Russian provinces very much. Regional leaders hardly ever comment on the subject, as they are concerned with resolving more tangible problems: how to get money from the federal budget to pay wages to their electorates, how to establish viable trade relations with foreign firms, how to stop the growth of criminality, and so forth.

The issue of foreign and security policy ranks only as the eighth priority for the Russian regional elites. Of much greater concern are the following issues:

- Growth of prices
- The collapse of the economy
- Increasing unemployment
- Anarchy in central power institutions
- Escalation of a civil war
- Militarization of society and involvement in military conflict
- Disintegration of Russia⁵

The negative image of the West doesn't play an important role in policy-making or in mass values in Russian regions. The issue of NATO enlargement, so intensively discussed by the political and intellectual elites as well as in mass media in Moscow, hardly provokes any reaction in the provinces.

At the same time, regional leaders and entrepreneurs become actors in the process of decision making in the above-mentioned field by formulating economic and political interests. On one hand, they would like to be

⁵ Composed on VtsIOM-data, Moscow, 1996-1997

more independent from the central power and to create their own political and ideological centers. On the other hand, they begin to carry out the concept of regionalism, based on the principle of subsidiarity well known in many European countries. Growing regionalization leads to specific types of political and geopolitical behavior. In different regions, new geopolitical orientations are established. The Far East of Russia and Primorye lean to China, Japan, and Southern Korea; Tuva and Buryatia are oriented towards Moldova and China; Karelia is attracted by Scandinavia.

Often, regional leaders combine pragmatic goals with ambitious declarations such as advantages in developing direct and close economic relations with foreign companies. Regions exporting power resources and raw materials seek to become economically self-sufficient. The social and cultural gap between regions more flexible to Western-type modernization, such as Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, and traditional agrarian regions is becoming more and more evident.

At present, there seem to be at least five groups of Russian regions with sufficiently expressed political interests. The first group includes regions with developed export-oriented extraction industries. These include the Republics of Komi, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Yakutiya, and Tyumen', Sakhalinskaya Oblast' and Magadanskaya Oblast', as well as Khabarovskiy Kray. The presence of mineral resources, budget independence, active foreign trade contacts, and other factors influence the choice of the development model. Doing well, thanks to their exports, these regions are interested in economic liberalization, preserving the international prestige of Russia, and friendly relations with potential partners. Local elites would prefer to develop foreign trade activities on an independent basis without state control.

As previously described, oil and gas regions have great influence. Their leaders already have sufficiently wide powers and are in charge of financial resources, going into regional budgets and non-budget funds. Their foreign policy orientations are determined mostly by the interests of oil and gas monopolists.

The second group consists of Russia's trade-industrial regions, *i.e.* the giant cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, some seaside territories with big ports such as Kaliningrad, the Murmanskaya Oblast', Kamchatskaya Oblast' and Arkhangelskaya Oblast', or Primorskiy Kray. Considering their influence on the process of formulating Russian foreign policy, they contribute to defending and advocating the interests of national capital and contribute to diversification of foreign policy orientations.

The third group is composed by industrially developed regions, such as the Republic of Udmurtiya, the Oblasti Sverdlovskaya, Nizhniy-Novgorodskaya, Samarskaya, Permskaya, Chelyabinskaya, Novosibirskaya, Tuskaya, and Tomskaya, as well as Krasnodarskiy Kray. In its economic structure, the military-industrial complex predominates. Regions of this group are experiencing a serious crisis, but they have different visions of how to solve it. Some of them, such as Sverdlovskaya Oblast', call for modernization with an active role of the state. In other regions, such as Nizhniy-Novgorodskaya Oblast', local authorities have worked out their own model, relying on market instruments. In the first case, regional leaders are against foreign instruments, application of liberal models, and Russia's participation in international economic and political institutions. The second case yields opposite preferences: those regions not only call for cooperation

but Russian integration within some Western institutions in order to attract foreign investment.

The fourth group is formed by agrarian and agro-industrial regions, for example the Central Chernozem economic region, Krasnodarskiy Kray, or Stavropolskiy Kray. These regions exist almost totally from their own resources. In the foreign policy dimension, their positions are rather weak; they are oriented toward development of their own markets. That is why regional leaders defend interests of Russian producers and favor limitation of imports. Self-sufficiency determines their strategic interests; they are drawn towards self-isolation and administrative methods of management. As a result, in the process of formulating foreign policy orientations of Russia, they consistently defend a so-called "Russian way" and reject participation in international institutions.

The fifth group consists of so-called depressed regions, *i.e.* the republics of the Northern Caucasus as well as the Republics of Altay, Buryatiya, Tuva, and Kalmykiya. In spite of similar economic indexes, the regional elites elaborate and formulate their strategy in a different way. Some are attracted by liberal models of development, but this is a rather specific form of liberalism based on the absence of any strategy whatsoever. Others defend »Soviet type" models of strict state regulation. As to their foreign policy predilections, republics of the Northern Caucasus are usually oriented towards the Islamic world.

Attempts by regional leaders to influence the process of formulating foreign policy, just as any regional lobbying, are carried out in the corridors of legislative power. The interests of the oil and gas regions are defended in the most consistent way. This is realized through the process of legislative

initiatives as well as with the help of individual deputies, parties, and committees of the State Duma. Through the Council of Federation, regional leaders can block any decision of the State Duma threatening their interests.

The Kosovo crisis

How Russian political elites reacted on the developments in the Balkans and how these reactions do influence Russian perceptions of future European security system?

Since the beginning of Kosovo crisis, Russia pretended to distance from the West instead of creating real partnership. Russian political and military circles tried to counterbalance NATO in the Balkans.

When the Kosovo crisis entered its critical phase (ethnic cleansing in Kosovo resulted in bombings in Yugoslavia), Russia's reaction was extremely emotional and expressed in "assymetric" demonstrators' behavior in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. But what has uncompromising support of Milosevic lead to? What is the outcome (final results) of the initiatives of the Russian Duma and of the trips to Belgrade of political leaders belonging to different political parties and movements? What has Russia really acquired in an attempt to strengthen its influence on the world arena and to protect its interests in the Balkans? What are the results of such foreign political stance in the country? All these questions demand answers to them.

As to Russia's world influence and relations with the West, which this influence to a great extent depends on (such is the history of the second half of the 20th century), these relations have been thrown 15-20 years back: the freezing winds of the Cold War start blowing again. The partnership, which

was built with such difficulty after NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed in May 1997, will probably have to be forgotten at least for the near future.

But probably Russia has considerable success in the East or in the South, having opposed the West? Either not. The stance of China, whose representative together with the Russia's voted in the UN Security Council for the resolution condemning bombing of Yugoslavia, as well as the Chinese leaders' reaction on the tragic mistake connected with the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, should not give an illusion of the possibility to form some strategic triangle in future: it is known that China and India in the Eastern manner delicately, but firmly evade building such strategic schemes together with Russia.

Countries of the Eastern Europe, which have not entered NATO yet, will be more persistent knocking on the door of this Western Alliance. And the so called second wave of enlargement, which has been discussed with great nervousness in Russian political and military establishment for the last 2-3- years, is becoming real as never before, because the East European countries have arguments that confirm their haste persistence: the raise of nationalism with an anti-Western face in Russia itself and the strife of the East European Countries to keep distance and to protect themselves from unpredictable development of events in our country, its unwillingness to consider proofs of criminal actions of a number of anti-democratic regimes and, despite anything, to ender them political assistance; destabilization in the South-Eastern region of Europe, demanding guarantees of their security.

Has Russia strengthen its positions in CIS? In Washington summit, devoted the NATO's 50th anniversary and attended by the leaders of CIS

countries (except Russia) demonstrated something that has not become clear to everybody after the Moscow summit. In Washington it was practically stated: perhaps, "the patient will live" but, obviously, not long. CIS countries do not evidently want to create a united front for protecting Milosevic's interests, they are clearly drawn towards the West, by and large, they are afraid of neo-imperial accents in Russia's policy, they see their future not in confrontation with NATO, but in partnership with the North Atlantic Alliance.

And what about our interests in the Balkans? Economization of the Russian foreign policy are clearly seen in the last years. It is to a greater extent stipulated by the interests of the Russian monopolies. It is known that fuel and energy complex of the Balkans is closely connected with Russia. It can be presumed that plans of the Russian oil monopolies are linked with the fact that Milosevic's regime can protect their interests in Yugoslavia. Is this true? Is there any guarantee, that after bombings stop and a peaceful solution to the Kosovo problem is achieved, Milosevic would not turn his back to Russia, as it happened before, and would not start negotiations, for instance, with French oil companies? Not without reason did France time and again expressed own attitude during negotiations.

Someone may object and ask- what about geopolitics and Slavonic brotherhood? These are notions of the past. Russia should adhere to its national State interests from the point of view of socio-economic, and not geopolitical, categories. In others words, it is high time for us to understand that we can make our own home attractive for our neighbours and those who live far away from Russia - only after we manage to put everything in good order in our house and make it safe and comfortable for our own Russian citizens.

And that is the only way to defend Russian so called "geopolitical interests" because only after that Russia can enhance its influence in the contemporary world where the might of a power doesn't depend on a number of missiles, tanks and air-crafts, but is determined by rates of economic growth, educational level of the population, living standard, and cultural influence, i.e. by qualitative, and not quantitative parameters. as far as the "Slavonic brotherhood" is concerned, why didn't remember about it during the time of Tito or in 1968 when Soviet tanks invaded Prague? And why don't Russians remember about thousands of Slavs suffering from repressions under the present-day Yugoslav regime?

The whole point is that it isn't the Slavonic brotherhood, but defending the "great power" interests interpreted in terms of geopolitical categories of "spheres of influence" that matter.

But can Russia let Milosevic trample its interests of a great power especially taking into consideration that he is playing them as a card in his political game using controversies between Russia and the West for his own benefit and will quickly forget about them at the first gleam of political settlement (as it has already happened time and again). And it is only natural that some Yugoslavian politicians are already saying that the key to the settlement is in Washington, not in Moscow.

And what is the situation inside Russia? Has the definitely pro-Serbian position led to the national consensus? The answer is negative. Yes, the majority of the Russians are against the bombing. But this is a natural attitude of normal people to the war in general, especially taking into account that the Russian mass media practically didn't give any information about those Belgrade's actions in Kosovo that had preceded the beginning

of bombing. At the same time, the most part of the Russian people during various public-opinion polls declared against involving Russia in the war on the side of Yugoslavia. And the leaders of the Moslem republics belonging to Russia have made it quite clear that they won't allow to send any volunteers to Yugoslavia because it would mean the beginning of a civil war in Russia itself since almost 50 million Moslems live here and their sympathies are obviously with the Kosovo Albanians.

Instead of the all-Russian consensus, we are facing the aggravation of the domestic political situation and hear calls of the radical left-wing forces for an immediate dismissal of the president who refused to render prompt military and technical assistance to the Milosevic's regime.

It is quite clear that such a sharp anti-West reaction of a considerable part of the Russian political establishment and finding of a common enemy in NATO is a hypercompensation for the failure in the reforming of the country and downfalls in its economics. In the context of the approaching elections, the anti-West rhetoric will evidently enhance since it is the only trump for various political forces and their leaders.

Thus, the results of pro-Serbian position of Russia are doubtful, if not absolutely contrary to the desirable from the point of view of Russia's real interests in the world and Europe, in the Balkans and CIS, and at home.

What is the way out of the situation? It seems necessary to return to the wide-range dialogue with the West, including NATO. At the time of crisis, all sides especially those which are not in confrontation, should maintain a dialogue , instead of avoiding contacts. It is necessary to use the existing mechanisms within the framework of UNO, OSCE and NATO, if Russia is willing to cooperate with, and not to confront the West. What is more, the

Russia's peace initiatives could have been much more effective if from the very beginning our country had acted in concert with the West, and hadn't opposed it (we may even suppose that in that case it would not have come to bombing). The confrontation with the West contradicts Russian interests since they involve a modernization of the country (which is impossible without the West's financial and technical aid), democratization of political institutions, formation of civil society, Russia's participation in the European integration process, and its integration into the world economy.

The calls to suspend the military and technical cooperation with the NATO countries, to leave the CFE Treaty are counterproductive in regard to Russia's own interests since Russia more than other countries needs a continuation of the cooperation and working out of new agreements within the framework of arms limitation.

Viktor Chernomyrdin, the special representative of the Russian President, is one of a few Russian politicians who is defending all the victims of the Balkan crisis, including the Kosovo Albanians, and has never permitted himself any ultra-nationalistic statements (remarks). His well-balanced position has clearly demonstrated the necessity to adhere to sober foreign policy with due regard to the current international developments instead of conducting a policy based on the myths and stereotypes of the period of bipolar confrontation.

Russian perceptions of the developments in the Balkans connected with Kosovo crisis, a negative reaction of Russian political and military "elites" on the results of the mission of V.Chernomyrdin, the fact that Russian society as a whole was not prepared to analyze the reasons and consequences of the conflict adequately - all these prove that we can't speak

about real democratic progress in Russia. The philosophy of human and minority rights is not yet integrated in mass consciousness.

What should be done? The main question in Russian history. The answer is to change old stereotypes of the Cold war period, to help young generations to perceive the multicoloured world not through the prism of confrontation with the West, but with the desire to cooperate and to solve different problems of the real and eventual cooperation. How to realize this extremely complicated goal? Through the channels of information and education. Only adequate information can help Russian people to see the world in its diversity, to understand the real, not virtual, European processes and to come to the conclusion that without close partnership with the West Russia will transform in marginal country.

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