

## THE ADEQUACY OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IDEAS AND INSTRUMENTS IN EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM

*This article deals with the critical assessment of Russian foreign policy ideas and instruments regarding the transformation of European security system. The author examines the context of political dialog between Russia and European partners and outlines main shortcomings preventing productive cooperation. In this light the feasibility of proposal of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev concerning Pan-European security architecture was assessed. Finally, the author examines the adequacy of Russian foreign policy instruments as well as their employment pertaining the European security.*

**Key words:** European Security, EU, NATO, Russia, foreign policy, ideas, instruments.

*Стаття присвячена критичній оцінці ідей Російської зовнішньої політики по відношенню до трансформаційних процесів в Європейській системі безпеки. Автор вивчає контекст політичного діалогу між Росією та європейськими партнерами та визначає проблеми, що стоять перешкодою для продуктивної співпраці. У цьому контексті оцінюється реалістичність пропозиції Російського президента Дмитра Медведєва щодо розбудови Пан-Європейської архітектури безпеки. Зокрема, автор досліджує адекватність самих інструментів зовнішньої політики Росії щодо Європейської безпеки, а також їх використання.*

**Ключові слова:** Європейська безпека, ЄС, НАТО, Росія, зовнішня політика, ідеї, інструменти.

*Статья посвящена критической оценке идей Российской внешней политики в отношении к трансформационным процессам в Европейской системе безопасности. Автор изучает контекст политического диалога между Россией и Европейскими партнерами и определяет проблемы которые препятствуют продуктивному сотрудничеству. В таком контексте оценивается реалистичность предложения Президента России Дмитрия Медведева в отношении формирования Пан-Европейской системы безопасности. Также, автор изучает адекватность инструментов внешней политики России относительно европейской безопасности, а также их использование.*

**Ключевые слова:** Европейская безопасность, ЕС, НАТО, Россия, внешняя политика, идеи, инструменты.

Russian Federation and European continent share a number of common interests that implicate a great potential for mutually-beneficial cooperation. In view of the fact that security of a state is a paramount priority for its existence the author decided to focus this research on adequacy of Russian foreign policy ideas, institutions and instruments in field of security in relation with countries of European region. The actuality of this research is stipulated by the fact that Ukraine as part of European security space has to align its security development policies in line with regional developments. In this regard Russia is an important factor that has to be considered and assessed. The topics of Russian foreign policy as well as European security has attracted interests of a number of Ukrainian and foreign scholars; however, the actuality of the issue and its' continues development demand further research and analysis.

The objective of this paper is to assess critically the adequacy of Russian foreign policy ideas and instruments

regarding European Security System. Given the specificities, complexities and global character of Russian foreign policy the author deems necessary to cover wide range of issues that have influence on its formation toward European counterparts. It is expected that Russian foreign policy ideas in regard of European Security System are rather ambitions than constructive at current phase of relations between Russia and European actors, thus they are reflected on Russian Foreign Policy instruments resulting in their partial insufficiency.

In order to establish validity of this research the author divided it into two main parts. First, and foremost the author will examine Russian foreign policy ideas in regard of European Security System development. The evolution of relations among parties concerned will be reflected as well as key complications that impede their development. Second, the instruments of Russian foreign policy for approaching and development of European security will be addressed.

Foreign Policy course of independent Russia cannot be characterized as consistent and stable due to its considerable changes. After the Soviet Union perished to exist Russia entered the complex process of self-identification [1, 50]. Different interests of its political elite that contributed to the absence of consensus on foreign policy objectives stipulated their formation in rather broad meaning [11, 197]. Key objectives that define current Russian foreign policy are provision of effective national security guaranteed by military might, promotion of its further economic development, as well as aspiration to restore its prestige and authority of Great Power [21]. In European region Moscow seeks to make full use of its potential to advance its standing in all these objectives.

Russia is partly a European state, therefore it is de facto bound to cooperate and shape European security system that should accommodate interests of key parties concerned. Russian Foreign Policy Concept of 2000 outlined that «[r]elations with European states is Russia's traditional foreign policy priority. The main aim of Russian foreign policy in Europe is the creation of a stable and democratic system of European security and cooperation» [20]. In its next Foreign Policy Concept of 2008 Moscow further celled upon its partners «for building a truly unified Europe without divisive lines through equal interaction between Russia, the European Union and the United States» [21].

Practical implementation of these objectives proves to be at times contradictory and challenging for both partners. Tensions between Russia and EU are caused by the differences in political cultures, where European post-modernist normative «soft power» versus Russian realpolitik with its traditional understanding of force based on economic and military-political levers [17, 84]. While EU is guided by its interests, it is also consolidated around its liberal democratic values that are cornerstone for its community. EU's critique of Russian domestic politics concerning weak rule of law, violation of human rights, dilatory modernization, corruption and democratic rollback sufficiently damaged Russian image and caused significant backlash from Moscow. «Soft power» of EU highlighted its advantages and at the same time revealed weakness of Russia. In contrast, EU appeared to be much more attractive, especially for former Soviet republics that aspired to develop their own identities and consequently foreign policy course. Successful integration of some former Soviet Republics was interpreted by Russian elite as hostile agenda aimed to humiliate it.

Eventually, cooperation between EU and Russia impeded due to their competition for political influence in so-called «shared neighborhoods» which eventually lead to political instability, missed economic opportunities, mistrust, challenges in cultural perceptions and culminates in overall damage to regional stability and security as it was exemplified in case of Georgia [16, 183]. EU-Russia relations entered a deadlock situation, since Moscow's demand to be recognized as a Great Power and equal partner cannot be satisfied by Brussels given that this move would conflict with its fundamental values and core identity principles.

Russia is particularly and reasonably sensitive when it comes to its near abroad countries due to its security

concerns, especially with immediate neighbors. Every Great power strives to form the secure buffer zone around itself and simply needs its own sphere of influence and markets. Georgian war of 2008 was a clear and explicit statement that Kremlin doesn't want to see NATO on its borders, keeping the Baltic States as an exception, and Moscow is willing to defend this interest with its military [9, 3]. Nearly a month before the war Russia has stated in its Foreign Policy Concept that it «maintains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO, notably to the plans of admitting Ukraine and Georgia to the membership in the alliance, as well as to bringing the NATO military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders on the whole» [21]. Such Kremlin's concern is reasonable due to the fact that NATO presence could diminish Russian regional military power singularity and consequently, its political influence. In addition, it is important to signal to international community that Russia will stand for its surrounding territories at any cost in light of rising discussion regarding exploration of Arctic resources, which are vigorous for Russian strategic and economic interests [14, 556].

Inability of EU and Russia to develop constructive political dialog prevent them from deeper cooperation. The relations between these partners up to today based on the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation that was signed back in 1994 and was automatically extended in 2007. Replacement of this agreement has been under negotiations since 2008 until nowadays. Russian Foreign Policy Concept back in 2000 mentioned the key obstacle towards achieving full effectiveness of Agreement «primarily [due to] the problem of an adequate respect for the interests of the Russian side in the process of the EU expansion and reform» [20]. Back in 2003 Moscow was offended by EU initiative to engage in the framework «Wider Europe - Neighborhood» where it was regarded as «neighbor», but not «partner» and was addressed in line with other former Soviet republics. Therefore, Concept of Four Spaces was designed to establish framework for cooperation. A few other legal frameworks were adopted to formalize and establish cooperation framework, however it did not prevent the crisis of systematic character from gaining the upper hand in EU-Russian relations and locking relations in zero-sum framework. In the long run Russia gave preference to bilateral relations with key European partners avoiding cumbersome structures of the EU [17, 85].

Russia has to certain extent reasonably criticized European security system for its failure to fulfill the goal outlined by Paris Charter that is creating Europe that is united, free and secure. President D. Medvedev in June 2008 brought forward Russia's Helsinki-2 proposal called to develop new security architecture of Europe. This idea envisaged the design of conceptual framework similar to Helsinki Final Act of 1975 that would comprise a different «baskets». The areas for cooperation were supposed to be military guarantees, borders, economy, energy, humanitarian guidelines and the question of democracy [9, 3]. President Medvedev elaborated his proposal further on World Policy Conference in October 2008. He offered to hold summit meeting that would bring together all countries on the space from Vancouver to Vladivostok in order to elaborate the idea of pan-

European security architecture that was supposed to be shaped in legally-binding treaty under international law. President Medvedev defined five key principles that would determine the treaty that would do away with Cold War legacy [19]: 1. necessity to affirm basic principles of security and cooperation in Euro-Atlantic space; 2. states should pledge not to resort to violence against each other, nor to resort to threat of it; 3. the treaty should establish «equal security» for all signatories; 4. not one state, nor international organization should enjoy «exclusive rights» to protect peace and stability in Europe; 5. the treaty should stipulate «basic parameters for arms control» and establish framework mechanism for combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism, and drug trafficking.

This proposal is reflected in key principles and standards that would accommodate interests and ideas of Russian foreign policy in European Security System. Russia posed itself along with the US and EU as three pillars of European civilization, and it envisaged that they should form the stronghold of European Security Architecture on equal terms. Proposed «principle of equal security» according to Margarete Klein builds upon three «No's», particularly, nobody should guarantee its own security at the expense of others; military entities should refrain from operations that undermine common security; and finally military alliances should avoid its development in a way that may threaten security of other signatory states [6, 8]. Eventually these principles culminate in Russian ban on most operations of North-Atlantic Alliance, balance the presence of the USA in Europe and considerably reduce the weight of European states in security system.

Ambitious proposal by Russia didn't find support among its transatlantic partners due to fundamental changes that it envisaged. Politically these ideas serve mainly the interests of Russian Federation, owing to the fact that it diminished American presence, as well as European capacity to manage security dialog due to its underdeveloped Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Security and Defense Policy and failed to accommodate interests of countries that are members of NATO but not EU, and vice versa [6, 8].

Russian foreign policy instruments in regard of European Security System are mainly reflecting its comparative advantages towards European countries. In addition, these instruments reflect Russian realpolitik approach that at times implies elements of pressure and power.

Russia is one of the largest exporters of energy resources and this comparative advantage is a driving force of its latest economic development. This advantage gives Moscow economic, political and security leverage in current international relations. Domination in energy producing and transporting industries by state-owned enterprises and further monopoly on energy markets is a tool of power that Russia successfully exploits in its foreign policy [13, 77].

In 2009 during the energy crisis between Ukraine and Russia, the latter effectively demonstrated its might of influence and pressure. In addition, it was an opportunity to pursue three goals: achieve better economic profits by increasing the price for gas, demonstrate to European

consumers their dependence on Kremlin's will, as well as influence political and economic development of its vital near abroad neighbor, that was aspired to pursue its Euro-Atlantic integration. However, the limit of such leverage over European countries is stipulated by heavy dependence of Russian energy-based economy on European demand of its supply. At the moment Russia has no alternatives for its energy demand in volumes that EU consumes [13, 70].

Military might presents another important instrument in Russian foreign policy, as it has vast defense capabilities on European continent. This is another comparative advantage that Russia holds upon in its aspirations for Great Power status. Moscow demonstrated its determination to use military in pursuit of its vital interests as it did in Georgia in 2008. While it remains open to the discussion what were the reasons or intentions in such a highly controversial act, it is important to mention that it had its political component due to the political recognition of new republics and their consequent defense guarantees [14, 558]. Russian withdrawal from Treaty on Conventional Arms Forces in Europe reflected «dissatisfaction not only with the order developed during the 1990s, but also postmodern tenets of openness and transparency» [11, 196].

Development of Strategic Antimissile Defense System in Europe by the USA recalled in Russian political and academic establishment a significant backlash attributable to the fact that it would limit Russian deterrent capabilities and significantly undermines Moscow's security and political stance. However, this problem appears much less dramatic if we address technical side of the issue. According to envisaged plan Antibalistic missile defense system is supposed to have ten interceptors in Poland, which is in no way would pose significant threat to Russian deterrent with its hundreds of rockets [18, 20]. The Radar planned to be installed in Czech Republic was intentionally designed to be placed in this country due to consideration of Russian interests [ram camo]. The question that Kremlin doesn't trust Washington to stick to developed plan is one thing, but it is different thing when such a system posed to be as a threat, while it cannot be such due to its technical limitations.

Political dimension of Antimissile Defense System is definitely much more significant than practical. It undermines Russian domination in its exclusive domination of defense might in Europe and humiliate its Great Power sentiments. Further, this project deals with European Security System, however, Moscow was invited neither to its design, nor to participation in it. Moscow simply was put in position to face the fact, while it desperately seeks an equal seat in this dialog. Refusal from such project would state that Russia has capability to moderate the presence of the USA in European Security System and substantially influence its developments. Demand from the USA of legally binding guarantees might be caused by Kremlin's desire to be recognized *de jure* as a key player in European Security System. Kremlin has offered its participation in the project and went even further offering its radar sight in Azerbaijan, but Washington didn't support it [18, 22].

Objections to the Antimissile Defense System also serve Russian interests in its special position in its relations with Iran. It is reasonable that Russia is not interested in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to Teheran, as it would decrease its own value of belonging to exclusive club of nuclear powers; however, Iran is an entry point for Russian foreign policy in the Middle East affairs [15, 99].

Abovementioned instruments of Russian foreign policy adequately represent its comparative advantages in the European region and assets in its foreign policy; however, their value decreases due to the methods in which they were employed. Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute that resulted in cut off supplies to Europe damaged Moscow's reputation as reliable and responsible supplier. In developed world «reliability of supply [is more important], rather than oil prices per se...[since] global economy is now much more adaptive to price hikes than 30 years ago» [10, 1108]. Georgian war in 2008 damaged Russian credibility even further, developing the trust gap between Moscow and the West. Such state of affairs indicates that «soft-power» instrument in Russian foreign policy is rather weak.

The fact that some former Soviet republics seek for cooperation and development on the principles and values of West definitely frustrates Russian political elite and is perceived by elites as attack of western conspiracy aimed to weaken and humiliate Moscow. Kremlin responded to such aspirations of its near abroad with pressure, traditional for its political culture, whether it is use of economic or military instruments, which eventually reinforced public aspirations for western integration and alienated Russia. At the same time Russia fails to offer integration framework based on principles of equality, as it always reserves the dominating and leading role for

itself. It is difficult for Russian elite to be on equal terms with other former Soviet republics and align itself with them without reserved superior role. The paradox of such state of affairs is that while Kremlin equipped with its Great Power mentality does not recognize former Soviet republics as full-fledged states, and treats them accordingly, it echoes back to Russia in a way that West doesn't recognize it to be a full-fledged Great Power due its conduct.

Framework of EU, lucrative for the former Soviet republics, offers equality and requires democratic governance, adherence to rule of law and respect for human right, gains ever greater public support. In this regard, Russian foreign policy is missing the concept of attractiveness that would be an asset for its foreign policy. Russia has indisputable advantages and sympathy among those societies in terms of common language, religion, historical legacy, family ties, common cultural space and values. Russian foreign policy elite may find useful to acknowledge that in current media saturated world public opinion has a greater influence and meaning than ever before.

Frictions between Russia and European states in political discourse resulted in divergence of their visions and eventually locked political dialog in zero sum formats. Russia proved to be adamant in its aspirations for Great Power status and identity, while EU proved to be relentless in its denial to recognize Russia as such due to conflict with its core values and identity. Moscow's claim for equal partnership with Western powers without fulfillment of fundamental criteria of western world is inadequate. Europe is centered on its liberal democratic values, and in this discourse Russia has a limited opportunity to participate. Nevertheless, the matter of fact is that without full and genuine participation of Russian Federation European Security System will remain incomplete.

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