CHAPTER - 5

CONCEPT OF RUSSIAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that despite over a decade of existence under a new dispensation. Russia faces several challenges, both foreign and domestic. Although President Putin's background and many of his actions reveal Russia's traditional disposition towards a "strong hand" in governance, is evident, the future course of action is uncertain. In foreign affairs, it must decide its priority whether it will turn to the East and forge a closer security relationship with the People's Republic of China and other major Asian powers or seek closer ties with the European Union and North America. As regards United States –its relations with it are still uncertain to an extent. The choices Russia makes will largely determine the future opportunities and risks in the relationship.¹

At the domestic level the war in Chechnya and the economic transformation, military reforms are some of the difficult problems faced by them. Additionally, foreign military sales, which Russia sees not only as a significant source of hard currency, are seen as the possible savior of Russia's military-industrial base. At the strategic level, the Russians see the U.S. drive towards a National Missile Defense (NMD) as a destabilizing factor in the strategic balance.

At the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Prague Summit in 2002 it was declared to envisage more far reaching and profound transformation of NATO than the one carried out during the 1990s. The issue at hand was adapting the alliance to the new threats to international security and augmenting its role in counteracting religious extremism and international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of

¹ Online at http://www.army.mil/usacsl/publications.htm
mass destruction. On the U.S.'s initiative, a plan to form the NATO Response Force (NRF) was approved and ways to enhance the alliance's military capabilities and to streamline its command structures were outlined. The NRF must be established within two years. It should be completely operational by October 2006. Its 21,000 strong expeditionary corps, consisting primarily of the national armed forces contingents of NATO's European countries, shall be quickly deployable upon the decision of the NATO Council to any trouble spot throughout the world. It should be capable of independently performing the set tasks, including in an environment where it might be faced with nuclear, biological, chemical, or radiological threats. The first step towards forming the new multinational NATO force is the drawing up of the conception for its use, as well as the Programme of specialized joint training necessary for ensuring the interoperability of the national contingents comprising the Response Force.

In order to develop NATO's military capabilities for fighting new sources of tensions and threats, the alliance members approved at the Prague Summit 2002, a specific "Prague Capabilities Commitment" (PCC) in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defence; intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses; strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refueling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units. The immense capabilities gap between the U.S. and most NATO countries in these areas prevented the latter from making a more significant contribution to the NATO operation in Kosovo in 1999 and to the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan in 2001-2002. For example, all of 1,400 U.S. ground
support fighter planes are equipped with precision-guided munitions, while only a few of the 2,900 fighter planes of its European allies have such munitions, whereas their laser guidance equipment is considered obsolete. The U.S. has 250 strategic transport aircraft, while NATO's European countries have only eleven. The American armed forces have 550 air-to-air refueling aircraft, whereas the European forces have only 70.2

In September 2002, Russia hosted a joint civil emergency exercise in cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies, and the Elimination of Natural Disasters to respond to a mock terrorist act at a chemical enterprise. A framework agreement has been put together on cooperation in search-and-rescue at sea. NATO and Russia are also working on the joint assessment of international terrorist threats to security in the Euro-Atlantic region, on questions relating to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and on the compatibility of Russia's and NATO's missile defence systems. A dialogue has begun on military reform. The Russia-NATO Council (RNC) participants highly evaluate the Council's activity. "Six months have not passed since the Russian and NATO heads of state and government met in Rome", (in May 2002, when the RNC was founded. – Author.), notes Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, "but already we can say with full confidence that the 'twenty' is becoming an efficient instrument of cooperation and joint activity. A comprehensive programme has been launched by means of our joint efforts, which

promises practical results in the very near future." According to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, participants in the Prague meeting of the RNC "expressed deep satisfaction at the substantial progress that has been made in implementing the Rome Declaration in all of the areas of cooperation contained therein".

The challenge in the post-Prague period is to incorporate Russia into a broader European and Euro-Atlantic security framework. An attempt was made to do this in the mid-1990s, but that effort was hindered by a number of factors, particularly differences over NATO’s air campaign against Serbia. However, President Putin’s decision to openly support the United States in the war on terrorism opens up new prospects for developing a more cooperative partnership between Russia and NATO.

A lot depends on how well the newly established NATO-Russia Council (NRC)—which supersedes the old Permanent Joint Council (PJC)—will function. The success of the new council will depend to a large extent on its ability to promote practical cooperation in areas of common interest. Rather than getting hung up on procedural issues, NATO and Russia need to identify a few specific areas of cooperation where they can show concrete, tangible results quickly. This will demonstrate to skeptical publics, Russian and Western alike, that cooperation is feasible and gives momentum to further collaboration. NATO also needs to begin to think about its longer-term goals vis-à-vis Russia. Defining the endgame at this point, however, may be premature. Russia has not expressed an interest in membership.

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3 Verbatim report of the speech by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at a press conference on the results of the Russia-NATO Council Meeting (Prague, November 22, 2002), http://www.In.mid.ru/brp4.nsf/2fee282eb6df40e643256999005e6e88c?7a203c3ef5f

4 Statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, in his capacity as Chairman of the NATO-Russia Council at the NATO-Russia Council Meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers // NATO Press Release, 2002, 22 November, p. 1.
Moreover, its transition is far from complete—and may not be for quite a while. Thus, it may be better to leave aside the issue of the end game for the moment and let interests develop organically. If collaboration gradually deepens and expands, it could lay the groundwork for a different type of relationship over time.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to study the Russian conception of strategic Partnership. This will be followed by Russia's policy towards NATO, the European Union and the United States, whose role in Europe is vital. A brief account of Russia's multi-lateralism is examined in the end.

**CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

Russian foreign policy is searching for its own identity in the post-bloc world. The policy is being implemented in an atmosphere of the difficult establishment of Russian statehood and a crisis in the economy. One of the most important tasks in Russian diplomacy is to help ensure a worthy place for Russia among the most developed states in the world.

According to the Russian hard-line approach 'strategic partnership' had been defined in the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation adopted in December 1999: “a decade of inconclusive reform had resulted in inadequate organisation of state power and civil society, socio-political polarisation of Russian society …...the weakening of the system of state regulation and control, an inadequate legal base and the absence of a strong state policy in the social sphere. The main task was the pursuit of economic revival, which would occur by strengthening the state in regulating the economy and society and restoring a powerful regime across the Russian Federation”.

A broader definition of this would include those that do not imply a security guarantee. In today’s parlance, they are often called ‘strategic partnership’ and include the recognition of common security interests as well as provisions for strong military cooperation to various degrees.\(^5\)

Partnership is also defined as partnership in the world politics means above all partnership between European Union, United States and Russia.\(^6\) It can be presumed that such partnership is one basic condition to secure peace and security, globally and in regional conflicts.\(^7\)

Of course, a deeper analysis would require a study of other challenges than only the direct threats to security, above all in the economic and environmental field, for example abject poverty, gross disparities in income, scarcity of resources, man made or natural catastrophes.

One of the more specious arguments, particularly in the West, is that Putin has redirected Russia’s focus away from traditional geo-political emphasis towards a more economically driven set of priorities.\(^8\)

A Revised Version of the Military Doctrine of Russian federation April 22, 2000 was presented to the public on October 2, 2003.\(^9\) The nature of this document explains three issues relevant in the modern context- on worldviews, on national


\(^{7}\) Ibid., p. 163.


\(^{9}\) This document is formally not a doctrine, but as said in the introduction-it is a report setting out the views of the leadership of the Ministry of Defence in an official English translation titled “Russian Armed Forces: Goals and Perspectives”
interest, on threat perceptions. The world, as the Russian doctrine sees it, is dominated by a strengthening of international cooperation, association and integration in a multilateral setting. Besides this, it is dominated by attempts to create a structure of international relations based on the domination of developed western countries led by the United States with its penchant for military solutions, even in violations of fundamental norms of international law.

Russian President Vladimir Putin defined it as “For us, Europe is a major trade and economic partner and our natural, most important partner, including in the political sphere. Russia is not located on the American continent, after all, but in Europe. Russia is interested in developing relations with our partners in the United States and the American continent as a whole and in Asia”.10

The National Security Concept mentions that the national interest of Russia in international sphere is focused on ensuring the sovereignty and reinforcing the position of Russia as a great power and one of the influential centers of the multipolar world, on developing equitable and mutually beneficial relations with all countries and integration associations, above all the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States as well as with Russia’s traditional partners.

Russia aimed at partnership with the Western countries based on a commitment to share democratic values and the need for close cooperation with these countries. The Foreign Policy Concept of 1993 underlines that Russia will pursue a course of partnership and allied relation with the West in order to facilitate Russia’s harmonious incorporation into the international democratic community and world

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economic-ties; and join the system regulating processes of political and economic
development in the world, including questions of global and regional stability and
security. It also ensures political, financial, technical and expert-advice support for the
economic reforms in Russia.\textsuperscript{11}

In 1994, Russia pursued ‘strategic partnership’ principles with the
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Europe, United States, Asia and the
Pacific region, Latin America, Africa, including NATO countries. It was the difficult
transition from proclaimed partnership to real partnership and it is this kind of real
partnership facilitated the accomplishment of the main task of foreign policy- ensuring
favourable conditions for the country’s national interests and internal development.\textsuperscript{12}

In advancing the concept of Europe-wide partnership, Russia called for
intensified interaction and the final overcoming of bloc oriented thinking. In 1995, a
shift in the emphasis from the accelerated expansion of NATO to the development of
partnership with Russia’s active participation. Russia is seeking partnership through a
dialogue on the possible parameters of this cooperation with both the NATO
leadership and with that organization’s member-countries.\textsuperscript{13} It’s partner of the West
but not an integrated member of Western security institution such as NATO.

The conceptions stated desire for “Strategic Partnership” with United States of
America in the Asia-pacific region, which implies “a division of responsibility for
security”, is a direct throwback to global ambitions of the past. How does China view

\textsuperscript{11} Kozyrev Andrei (Minister of Foreign Affairs), “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Proposes and

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 13.

this or Japan, relations with which are rightly good deals of significance?\textsuperscript{14} Therefore, the partnership with the United States and the establishment and maintenance of a mutually acceptable balance of interests with that power are among the chief priorities.\textsuperscript{15} The potential for relations with the East is immeasurably greater. It is important to step up Russian policy and diplomacy in the Asian-Pacific region, especially from the standpoint of ensuring the interests of Russia's economic development.\textsuperscript{16}

The most economically and technologically advanced countries in Europe and Asia that have aligned with the United States in the Cold War continue to bandwagon with United States. Decisions that the next United States Administration takes on key security issues, including nuclear arms reductions, national missile defence (NMD), and NATO expansion, will have considerable influence in shaping the policies of existing and emerging great powers. The system may look overwhelmingly unipolar today, but history suggests that that such moments were ephemeral, and we should expect and prepare for a more complex and perhaps dangerous multiplicity to emerge in the first quarter of the new century. Sino-Russian relations and Eurasian security it can be said that the emergence of some kind of Eurasian, anti-United States security alliance led by Russia and China was unlikely that could only come about as a result of “a series of major foreign and security policy blunders by the United States and its allies.” Reasonable people may disagree about the wisdom of the United States –


\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p. 14.
British bombing of Iraq in December 1998, the expansion of NATO’s membership and mission, and the 1999 Kosovo war, but the net result is further strains in Russia with the West.

In December 1998, then Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov in New Delhi broached the notion of a “strategic triangle” comprising of Russia, China and India, which could serve as a stabilizing force in international security. The proposal was not received with great enthusiasm in either Beijing or New Delhi, and most Western commentators similarly did not take it very seriously due to long-standing and deep-seated differences between India and China. It is well known, for example, that subsequent to the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 the Indian Defence Minister cited China as the most serious threat to India, one that necessitated the development of an Indian strategic deterrent. A triangular strategic alliance may not be imminent, but the coincidence of interest between China, Russia and India has grown in the past.

For Russia, the “strategic partnership” it is developing on a bilateral basis with China and India constitute increasingly important components of its overall foreign policy, which has steadily drifted away from the west during the Yeltsin era. This memo will analyze the dynamics of these relationships in the context of Russia’s overall foreign and security policy, how their trajectories could shape the evolution of international system, and their implications for United States policy.

In the post- 11 September 2001 environment, positive notions of cooperative security and economic partnership have displaced the negative, competitive politics of a Cold War hangover. Such cooperation will not be without its difficulties yet it is
centered in, and derives strength from, an essential unity of perception and purpose among its principal actors.

RUSSIA AND NATO

The NATO-Russia Permanent joint Council met for the first time in July 1997. The record shows, however, that substantial progress was achieved even in this short period. Not only did the PJC establish itself as the venue for NATO-Russia consultations, but a whole network of experts' contacts took place, Working Groups, and ad-hoc meetings developed under its umbrella, addressing the areas of consultation and cooperation foreseen in the Founding Act. Russia started building the NATO-Russia partnership from the bottom up, on the nuts and bolts, such as air space management, disarmament, armaments cooperation, proliferation, civil emergency planning, scientific cooperation and more. For a while, it seemed that this progress was irreversible. Until the Kosovo crisis gave a rude setback. All these promising inroads, broadening trust and confidence and developing habits and patterns of cooperation came to an abrupt halt in March 1999. At this crucial moment, compelled by an unfolding humanitarian tragedy in Kosovo and dead-lock at the UN Security Council, nineteen democratic NATO countries decided to take military action to stop the ethnic killing and cleansing of Milosevic. As a result of NATO's action, Russia walked out of the PJC. Russia-NATO relationship was plunged into its most serious crisis. But as Dostoyevsky said in A Writer's Diary, "the cleverest of all is the man who calls himself a fool at least once a month." So perhaps a few words of collective soul-searching may be in order -- to learn, and to avoid setbacks of the same scale in the future.
The main goal of the Russia-NATO partnership was the establishment of a system of collective security and stability in Europe. Partnership should lead not to a juxtaposition of NATO to other institutions, but, on the contrary, to coordination of their activities in pursuit of their goal. One should mention here the CSCE first of all. It is now OSCE. It has already accumulated considerable potential for maintaining and strengthening peace in Europe. This logic also applies to the NACC. Russia–NATO partnership could contribute to transforming the NACC into an independent body which would be closely linked to the CSCE and which would promote military-political cooperation in the Euro Atlantic area. Generally speaking, the CSCE should aim at coordinating the activities of NATO, the European Union, the council of Europe, the West European Union and the CIS in the sphere of enhancing stability and security, promoting peace-keeping and protecting human and national minority rights. 17

Concrete areas and mechanisms of partnership should be defined on the basis of an agreement reached between Russia and the Alliance “to pursue the broad, enhanced dialogue in cooperation in areas where Russia has unique and important contributions to make, commensurate with its weight and responsibility as a major European, international and nuclear power through sharing of information on issues regarding politico-security related matters having a European dimension, political consultations on issues of common concern and cooperation in a range of security related areas including, as appropriate, in the peace keeping field”. 18

At the same time, on a number of parameters, NATO’s present-day political and military guidelines do not coincide with security interests of the Russian Federation and occasionally directly contradict them. This primarily concerns the provisions of NATO’s new strategic concept, which do not exclude the conduct of use of force operations outside of the zone of applications of the Washington treaty without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council. Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO.19

Substantive and constructive cooperation between Russia and NATO is only possible if it is based on due respect for the interests of the sides and on unconditional fulfillment of mutual obligations assumed.20

In 2000, an increased Russian co-operation with NATO is noticeable. Russia-NATO relations becoming warmer is directly associated with Vladimir Putin’s name. Russia’s willingness to unfreeze relations with NATO began in February with a meeting between Vladimir Putin and NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson. NATO’s interest was/is to exchange information on the major provisions of Russia’s national and military doctrine, and the war in Chechnya. Russia was/is interested to exchange views on the provisions of NATO’s strategic concept and the war in Kosovo. 21

On November 22, 2002, a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council was held in Prague at the level of foreign ministers. The participants of the meeting summed up

20 Ibid.
the results of the first six months of the RNC's activity and worked out plans for the future. The sides ascertained the significant progress achieved in cooperation between Russia and NATO. The organisational stage of forming the Council's structures is completed. Working groups were formed in several areas. A political dialogue is actively developing. A political conception of Russia-NATO joint peacekeeping operations was drawn up, as well as documents for ensuring border security in the Balkans. In September 2002, Russia hosted a joint civil emergency exercise in cooperation with the Elimination of Natural Disasters to respond to a mock terrorist act at a chemical enterprise.

A framework agreement has been put together on cooperation in search and rescue at sea. NATO and Russia are also working on the joint assessment of international terrorist threats to security in the Euro Atlantic region, on questions relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and on the compatibility of Russia's and NATO's missile defence systems. A dialogue has begun on military reform.

The Russia NATO Council (RNC) participants highly evaluate the Council's activity. "Six months have not passed since the Russian and NATO heads of state and government met in Rome (in May 2002, when the RNC was founded. – Author.), notes Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, "but already we can say with full confidence that the 'twenty' is becoming an efficient instrument of cooperation and joint activity. A comprehensive programme has been launched by means of our joint
efforts, which promises practical results in the very near future."22 According to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, participants in the Prague meeting of the RNC "expressed deep satisfaction at the substantial progress that has been made in implementing the Rome Declaration in all of the areas of cooperation contained therein".23

But Russia's practical cooperation with NATO, except for the development of political dialogue, does not affect the main areas of activity of the alliance, which was and still is, as follows from the Prague decisions, a military organisation. Despite the importance of the spheres of cooperation listed above, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is not Russia's main partner either in the dialogue on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or in resolving then on military problems of combating international terrorism. These questions are discussed bilaterally by representatives of the special services, law enforcement agencies and financial departments. It is difficult to classify cooperation in civil emergency exercises, search and rescue at sea, or the retraining of decommissioned officers as key elements in this sphere either. They are all important aspects, but NATO was created and exists for other purposes. Cooperation is essentially not developing in the alliance's main sphere of activity, i.e. the military, including the military aspects of fighting international terrorism. Russia, and primarily the military establishment, is manifesting extreme restraint in this respect. This is explained by the lack of financing and shortage of personnel, or by

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22 Verbatim report of the speech by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at a press conference on the results of the Russia-NATO Council Meeting (Prague, November 22, 2002), http://www.ln.mid.ru/ brp_4.nsf/2fee282eb6d f40e643 25699 900 5e6e88c/7a203c3ef51fb

23 Statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, in his capacity as Chairman of the NATO/Russia Council at the NATO-Russia Council Meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers // NATO Press Release, 2002, 22 November, p. 1.
uncertainties with regard to the military reform under way in the country. In terms of its economic, scientific, technical, and military potential, Russia is defined as a "self sufficient state capable of independently ensuring its own defence".

This claim of Russia to self sufficiency is somewhat unacceptable mainly because of the state of the Russian armed forces and the problem, including economic. Perhaps only Russia's nuclear power can be considered self sufficient, or to be more precise, redundant. But since it has no real conventional deterrence potential, the country's nuclear capabilities in military and political significance. In actual fact, the restraint displayed by the Russian side in developing military cooperation and, in particular, in conducting joint military exercises with NATO is most likely explained by political reasons and its lack of interest in this cooperation. Since there is still some mistrust (frequently mutual), the RNC participants at the current stage have deliberately gone on the route of developing low profile, essentially, symbolic cooperation, without counting on any serious breakthroughs in key areas.24 It turns out that the activity of the RNC is not so much aimed at achieving significant progress, but at preventing breakdowns in cooperation. As a result, the impression is created that Russia is still not sure how it feels about real cooperation with NATO.

For this reason, it is limiting itself to sustaining the political dialogue with Brussels, which helps to lower the level of uncertainty in relations with the West.

However, if Russia is not sure about the expediency of fully implementing the provisions of the Rome Declaration on the new quality of relations with NATO, which presupposes that joint decisions and activities should be undertaken with the alliance,

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the RNC will limit its activity to carrying out joint consultations. As a result, the RNC will not differ much from the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), which existed from 1997 to 2002. Like the PJC, the RNC may fall the victim of another crisis in relations between Russia and the West, as happened with the PJC during the Kosovo crisis in 1999. At best, cooperation with NATO will remain symbolic, and the RNC will not play any serious role in resolving problems of European and international security. If Russia intends to implement the Rome declaration of 2002 or at least does not exclude the possibility of joint operations with NATO to repulse new threats and challenges to internal, the most important thing, that is, on developing full fledged military cooperation with the alliance. Several questions arise with respect to arriving at some decision about further development of cooperation between Russia and NATO. First, why does Russia need to cooperate with NATO at all? Second, what practical results can be expected from this cooperation? And finally in which areas is it expedient to develop military cooperation between Russia and the alliance? In which regions might the need arise for their joint action?

Igor Ivanov talks about Russia's interest in "the Council (Russia-NATO) becoming one of the basic elements in a new system of Euro-Atlantic security in the very near future". Other Russian official representatives are say that "transformation (of NATO. – Author.) should promote the creation of a joint responsibility structure for maintaining peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region". At the same time, Moscow is not rushing to put these intentions into practice, rather it seems to be watching from the sidelines to see what will come out of NATO's transformation.

25 Verbatim report of the speech by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov at a press conference on the results of the Russia-NATO Council Meeting (Prague, 22 November, 2002).
Russian specialists say that NATO, like other international organisations founded during the Cold War, including the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), has been unable to adapt to the new threats to international security. All of these organisations must go through intense transformation and testing to see whether they are able to keep abreast of the changing political situation in Europe and the world. The prospects for further development in cooperation between Russia and NATO will depend on how soon the alliance overcomes the inertia of the Cold War and restructures itself in a way that can repulse new threats and challenges to security. It is characteristic that the decisions adopted at the Prague Summit are usually evaluated in Moscow as insufficient from the viewpoint of transforming NATO. Admittedly, this is mostly in reference to the decision adopted in Prague on further eastward enlargement of the alliance. But while Russia is participating in resolving questions of adapting the UN and the OSCE to the changing international situation, what compels it to distance itself from participating in the transformation of NATO? After all, the creation of the RNC is giving Moscow the opportunity to have an impact on NATO's evolution, by developing not only the political dialogue, but also specific cooperation within the framework of the "twenty". Cooperation between Russia and the U.S. during the antiterrorist campaign after the terrorist acts in the U.S. on September 11, 2001 put Russia's gradual integration into the Euro-Atlantic security system on the agenda for the first time. It is not worthy reminding that at the beginning of the 1990s, this was not a topic of discussion at all. Russia should take advantage of this opportunity unless it wants to find itself on the other side of the barricade alongside those forces trying to disrupt the emerging world
order, or unless it wants to remain one on one with its problems, which are accumulating both optimal ways for Russia to participate in the Euro-Atlantic security system are being sought in many areas. The matter concerns adapting the UN system and its Security Council to the new conditions and Russia's more dynamic integration into the group of eight leading industrial states of the world. Russia's integration will help it to move closer to the U.S. and the European Union, including in the sphere of common foreign policy that is just taking shape, and in the security and defence policy of the EU countries. Founding of the Russia-NATO Council in May 2002 was aimed at resolving this task. In recent months, antiterrorist interaction between Russian and Western special services, law enforcement structures, and financial departments has perceptibly increased.

At the same time, full scale and full fledged cooperation between Russia and NATO is impossible without implementing military cooperation programmes between them, that is, working out and planning the military aspects of joint activity in such areas as intercepting international terrorist activity, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional instability. The decisions adopted at the Prague Summit are directed precisely at transforming NATO's military potential and command structures in this direction.

In turn, the joint planning and conducting of military operations calls for the interoperability of intelligence, communications, command and control, as well as of the deployed units of Russia and the NATO countries. Their compatibility cannot be ensured without conducting joint exercises. In so doing, bilateral cooperation with individual Western states cannot replace cooperation with NATO as an international
structure. This means that Russia and NATO must carry out joint exercises. Russia's and NATO's current assessments of the main threats and challenges to international security coincide. The decisions of the Prague Summit are aimed at enhancing the alliance's military potential in order to resolve non-traditional military tasks of ensuring security. Forming the forces required for this purpose will require time and significant resources. Taking into account the current financial and economic status of NATO's European members, this task is unlikely to be carried out effectively in the set time. But after the Prague Summit it is clear in which direction NATO will develop in the near future.

In this respect, Russia is faced with another question. Until now, the discussion around military cooperation with NATO had been focused on Russia's participation in joint peacekeeping operations. Russia is already participating in two such operations with NATO, namely, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kosovo. But taking into account the change in character and geographic location of NATO's future military activity, it is pertinent to ask whether military cooperation between Russia and NATO should be limited to cooperation in the Balkans and that too within the framework of peacekeeping operations.

Can Russia participate in joint operations with NATO countries beyond Europe? In this case, Russia will need to work on practical questions not only relating to joint peacekeeping operations with NATO, but also to cooperation with the new Response Force. It is also a question that Russian Foreign Policy will have to decide the extent to which it can cooperate with NATO.
Admittedly, today it is difficult to define the geographical region beyond Europe in which the interests and priorities of Russia and the NATO countries could coincide with the possibility of them conducting even a small scale joint military operation against terrorism etc. Russia is not taking direct part either in the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan or in the International Security forces deployed in Kabul under the auspices of the UN. It is hard to imagine Russia participating in operations in Iraq or in any other Near East country. Due to its limited resources Russia is unlikely to participate in any less controversial international operation far beyond its borders, for example, in East Timor. Russia is even curtailing its participation in the peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. But as early as the near future we cannot exclude further destabilisation of the situation in the regions in which Russia has a definite interest – Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Despite the statements on self-sufficiency, Russia has neither the military nor the economic resources to prevent outbreaks of instability in these regions or stop a dangerous escalation in internal conflicts should they become aggravated. It is precisely with respect to these regions that Russia and the West, primarily the NATO and EU countries, should come to an agreement on the mechanisms for joint response to and the settlement of crises, including the possibility of adopting military measures. These measures do not exclude Russia's participation, would be in full conformity with the thesis of joint responsibility put forward by Russian politicians. In so doing, Russia's non-participation in NATO leaves Moscow free to make its final choice whether to respond to the development of the situation in Central Asia and the South Caucasus independently or in cooperation with the countries of the alliance and the EU.
However, implementing programmes of military cooperation with NATO will make it possible to have this choice, whereas Russia's unwillingness to participate in joint operations with the alliance will deprive Moscow of this choice. Moscow's willingness to take joint responsibility is required for Russia's full fledged and, what is more, competent participation in the system of Euro-Atlantic security. Ensuring interoperability with NATO and particularly with the Response Force, the alliance is formed, it will require significant finances. Since they are in short supply, Russia's armed forces are unlikely to be able to carry out this task independently and within a reasonable deadline if they continue to develop passively and if efforts are not made to speed up military reform. Since both the NATO countries and Russia are currently striving to upgrade and adapt their armed forces, taking into account essentially the same non-traditional threats and challenges to security, cooperation with NATO, particularly during formation of the alliance's Response Force, can only have a favourable effect on Russia's armed forces and make it possible to direct their reform along more expedient lines. In so doing, it is well to keep in mind the possibility of specialising Russia's armed forces and military industrial complex in specific areas for up to date military preparedness to respond to the rapidly changing military political situation in unstable regions. This is another argument in favour of military cooperation with NATO.

Each round of NATO expansion brings the potential for further tensions. In this light, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe represents a viable alternative security organisation to some – mostly Europeans and Asians – but not to others. The OSCE is itself a child of the institution –building that emerged from the
soft security approach to European politics. The Russian Federation, as the successor to the Soviet Union, America's erstwhile rival superpower, is also searching for a commensurate role in global politics, albeit currently hindered in this endeavor by a critical shortage of political and economic resources. Security risks that jeopardize the cohesion of the Federation are forcing Moscow to direct its attention not only to Europe, but also to the south (to the Caucasus and the Caspian Region). In Europe, although the European Union (EU) is in the process of becoming a major economic power in the world, this evolution has been accompanied at the same time by a frequently lamented weakness in developing an effective common foreign and security policy.

Hence, there is divergence on the question of relations between Russia and Europe, which has been raised so often in the course of history. While the Federal Republic of Germany wants to use its EU presidency in the first half of 1999 to define a coordinated EU policy on Russia (a "common strategy"), as a consequence of the American and British military action carried out against Iraq in December 1998, Russia is again speaking of proposals for "strategic alliances" with India and China. The severe economic and financial crisis besetting Russia since August 1998 has made Russian policy even more difficult to predict. People studying the question of Russia's role in Europe today will hardly be able to point to clear-cut positions, let alone a "grand design." More likely, analysts will be able to define a number of individual experiences and interests.

The situation is different with regard to the agreement to strengthen the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), referred to in the Founding Act as "the only pan-European security organisation" and attributed "a key role in European peace and stability." The OSCE, in fact, regularly assumes new tasks that range from providing political backup for peace and ceasefire agreements, to organizing and monitoring democratic elections in crisis regions. However, in contrast to what was laid down in the Founding Act, the OSCE is not being given the resources it needs for these difficult and dangerous tasks. The function the OSCE was supposed to assume in the Kosovo crisis can be viewed as a typical example. The OSCE was supposed to send a contingent of 2,000 unarmed monitors to Kosovo to verify compliance with the agreements reached between Richard Holbrooke and Slobodan Miloševic in October 1998, backed up by a NATO Extraction Force stationed in Macedonia. But three months later, the OSCE contingent was still incomplete and unable to work at full strength. There is a discrepancy between the central role the OSCE can and ought to play in Europe with respect to crisis prevention measures, and the provision of political backup for peace processes and its actual capacities. The pledges made in this part of the Founding Act are yet to be fulfilled.

RUSSIA AND EUROPE RELATIONSHIP

Relations with European states have been Russia’s traditional foreign policy priority. The principal aim of Russia’s foreign policy in Europe is the creation of the stable and democratic system of European security and cooperation. Russia is interested in further balanced development of the multi-functional character of the OSCE. Russia
strongly opposes the narrowing of the OSCE functions, in particular the attempts to redirect its activities to the post Soviet space and the Balkans.\textsuperscript{27}

Russia is working towards making the adapted Treaty on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe into an effective means of European security and towards imparting a comprehensive nature to confidence-building measures including in particular, coalition activities and naval activities.\textsuperscript{28}

Proceeding from its own requirements regarding the building of a civic society, Russia intends to continue its participation in the activities of the Council of Europe.\textsuperscript{29} Of key importance are relations with the European Union (EU). The ongoing processes with the EU have had a growing impact on the dynamics of the situation in Europe. These are the EU expansion, transition to a common currency, the international reform, and the emergence of a common foreign policy and a common policy in the area of security, as well as a defence identity. Considering these processes to be an objective component of European development, Russia is seeking due respect for its interests, including in the sphere of bilateral relations with individual EU member countries.\textsuperscript{30}

The character of relations with the EU is determined by the framework of the June 24, 1994 Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation; partnership between the Russian Federation, on the one hand, and the European communities and their member states on the other. Concrete problems, primarily the problem of adequate respect for

\textsuperscript{27} The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, Rossiiskaya Gazeta, January 18, 2000, approved by the Presidential Decree No.1300 of 17 December 1999 (given in the wording of Presidential Decree No. 24 of January 10, 2000.), Documents, Review of International Affairs, August 2000, Vol. LI, No. 1096, p. VI.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. VI.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. VI.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. VI.
the interests of the EU expansion and reform, will be dealt with on the basis of the Strategy for the Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union, approved in 1999. The EU’s emerging military-political dimension should become a matter of special attention.31

Cooperation between Russia and European Union is based on Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PAC), signed in 1997 and in common strategies toward each other. The relations between European Union and Russia are largely economic in nature, the security aspect in cooperation with Russia is also part of the ties being forged. As it is stated in the Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia the main aim of the Union is to support the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in Russia as well as cooperation to strengthen stability in Europe and beyond. The war in Chechnya has diminished the enthusiasm in EU-Russian relations, but there is definitely the potentiality to intensify the cooperation.

Putin has devoted significant time and energy to developing relations with the EU since his appointment as Prime Minister in 1999 and was involved in writing and presenting Russia’s official strategy to the EU, the main lines of Russian policy toward the EU were promulgated in a document entitled “The Medium-Term Strategy for the Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the EU (2000-2010)”, was presented to Brussels in October 1999.32 It conveys Russia’s view of the EU as part of its pursuit of a multipolar world and a pan-European collective security system, reflecting elements of former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov’s earlier vision of pan European security, which sought to offset NATO dominance with

31 Ibid., p. VI.
32 Available at www.eur.ru
an increased role for OSCE. The Medium-Term Strategy declares cooperation between Russia and the EU in European crisis management as seen to “counterbalance, the NATO-centrism in Europe”. Co-operation with the EU on security issues is perceived as more important for its impact on the wider shape of European security than for its intrinsic value.33

It appears from the emerging relationship that Europe and Eurasia will most likely develop around two poles, one formed by the European Union in the western and central parts of the continent, the other consisting of Russia and possibly other countries aligned with Russia. Although Western Europe will become a more cohesive political and economic force, its emergence as a superpower is unlikely. With Russia’s military in drastic decline, the United States and its allies will enjoy decisive technological superiority over potential adversaries in Europe, especially in air power.

U.S. military assets will be needed for conventional deterrence at the margins of NATO, primarily in the unstable gray area between an expanded Western Europe and Russia. As threats from the South emerge, the United States may be called upon by its allies and its own defense requirements to devise effective counter-proliferation capabilities and options. All future operations and planning in Europe will require close cooperation with allies, some of whom may press for enhanced influence in NATO--although their military capabilities will remain modest.

Since 2000, the Russian government has sought to add substance to the strategic partnership that was declared between Moscow and Brussels. Putin’s objectives with the EU are based on his recognition of the needs to foster closer and

33 Ibid.
better ties with an enlarging economic and political union of states on Russia's borders, which takes the lion's share of Russian trade and is emerging as a new security actor across the European continent and in world affairs. The EU has become one of the central planks in Russian foreign policy of international engagement, put in place by Putin following the confusion and isolation of the last years of the Yeltsin era. Although Putin never tires of linking Russian identity, culture, and history to Europe, the stakes are more than psychological—the EU is Russia's most important partner. The strategy reifies Russia's autonomy as a great power, distinct from the European Union: "As a world power situated on two continents, Russia should retain its domestic and foreign policies, its status and advantages of an Euro-Asian state and the largest country of the CIS independence of its activities at international organisations." 

The Russian Federation views the EU as one of its main political and economic partners and is striving to develop with it intensive, stable and long term cooperation devoid of expediency fluctuations. According to President Putin, with EU as its most important partner, accounting for 37 percent of Russia's external trade, Russia also has substantial economic interests in the EU, especially as this share will likely increase to 52 percent after enlargement. Trade in energy resources is vital to both parties—in 1999, 21 percent of the EU's oil came from Russia and 41 percent of the

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36 The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, Op cit.
EU's gas was supplied by Russia. The European market is equally significant for Russia – in 1999, 53 percent of the Russia's oil exports went to the EU and in 2000, 63 percent of Russia's natural gas exports were supplied to European markets. In terms of overall trade, according to EU calculations, member countries accounted for nearly 25 percent of Russia's imports and some 35 percent of Russia's exports. The scale of trade imparts strategic importance to the EU as a key economic interlocutor, but the relationship is unbalanced. Russia's share of EU external trade in 2000 consisted of 4.4 percent of imports and a mere 2.1 percent of exports. The EU officials are never tired of predicting that the EU enlargement will benefit Russia. In the words of EU Commissioner Gunter Verheugen, "we are firmly committed not to allow new dividing lines to be drawn in Europe." The reality that Moscow recognises – is those enlargements will create insiders and outsiders. If the EU were only a single market and free trade area, problems between Brussels and Moscow would be limited to the technical arena. The EU is far more than this, however: it is both a vision for Europe and the reality of uniquely integrated states. Putin aspires to create a strong Russian state that helps shape globalization and is not shaped by it. Developing close ties with European states and the EU as trendsetters of globalization is deemed vital for achieving this objective. In May 2002, Russia's Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, stated, "It is crucial that Russia is not some where on the sidelines of this

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39 Ibid., p. 99-118.

process". The problem is that EU enlargement raises the specter of Russia on the periphery of an evermore powerful Europe.

In the year 2003, the EU and Russia learned they need to act together in the fight against religious extremism and terrorism. In May 2003, the EU Council launched a discussion on the possibility of EU involvement in the deployment of a peace consolidation mission in Moldova to replace the current peacekeeping operation and underpin a settlement between the two parties. Facing the recalcitrance of Russia and, therefore of Transdniestria where Russia had been deeply involved in peacekeeping to the conflict since the establishment of a cease fire regime in July 1992. At the Istanbul OSCE summit in 1999, Russia agreed to withdraw its forces and equipment. But for a number of reasons, the Russian Ministry failed to meet the deadline, which was extended to December 31, 2003. By late 2003, Russia had withdrawn about half of the weaponry and equipment, and much work remains before the completion of the processes.

The EU is important to Russia for reasons of European security. Moscow is aware that the EU is in the throes of a revolution. It consists of the greatest enlargement the EU has ever experienced, with 10 new members joining in May 2004. The impact of enlargement on the EU's internal dynamics will be fundamental-political working will change, and new constellations of actors will arise. In the run to its accession, for example, Poland pushed for greater EU engagement in Ukraine and Moldova; and Lithuania and Latvia have been active in developing military ties with the states of Caucasus. From Moscow's perspective, the new member states may

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shatter the cozy relations Russia has entertained with some of the older EU members, such as France and Italy. The new members are likely to alter the tone if not the substance of EU policy towards Russia, and their arrival augurs deeper EU engagement in the former Soviet Union. Certainly, the new states will bring a different urgency to relations with Russia that could lead to greater EU interference in Russia’s domestic affairs, such as the Yukos affairs and the conflict in Chechnya.42

RUSSIA AND UNITED STATES

Russian hopes of an equal partnership with the United States were dashed by 1994. Both sides realised that there were definite limits to a genuine partnership. It is difficult to determine whether it was a civilisational or geo-political factor that affected the relationship. Possibly both the factors impinged on the development of very warm and close ties between the two countries. As we have seen the enlargement of NATO was one of the factors. Nevertheless, the United States recognises the fact that it should seriously engage with Russia.

Russia shares a vital common interest: in the war on terrorism, in countering the proliferation of Weapons of Mass destruction (WMD), in combating human trafficking and in fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic. And Russia are headed in the same direction on major geopolitical issues in the Middle East, in South Asia and North East Asia. The fundamental U.S.-Russian relationship is strong, and there is potential for an even more productive strategic partnership. At the same time, certain

developments in Russia’s domestic politics and in its relations with neighboring states have raised concerns in many quarters. 43

On the Russian domestic scene, the Yukos/Khodorkovskiy case, the pattern of pressure on journalists and the independent broadcast media, the conduct of December’s Duma elections and of the October presidential election in Chechnya all these facts raise questions about the strength and depth of Russia’s commitment to democratic reform and the rule of law. Reports of continued violence and human rights abuses in Chechnya remind us that there are those in the federal and local security forces and among the separatists who are still resorting to unacceptable methods of resolving a conflict that ought to be dealt with by civilized political means. 44

The Russian leaders heard Secretary Powell’s message loud and clear. On certain issues, they were able to provide immediate responses, for example, they volunteered that they recognized Georgia’s sovereignty and supported its territorial integrity. On other issues, it was understood, but had a different view. But in all cases, the exchange was open and honest; given the gradual transformation of the relationship from one of competition to one of partnership, this was as it should be. 45

The post-Soviet space was one such area where the differences were irreconcilable.

Although Russia remains a difficult place to do business. Bilateral trade was improving, and Freedom Support Act Assistance on Economic Reform is a success

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44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
story: increasingly target assistance projects to democracy-building and civil society rather than economic reform programs. Russia wants to join the World Trade Organization. The United States supports Russia's membership and has offered to help the Russian Federation improve its record on Intellectual Property Rights and attracting foreign direct investment. The energy sector in particular, while great in potential, has been full of surprises, and we are keeping a watchful eye on developments in that area. United States support bringing more Russian energy resources to world markets to diversify sources of supply. The U.S.-Russia energy dialogue was created to develop bilateral cooperation in energy, encourage new commercial partnerships and expand energy investment in Russia. In sum, Russia is gradually improving as an economic partner. United States hope the changes that began with the surprise dismissal last week of the Russian Government will accelerate positive reforms in President Putin’s second term of office.46

From the Russian standpoint, since 9-11 the “working as equals” approach has yielded mixed results. Olive branch gestures on Moscow’s part have included “cooperating” on the ABM Treaty, NATO enlargement, and the presence of US troops in Central Asia. In return, President Putin expected active American support on 1) Russian entry into the WTO, 2) acquiring Most-Favored-Nation trading status with the US, (now it has been given) 3) accessing US oil and gas markets, 4) fulfilling its anti-terrorism agenda (by having the US conduct an intelligence crackdown on out-of-area groups, for example), and much more. This tit-for-tat initiative represent a gradual, on-the-whole expectation of what Russia wanted (and still wants) from its “strategic

46 Ibid.
bargain" with the United States. Unfortunately, the glossing over of short-term problems in the interest of a long-term bargain has complicated matters. These problems include Russian military sales to unsavory regimes; the militarized and unilateralist bent of the Bush Administration, as most recently illustrated by the squabbles over Iraq; and Moscow's problematic relationship with Chechnya, Iran, Georgia, etc. Additionally, Russian leaders have felt — wrongly or rightly — that they have been held to a higher "good neighbor" standard than other Western nations when it comes to dealing with the US. The important thing to remember, however, is that although these irritants do negatively impact such as mutual intelligence sharing, they have not imperiled the commitment — by both nations — to their evolving strategic dialogue.

Russia's top priorities include pursuing confidence-building measures, which demonstrate its ability to function as a "constructive player" in the Alliance, and cooperating on possible defense reforms. The Ministry of Defence, however, remains an impediment to these laudatory goals. Its leaders still seemingly dismiss the NRC agenda as too vague, and a good number of them continue to doubt the basic utility/value of Russia-NATO ties.

The concept of multi-polar world remains the cornerstone of the Russian foreign policy. Russian foreign policy decision-makers regard the European Union, China, India and Japan as the poles of the world politics. To neutralize the decline in the relationship with the U.S., Russia will develop relations to such its strategic partners as China, India and Iran as a new pole of the world politics. Another tendency in Russian foreign policy is the decline of relationship with such international
organizations, in which the U.S. plays the key role: the UN, the NATO and the OSCE. 47

Despite the new US-Russian rapprochement, American concerns with other dimensions of Russia's security policies persisted. The United States remained preoccupied by the activities of Russian entities — technically not government entities, but closely allied to them — that, it considers, have exacerbated nuclear proliferation, thus endangering global security. Russia's ties with Iran, Iraq and North Korea are the prime concerns. Washington also remained concerned about Russia's policies toward many of its CIS neighbors, its use of energy leverage in Ukraine and other CIS countries and its continued support of undemocratic regimes, for example Russian support to that of Belarus' Alexander Lukashenko. Thus, the United States continues to view its security relations with Russia within a broader global context.

Russia also has been at odds with the United States over strategic arms control. The Clinton Administration has sought Russia's consent for amendments to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to permit deployment of a limited system in the United States to defend against possible strikes by states armed with nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. Russian military officers, fearing such a system could be expanded and thereby erode the deterrent value of Russia's nuclear missiles, adamantly oppose modifying the ABM treaty. Some Russian political leaders occasionally have hinted they could allow modest revisions in return for concessions on Russia's nuclear missile deployments. Putin's proclaimed desire to have the Russian Parliament endorse the pending Strategic Arms Control Treaty, START-II, suggests

he may eventually seek some sort of bargain. But for now, disagreement about the Treaty remains acute - as Russia's new doctrine, with its more liberal language about the use of nuclear weapons, reveals.

When the Shanghai Five was formed in May 1996 by five countries (Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan - then known as Shanghai Five)\textsuperscript{48} The countries were joined this time as signatories to an agreement on confidence-building measures along the former Soviet - Chinese border. It has taken more than seven years to turn a regional club into an organisation with a clear cut structure and explicit functions. Such as an economic agenda fight against three evil forces- as the Chinese put it- religious extremism, separatism and terrorism etc. Uzbekistan in 2001, was made part of the club at which time the organisation name was changed from the “Shanghai Five” to Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.\textsuperscript{49}

It had a limited objective of maintaining peace and security along the border by initiating confidence building measures. Gradually the agenda of the Sanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) expanded to deal with the new challenges that were arising posing a threat to the stability and security of Central Asia. Apart from religious extremism, terrorism and separatism, other negative tendencies that arose were drug trafficking, organised crime and smuggling of small weapons. But in the wake of the terrorist attacks, the SCO redoubled its efforts to implement long discussed plans to establish a clear cut structure for the organisation and to create within it a number of instruments for effectively addressing a broad spectrum of problems- from combating terrorism and separatism to developing economic


\textsuperscript{49} CDPSP, Vol. 54, No. 24, p. 6-7.
cooperation and protecting the environment. The organisation’s main centers are China and Russia, although officially the SCO is a structure that is based on equality in the words of Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, seeks to “confirmation to the requirements of a multipolar world.”

The security scenario in Central Asia had assumed dangerous proportions. With the military presence of the West in 2001 the geopolitical landscape of Central Asia underwent a fundamental change. The International Coalition Forces led by the USA had defeated the Taliban in Afghanistan - the hub of international terrorism. While Russia and China were in agreement with the Western military action in the Central Asian region, as it rid the area of negative forces, at another level there was circumspection about the long-term objectives of the West particularly the U.S. Meanwhile the Shanghai Five was institutionalised at the St. Petersburg Summit in June 2002.

Meanwhile, all the SCO members are working to solve urgent problems. A Shanghai Convention was issued and later a Secretariat set up in Beijing in 2004. Importantly a Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) was set up in Tashkent to combat the danger arising out of non-military threats. With nine years down the line the SCO has emerged as a regional security organisation. Subsequently economic dimension has been added to create a Customs Union leading to a Free Trade Area are on.

The existence of CIS is perceived in Russia as a means to maintain its influence over the region and preventing the member states to become an anti-Russian

51 Ibid.
buffer zone. CIS is neither based on shared values nor shared interests, there are only two uniting forces – dependence on Russia and Russia-centered infrastructure. At present, Russia's room of maneuver in the region is continuously declining and mitigated by new actors and new interdependencies. The CIS faces an increasingly uncertain future since it does not have real bases for effective interstate cooperation in the future.

Nevertheless due to geopolitical compulsions the CIS will continue to be accorded priority area in Russia's foreign policy. The emphasis is the development of good neighborly relations and strategic partnership with all, CIS member states. Practical relations with each of them should be structured with due regard for reciprocal openness to cooperation and readiness to take into account in a due manner the interests of the Russian Federation, including in terms of guarantees of rights of Russian compatriots.

A priority task is to strengthen the Union of Belarus and Russia as the highest, at this stage, form of integration of two sovereign states. It is felt necessary to attach a priority importance to joint efforts toward settling conflicts in CIS member states, and to the development of cooperation in the military-political area and in the sphere of security, particularly in combating international terrorism and extremism.

Before discussing the significance of Russia's strategic partnerships with China and India, we must point out the obvious yet crucial point that Russia today enjoys no alliance relationship with any state remotely resembling a great power. Not since the short-lived Sino-Soviet alliance of the 1950s has Moscow embraced another great power in an alliance relationship, and since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.
Russia has been bereft of alliance partners except those that are failed or failing states. For a country like the United States, in the enviable position of strong alliance relations with powerful states, it is easy to be dismissive of the more vague notion of "strategic partnerships". But for Russia, these are very significant relationships, including its floundering "strategic partnership" with the United States. Russia also see, however, by those wishing to critique United States policy toward Russia, or seeking to read malign intent on the part of, a tendency to overstate the significance of Moscow's strategic partnerships, especially with China. The Russian leadership has elevated some bilateral relationships to the level of "strategic partnership" because of perceived long term and important shared interests which are not necessarily directed against a third party. The proliferation of strategic partnerships on the part of Russia and other power (including the United States) also reflects an international system in transition. It is possible that some of these relationships could evolve into tighter alliances, but that is certainly not clear at this point. The Sino-Russian strategic partnership predates the Indo-Russian strategic partnership, which was finally realized with President Vladimir Putin's trip to India. The two relationships share a number of common features, but there are some important differences as well. In each case there is strong rhetorical support for a multipolar world order not dominated by the United States. All three countries support an enhanced role for the United Nations, and Russia has specifically endorsed India's candidacy to join the UN Security Council. All three denounced the NATO action in Kosovo as violation of international law since it did not receive a UN mandate. All three are also very sensitive to violation of national sovereignty and extremely reluctant to invite international mediation of challenges to
their territorial integrity in Taiwan, Kashmir and Chechnya. China, Russia, and India share sensitivities about Islamic “threats” as each country has large Muslim populations, and each shares borders with states containing Muslim majorities. In particular, they fear that the increasingly weak and failing states of Central Asia will serve as conduits for more radical Muslim groups, terrorist activities, and drug trafficking which will erode their authority in peripheral territories. They view Afghanistan under the Taliban leadership as the dangerous hub of these activities. India and China have increasingly relied on Russia as a source of conventional weapons and possibly other weapons technologies. China and India are the two biggest clients of the struggling Russian military industrial complex, as each purchase now about $1 billion worth of arms a year and these relationships are growing. Since domestic Russian procurement virtually dried up in the 1990s arms sales to China and India is a vital, if not controversial, national security interests for Moscow. There is clearly a competitive aspect to Chinese and Indian conventional purchases from Russia since Beijing and New Delhi to some extent regard each other as a security threat. There is also further potential for growth in Russia’s economic relations in the energy sphere as the Indian and Chinese economies continue to grow at a rapid pace.

So although today Russia remains a less significant trade partner for China and India than vice versa, overall trade relations are likely to grow considerably in the next decade.

On nuclear security, the dynamics triangular between Russia, China and India become far more complicated. Both Russia and China denounced India’s nuclear tests in 1998, although Russia’s criticism was milder, and both Moscow and Beijing have
urged India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). If the nuclear rivalry between China and India intensifies, Russia, non-partisan stance as strategic partnership to both may become less sustainable. Possible United States deployment of national and/or theatre missile defence systems also elicits different types of concerns from Moscow, Beijing and New Delhi. Russians are concerned primarily about the deployment of a NMD system that could eventually compromise the Russian strategic deterrent. The Chinese strongly oppose United States deployment of theatre system in the Asia-Pacific and especially the potential sharing with Taiwan. But Beijing is also concerned about so-called “thin” national defense designed to address small attacks and accidental launches, because these defense would compromise existing Chinese deterrent capabilities. India is opposed to United States deployment of NMD because it will likely hasten Chinese efforts to modernize and expand their nuclear forces, thus compelling India to deploy a more robust nuclear deterrent than it might otherwise. Even though Moscow has emphasised the long term nature of its shared interests with China and India, the Sino-Russian relationship is viewed with suspicion among Russian policy making elites in a way that the Indo-Russia relationship is not. Russia shares long border with China and a long history of often bitter and complex relations. There is an implicit Russian hedge position on China that is amplified by the growing sense of economic and demographic vulnerability of the Russian Far East and to Moscow’s “sphere of influence” in Central Asia. While perhaps for the near future China will focus on its interests in Taiwan and the South China Sea, there exists a barely-veiled Russian fear that continued Russian weakness will invite Chinese
infiltration and eventual control of some Russian territory. This is not to say that conflict with China is at all likely, but rather that the sensibilities are different. The Indo-Chinese border dispute is unlikely to lead to military conflict, but it is a source of estrangement, especially given the presence of the Dalai Lama and a large Tibetan population in India. Russia's status as a falling great power, while China and India are on the rise also adds to the unease and potential instability in the triangular relationship.

From the above it is clear that Russian and American interests do not coincide in the Asia-Pacific region as they do in Europe to an extent. At the wider level these differences do have an impact on Russia-United States relations, which in turn affects the relationship at the NATO level. Hence one cannot deny that there exists a subtle competition between Russia and United States especially in Eurasia. This in itself places limits to Russia-United States relations.

In a joint statement emerging from the April 1996 summit between Boris Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin, the Chinese and the Russians announced that they were engaged in building a "strategic partnership". A joint Sino-Russian joint statement from April 1997 began to spell out what the strategic partnership involved as it included an anti-hegemony clause and expressed opposition to a lingering "Cold War mentality" and efforts to enlarge and strengthen military blocs. Seemingly, like the United States-Russian declaratory strategic partnership of five years ago, the emerging Sino-Russian strategic partnership carries more near-term political than security weight.
RUSSIA AND THE PROSPECTS FOR MULTILATERILISM IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

With the break up of the Soviet Union and the decline of Russian military and economic power, Moscow lost much of its former influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Many regional powers feel that Russia currently does not have much to offer to other Asia-Pacific countries. However, this does not mean that Russia has lost interest in the Asia-Pacific region, nor agreed to the role of the sidelined player. After all a big expanse of Russian territory with abundant natural resources lies in the Asia-Pacific region. On the contrary, Russian strategic planners; view the Asia-Pacific region as an important dimension for Russia’s international policy. The Asia-Pacific region is seen as both a promising market for Russian products and a potential source of investments and advanced technology. The area has abundant natural resources. In particular, Moscow believes that cooperation with Asia-Pacific region could help to revive the Russian Far East. Despite the end of confrontation with the United States and China, Russia is still uneasy about a number of developments in the area. Russia worries about the rise of resurgent power in the Asia-Pacific region. There are several unresolved territorial disputes in Russia’s vicinity (including the Russian-Japanese conflict over the Kurile Islands). Some key players (especially the United States) tend to ignore Russia in discussing the most important regional problems. Some of the recent American security initiatives (for example United States plans to create an East Asian anti-ballistic missile defence system) are perceived by Russian strategists as destabilizing and threatening to Russian security interest. Moreover, the region lacks a credible security architecture that could take care of Russia’s interests.
The Russian security approach is conducive to multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific. Russia perceives the ASEAN Regional Forum countries as partners rather than enemies. Its security policy is based on a combination of both bilateral and multilateral dialogues rather than a preference for one over the other. A future security system in the Asia-Pacific is seen as an intricate nexus of shifting and flexible arrangements, formal and informal dialogues, bilateral, sub regional, regional and global regimes and mechanisms- rather than a unipolar, bipolar or other rigid multilateral structure. According to this view, Russia should play a key role in creating such a system via its active engagement in regional cooperation both in the hard and soft security domains. Moscow demonstrates its readiness to contribute to the regional security process by the radical changes in its nuclear policies and military doctrine, armed forces reductions; arms control initiatives and introduction of an impressive CSBM program. Russia successfully established and institutionalized a security dialogue with key regional actors ranging from China, Japan, and the United States to the ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum and APEC. Despite a number of obstacles such as Russia’s current weakness and the attempts by some states to ignore Moscow in discussing regional problems and the financial crisis in East Asia, Russian leaders believe that it could contribute to the peaceful and progressive development in South East Asia. Building new security architecture in the region will not be easy, as there is very little tradition of security cooperation, particularly on a multilateral basis. Perhaps the time is not ripe for far-reaching initiatives, and some Russian proposals are premature. Moreover countries like Japan and South Korea already have security related ties with the United States. Otherwise the Asia Pacific could get bogged down
in the endless process of an arms race, or in ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts. Multi-lateralism has become an important instrument in Russia’s diplomacy. This is especially apparent in East and South East Asia. Russia would like to play a more active role in the region and A multilateral approach is feasible for the present.

CONCLUSION

Russia is an indispensable player in developing a new global security architecture. Those who want to enlist Russia as a partner in solving security problems, those who see in Russia an interesting market for the future, and those who would like to see stable democratic conditions develop in Russia-and the vast majority of Europeans want all of these things-will have to set two main priorities in the present situation. First, to take seriously and to implement every point of the political program contained in the NATO-Russia Founding Act as the most important strategy accompanying NATO enlargement to the East; and second, to seek, in a spirit of partnership with Russia, a fair balancing of interests in the southern regions of the former Soviet Union. The great challenge facing Putin has been to develop friendly ties with major Asian powers while remaining engaged with the West, and this is he had begun to do.