The End of the End of the Cold War: Current Dilemmas Confronting European Security in the Wake of the Ukrainian Conflict

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Abstract

Seventy years after the founders of modern Europe set out to bring stability, union and prosperity to a continent wracked by conflict, Europe and its principal political manifestation, the European Union, is currently confronted with a renewed, and potentially defining struggle against the re-energised forces of internal division and fragmentation, external hostility and encroachment. In the aftermath of Russia's recent dismemberment of a European country by the annexation of Crimea, and its involvement in the currently frozen conflict recently fought out in eastern Ukraine, Europe is facing an increasingly insecure future. Indeed it would seem that, for the first time since the end of the Cold War twenty-five years ago, there are doubts as to whether or not the European Union's borders any longer remain secure. It is against this backdrop that President Putin's apparent attempts to re-establish 'Soviet-era spheres of influence' affect not only Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, but also Central and Eastern European countries which are much closer to the heart of Europe, such as Bosnia, Macedonia and Serbia, and EU member states such as Hungary and Slovakia. By reviewing the foundations of Euro-Atlantic Security in the aftermath of the Second World War and appraising the Post-Cold War security structure, this chapter er will consider competing claims in the post-2000 Putin era between Western security institutions and the new Russian security doctrine aimed to control the "near abroad" (former Soviet space). Twenty-five years after the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe are we now at the end of the End of the Cold War? By considering the new security threats to Europe, this chapter will assess today's European security agenda, or the lack of it. With its security focus elsewhere in the world, perhaps the United States, the traditional guarantor of European security might not be able to provide such guarantees today. Perhaps the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative has been proven to be too ambitious in the light of recent developments. Has the crisis in Ukraine opened Cold War wounds, and what are the regional repercussions of

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4553564

this frozen conflict? Indeed, have any mistakes been made by the Western Alliance in its approach to Russia's legitimate interests. Has the West made an (un) intentional contribution to the current state of affairs and what is the future of the political and security order in Europe?

Keywords: European Security, Eastern Partnership, Russia, NATO, Euro-Atlantic Project, sanctions, frozen conflicts, 'the End of the End of the Cold War'.

The Meaning of Europe

Anthony Giddens, in his *Turbulent and Mighty Continent* (2014) – itself a reference to Winston S. Churchill's appraisal of Europe – has built on the by now well-established idea that the origins of the European Union were inspired by the praiseworthy and necessary desire to end war between European states; wars in which many millions had died. It is particularly poignant to recall these founding aspirations of the European Union in a year which has witnessed commemorations to mark the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the end of the Second World War in 1945, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. In the aftermath of the First World War, one of the key ideas underpinning the European project was to bring peace and harmony to the peoples of Europe by bringing closure to the balance of power politics that had dominated the 19th century, with movements towards creating a Pan-Europa, a European Customs Union, a Federal Europe or even a United States of Europe. This theme was taken up in the 1920s by key thinkers and political figures, such as Count Richard Koudenhove-Kalergi, Elemér Hantos, Gustav Stresemann, Aristide Briand and Edouard Herriot. Such integrationist idealism would be taken further in the aftermath of the Second World War by the forefathers of the European Union – Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gaspari, and Paul-Henri Spark among others.

If the European Union of today is about openness, peace and cooperation between European states, this was well-demonstrated by its founding organisations such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), proposed by French Planning Commissioner Jean Monnet and French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, and established in 1950. The ECSC marked the first major step toward Franco-German reconciliation. This was followed by the debate over the European Defence Community initially introduced by the French Prime Minister René Pleven in October 1950, which although never ratified, following its rejection by the French National Assembly in 1954 was

nevertheless subsumed by the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed in July 1949. At the same time, the creation of NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) was an important step in the evolution of the policy of the Western containment of the Soviet Union (Weigall and Stirk, 1992), whilst Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty provided the security umbrella for Europe which has lasted until this day. It was Article 5 which stipulated that:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area…. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security (Weigall and Stirk, 1992, p.75).

Membership of NATO and the European integrationist project which would eventually become the European Union, in 1992, meant that European member states would never fight against each other again, and in the aftermath of the Second World War and during the Cold War, the idea of a peaceful Europe was imbricated upon American military strength and the belief that the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) has always been at hand as a major security resource (Giddens, 2014, p. 200). Put another way, the understanding has been that, with an acknowledgement to Joseph. S. Nye (2004), European 'power', is based upon 'soft power' if one accepts that the European Union: "Rather than threatening to conquer… exerts a magnetic power of attraction" and that, "…the influence of the EU goes well beyond those countries which might one day be accepted as full members of the European Neighbourhood Initiative" (Giddens 2014). This view is backed up by Ian Manners in his article "Normative Power Europe, A Contradiction in Terms?" (2002) in which he demonstrates how Normative Power in Europe (NPE) is based on five core values: Peace; Liberty; Democracy; Rule of Law; and, Respect for Human Rights, to which he adds four subsidiary values: Social Solidarity; Anti-discrimination; Sustainable Development and Good Governance. José Manuel Barroso, referred to NPE as: "a force for good." In other words our understanding of the role of Europe is based on Soft Power (Nye) and 'the magnetic power of attraction' (Giddens) to which we may add Robert Cooper's view of the transparency of the Union, so that once again we have the idea that no European Union member state will ever, ever go to war

against another European Union member state again. For Cooper, the European Union provided the classic example of what he termed the post-modern state (Cooper, 2003 and 2007) whereby the political, economic and military affairs of EU member states are so transparent and so closely intertwined that the idea of conflict between them is rendered unthinkable. With reference to the New World Order of the 1990s, Cooper argues that: "…there is a zone of safety in Europe and outside is a zone of danger and chaos" (Cooper, 2003, p. 55). In a nutshell, Cooper encapsulates his argument clearly and concisely in the following passage:

> The postmodern, European answer to threats is to extend the system of co-operative empire ever wider. 'I have no way to defend my borders but to extend them,' said Catherine the Great – and the European Union sometimes seems to be saying the same. This is, in fact, an exact description of the most natural security policy for a postmodern community of states. The wider the postmodern network can be extended the less risk there will be from neighbours and the more resources to defend the community without having to become excessively militarized. (Cooper, 2003, p.78)

Meanwhile, Robert Kagan (2003), who had described Europe as Venus and America as Mars – "full of mistrust and misunderstandings", argues in the opening paragraph of his book that: "It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world" (op.cit., p. 3). For Kagan:

> Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a post-historical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Immanuel Kant's "perpetual peace". (ibid.)

Yet, how different the scenario painted in 2003 must seem to the situation confronting Europe today. Within a decade, we have witnessed: the European economic crash in 2008 and its continuing repurcussions; the occupation of Crimea by Russian troops in the Spring of 2014; the ongoing frozen conflict (in between ceasefires) in Eastern Ukraine; the sudden rise to prominence of the Islamic State since the summer of 2014; the current climate of fear over potential terrorist threats from political Islam and of course the growing refugee crisis and increased migration which is confronting the European Union today, especially in the wake of the continuing four-year-long conflict in Syria.

Giddens, rather than accepting the differences between the EU and the US pointed out by Kagan, advocates reinforcing John F. Kennedy's transatlantic partnership project of the early 1960s and strengthening EU-US relations. Two key issues are at stake here: The first is the role played by the United States and the second is the role played by a re-invigorated Russia.

But, does the EU have to replace the US in a defence role? Is there not a better reaction to the current dilemmas confronting European security? In particular one should consider the EU's soft power influence and the idea that the EU has a considerable normative power role to play. Can the EU not open up negotiations with Russia and find an alternative role to play?

Without subscribing to Edward Lucas' theory that we have entered into a New Cold War (2008 and 2014) nor indeed General Folgers Rasmusen's view that the "Nuclear issue is back" (2015), it cannot be denied that twenty-five years after the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe we now find ourselves in a new period which can be described as the "End of the End of the Cold War". The current crisis in Ukraine, which has been going on since February 2014, has certainly re-opened some of the old Cold War wounds with the potential for serious repercussions on frozen conflicts. Nevertheless, this does not signify a return to Cold War. Indeed, one take on Putin's current involvement in Syria is that he might well be trying to distract attention away from the frozen conflict in Ukraine by seeking a measure of international rehabilitation and looking towards cooperating with the West over the Syrian conflict, where US-led policy has clearly failed. The only problem is that he is fully backing the Assad regime in Syria, the leader of a former client state of the Soviet Union (Hudson, 2015).

Russia, NATO and the New European Order

The period 1989 to 1991 witnessed the beginning of a New European Security Order. Borders in Europe would be unchallenged (Lucas, 2014, x). There were also organisations in place, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) - that success story of the 1975 Helsinki Agreement which would come to play such a significant part on the European scene at the end of the Cold War. Indeed, Giddens remarks that:

> …the creation of the EU owes an enormous debt to someone from outside – Mikhail Gorbachev. Without *perestroika* and *glasnost*, without his decision not to intervene militarily to suppress the movements in

> Poland, East Germany and Hungary, there would be no European Union in the form that it takes today. (Giddens, 2014, p.187)

There was a honeymoon period, in which many in Europe believed things could only get better and that there would be peace, harmony and prosperity between one-time former enemies, and this mood of optimism seemed to be buoyed up by Gorbachev's Common European Home speech of 1985:

> Europe is indeed a common home where geography and history have closely interwoven the destinies of dozens of countries and nations. Of course, each of them has its own problem, and each wants to live its own life, to follow its own traditions. Therefore, developing the metaphor, one may say: the home is common, that is true, but each family has its own apartment, and there are different entrances too….
>
> The concept of a 'common European home' suggests above all a degree of integrity, even if its states belong to different social systems and opposing military-political alliances….
>
> One can mention a number of objective circumstances which create the need for a pan-European policy:
>
> Densely populated and highly urbanized, Europe bristles with weapons, both nuclear and conventional. It would not be enough to call it a 'powder keg' today….
>
> Even a conventional war, to say nothing of a nuclear one, would be disastrous for Europe today…. (Weigall and Stirk, 1992, p. 188).

How times have changed. This was the speech that helped to establish the tremendous changes that would take place in the second half of the 1980s that would eventually bring about an end to the Cold War that has lasted for a quarter of a century.

And so, with the exception of one major European crisis, the conflicts in the former – Yugoslavia, for many in Europe, this seemed to be the dawning of a 'golden age'. As for the crisis in the Balkans, Giddens is not the first to admit that the European Community fell at the first hurdle, and that once again, the Americans would have to come in, with NATO airstrikes and the eventual peace settlement for Bosnia, negotiated in November 1995 at the Wright-Patterson Air force base in Dayton Ohio.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1990, the whole issue of defence and security in Russia and Europe has gone through a tremendous sea-change. Throughout the period of the Cold War, both East and West had based their strategies upon nuclear deterrence in order to maintain the peace. Nuclear

weapons provided the means of organising and implementing western security policy, with the nuclear submarine with ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) capabilities serving as the ultimate strategic weapon of the 1970s and early 1980s. Then the threat of the United States Strategic Defence Initiative, in the mid-1980s, hastened Gorbachev's reform policies of Glasnost and Perestroika, which eventually culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was widely believed that these events marked the demise of what then appeared to be monolithic single party systems, though time would soon show that they had not been quite as monolithic as had been imagined at the time in the West. This was accompanied by an increase in the number of liberal democracies in what had formerly been called 'Eastern Europe', alongside what may be referred to euphemistically as 'multi-party republics', though they often lacked the levels of democracy and civil society that had developed in countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. Meanwhile, Cold War organisations and institutions, such as Comecon and the Warsaw Pact had disappeared, whilst existing western organisations, especially NATO, had to reconsider and reassess their role, as new bodies and instruments were created to deal with potential threats to European and international security, as they arose.

In the first half of the 1990s, one of the main security concerns of the international community was the shift from inter-state to intra-state conflict. For example, in 1991, when war broke out in Europe for the first time since 1945, with the bloody wars of secession and post-Yugoslav transition. These wars, in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina brought horrors, hitherto inconceivable to the post Second World War mind-set, in which peace had reigned for forty-five years, thanks to systems created during the Cold War, where the fear of nuclear Armageddon had brought about European and world stability. South-Eastern Europe was confronted with tensions and insecurity, which not only affected the Yugoslav successor states, but also threatened to spill over into Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, even Hungary, Romania, Italy and beyond.

In the meantime, Russia was confronted with new security challenges to its West and South. In the West, states which had hitherto been allies, a 'middle abroad' from the Russian perspective, and had been closely integrated into the Soviet defensive and economic systems, were now furnished with new governments, new constitutions and new ambitions. They were driving towards a new understanding with the West, desiring greater association and even integration within the European Union, and protection, through the auspices of NATO, from perceived threats coming from their eastern neighbour, Russia.

Certainly, the flattening of Grozny, capital of Chechnya, was hardly the best way of calming Polish, Hungarian, Slovak and Baltic fears about any perceived Russian military threat. The CEE states started rushing to the NATO defensive umbrella, first through NATO's Partnership for Peace Programme (PfP), and for some states, namely Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic at first, full membership of NATO in March 1999. Furthermore, since Finland had entered the European Union in 1995, the EU now shared a long frontier with Russia for the first time, so that the continued enlargement of Europe brought Russia ever closer as a neighbour. From a European perspective, cooperation with Russia became essential; something that should not be forgotten in the current crisis over eastern Ukraine and also with regard to the establishment of Europe's Eastern Partnership project of 2009.

Russia, meanwhile, was also concerned with its nearest neighbours, the successor republics to the Soviet Union, the so-called 'near abroad', this would form Russia's immediate security problems. In the north, there was tension with the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, over the citizenship rights of Russian minorities. To the immediate west there were tensions with Ukraine, particularly over the ownership of the Black Sea Fleet and the control of the Crimea. To the south there were tensions in Transcaucasia and Central Asia, with outbreaks of violence in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Transdeniester and Moldova. Whilst the Russian Federation's own autonomous regions, such as Tatarstan, then Bashkortostan, began to clamour for independence.

Meanwhile, Russia actively participated in European and International institutions, such as the CSCE (Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe), established at Helsinki in 1975, and renamed OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) at Budapest in December 1994. Russia also participated in international peace-keeping efforts. From December 1995 Russian troops helped enforce the peace in BiH, alongside their NATO allies, as co-members of IFOR (Implementation Force) and SFOR (Stabilisation Force). From June 1999 they also worked with KFOR (Kosovo Force) in Kosovo, at a time when relations between Russia and the West seemed to have fallen to an all-time low, following the debacle over Priština airport.

The souring of relations between Russia and the West started with the expansion of NATO into Central and Eastern Europe. This would become one of the thorniest issues in international relations during the 1990s. But, Russia had to consider its traditional geopolitical concerns. There was deep-rooted anxiety that invasion could come from the West again. This was deeply embedded in the Russian national psyche. After invasion from the West in 1812, 1914 and

1941, and the loss of so many Russian lives in two world wars and the Russian Civil War (1918-1921) which had also been a war of allied intervention, Russia had, after the Great Patriotic War, used the newly Communist East European states as a barrier or glacis between Russia and the West. Furthermore, concerned already that former 'East European' allies were clamouring to join NATO, Russian opinion would be extremely concerned if countries in the former Soviet sphere of influence such as Belarus and Ukraine were to join NATO as this would bring what has been described as the world's most powerful military alliance, right onto Russia's borders. Writing in 2015, it is interesting to take note of the fact that the launch of the EU's Eastern Partnership Programme in 2009, in the aftermath of Russia's conflict with Georgia in the summer of 2008 would have a similar impact on Russian foreign policy thinking, which is impacting on the security of an expanded Europe today.

What was NATO without communism? In the aftermath of events in 1989 and 1991 NATO had to completely rethink its position in the world. Whereas it had originally been established to defend the West from Soviet aggression and rearm Germany, it began to look into the role of peace-keeping and peace-enforcement, expansion and even acting out of area. Peace enforcement does not just entail a presence in areas of post-conflict periods of tension, such as the effective NATO-led protectorate that had been established in BiH in December 1995, but also coming to the assistance of minorities under threat, such as the Kosovar Albanians in Serbia, as part of a policy that would be dubbed 'The Responsibility to Protect', that would formally be adopted by the United Nations, ten years later in September 2009, when at the UN summit, all member states formally accepted the responsibility of each state to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (United Nations, September 2015). The problem vis-à-vis NATO's relationship with Russia, was that whereas Russia had made a considerable contribution to IFOR/SFOR activities in BiH, Russia was vehemently opposed to NATO air strikes on its co-religionists and fellow Slavs in Serbia in the Spring of 1999, right on the cusp of the demise of Yeltsin and the rise to power of Vladimir Putin.

Returning to the early 1990s, there were concerns not just about the direction that NATO was taking, but whether or not the organisation would even continue to exist. NATO also came in for criticism for failing to respond effectively to the conflicts in the Yugoslav successor states. Critics argued that there was no longer any substantial threat and that NATO could be replaced by a beefed-up OSCE. But, what they failed to acknowledge was that most of the CEE (Central and East European States) wanted to join NATO and were not

interested in European alternatives such as Eurocorps or the WEU (Western European Union).

Given that the Cold War had ended, many questioned the very purpose of NATO. Its specific aim had been to combat the Soviet threat to the West, but in the 1990s, that threat appeared to have gone away. Formed in April 1949, NATO had kept the peace throughout the Cold War period as the main organisation for the coordination of foreign, security and defence policies in Western Europe and North America. In the last decade of the twentieth century, NATO underwent a tremendous process of transformation, whereby both its role and its sphere of influence had changed considerably. With the collapse of communism, NATO still had to consider Russia's residual military potential. Meanwhile NATO had to consider its policy towards the issue of armed conflict on Europe's periphery and the question of what to do about the crises that would develop in Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and the Kurdish problems in Turkey at the end of the decade and the beginning of the twenty-first century. There still remained the problem of the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, which entailed the continued bombing of Iraq throughout 1999, and into the early 2000s which might have also partly motivated the desire to bomb Serbia, Russia's traditional ally in South-Eastern Europe, in the spring of that year, since the Serbs were thought to have provided Iraq with biological weapons, technology and know-how whilst the Iraqis advised them on the use of ground to air defence systems.

Other concerns confronting NATO were the instability to the south of Europe in countries such as Algeria and Cyprus and across much of the Middle East, as well as the fear of Islamic fundamentalism. In the absence of the old Soviet threat it seemed as though western liberal democracies and systems within them, such as military-industrial complexes still needed enemies, either to divert public opinion away from internal problems, or to assist their economies. Indeed, the West's blundering interventions in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Iraq both before and after the Arab Spring and its failure to deal more directly and effectively with the Assad regime and the conflict in Syria contributed directly to the rise of ISIS in 2014 in a new crisis which has taken the focus off Crimea and Ukraine. Likewise, the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have dissipated much of the support there might have been in wider populations in the West for further military engagements as well as fostering a general disengagement towards politics in western countries, if not total cynicism towards western governments.

Meanwhile, returning to Europe, by the end of 1991 it had been realised that NATO's new role could be to facilitate cooperation between those CEE states which wanted to join the alliance, mainly out of fear of Russia, fuelled by the ramblings of Zhirinovsky's middle and near abroad rhetoric, that was central to his nationalistic outlook. Such fears were exacerbated in 1994, when the Russian government argued that it had the right to intervene in the Baltic States, should either Russian installations or the remaining Russian minorities come under threat. The situation was not helped by the Kaliningrad peninsula conundrum, whereby an area of Russian territory had been separated from Russia proper by the secession of Lithuania from the Soviet Union. In 1995, this led Communist Party leader Gennady Zuganov to comment that: "The country has been pushed back to the borders it had in the sixteenth century…dozens of millions of compatriots are now second class citizens, living beyond the frontiers of the Russian Federation." One cannot escape the fact that the Russian psyche is focused on the importance of borders and territories. Meanwhile, Lithuania would go on to join the EU on 1 May 2004.

NATO was confronted with a dilemma. If it did not enlarge, some CEE countries might be left in a security vacuum which would lead to more insecurity in the region. However, if NATO were to enlarge, it might risk a new confrontation with Russia. Whatever the case, it should be recognised that at the time Russia was constrained by its economic and military weakness, its domestic tensions and its need for economic aid from the West. This certainly seemed to be the case during the Kosovo crisis, although Boris Yeltsin was clearly upset about the loss of Russian prestige, hence his sabre rattling in the early summer of 1999. Furthermore, Russia had gained a lot of kudos from its involvement in the IFOR and SFOR operations in Bosnia, which would benefit its relations with the International Community. Anyway, at the time, Russia had more immediate security problems in Transcaucasia and Central Asia, to say nothing of its concerns over the rise of China.

In January 1994, NATO had launched the PfP on the basis of 'sixteen plus one' in other words relations between the then sixteen NATO member states on a separate basis, with each CEE country, allowing them to determine how far they wanted to go with the relationship. PfP was seen as a temporary means of expanding NATO, based on partnership, without ruffling Russia's feathers too much, since it did not guarantee full membership to partners as allies fully protected by Article 5. Within its first year of operation, twenty-six countries would join.

Membership of NATO, like joining the EU would entail entering, or re-entering into the European mainstream. It would provide further support for developing democracy, civil society and lustration in these states (NPE). It would encourage cooperative relations between neighbouring states as happened with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999. It would increase economic investment and help develop market reforms and it would entail the civilian control over the armed forces. In other words, membership of NATO would add to the feeling of being part of a wider, democratic Europe, a break with the past and an end to the period of transition.

In the meantime, Russia was deeply concerned that this was an all-out attempt to enlarge NATO; that its former enemy would now be on Russia's doorstep, going against Russia's foreign policy for the previous fifty years. By contrast the CEE states felt that this was just a holding operation and that NATO had no serious intention of offering them full membership.

In the 1990s, Russia's response to NATO expansion had been to build new buffer states. Whilst Yeltsin had signed an agreement with Belarus allowing Russian troops to patrol Belarus' so-called three 'external borders' with Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. This led to the comment by Colonel-General Andrei Nikolayev that by this agreement, Russia had pushed its military border 384 miles to the west of the 'administrative border'. This was Russia's way of expanding through military alliances that competed with NATO and underlined Russia's thirst for 'Great Power' status. It was good for Russian prestige and morale. So, Russia's only alternative was to create its own military bloc with the former Soviet republics. Was this not a precursor to the 'hybrid' warfare that we have witnessed more recently in 2014 and 2015 in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, whereby the Russians have employed a strategy based on: deception, denial, undermining the power of a state from within, working with sub-state ethnic nationalisms and above all keeping it all beneath the radar of NATO's Article 5 – the "all for one and one for all" declaration. This is what had happened in eastern Ukraine and Crimea and it could easily by employed by stealth in the Baltics, where Russia could in turn use frozen conflicts to its own advantage.

Ultimately, as the new millennium dawned it remained clear that among other things, the key issues confronting European security and defence would continue to be: the widening and deepening of Europe, the impact of organisations such as NATO on the CEE and Russia, minority groups and human rights and the changing nature of Europe: north-south cleavages, new barriers and frontiers and disparity between states with a rich man and a poor man Europe and the issue of Fortress Europe. Certainly, ten years after the fall of the

Berlin Wall, it seemed that the frontier decided at Yalta in 1945 had shifted a few hundred miles further East.

But, for many in Russia, the lesson of 1991 was quite different. Communism had failed, and the ensuing "collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as a humiliating geopolitical setback." It was all about the loss of Empire. Anybody, who has any real inkling of Russian history, will understand Russia's concerns about its borders, its neighbours and the deeply imbedded fear of invasion. The dates and events of 1812, 1914, 1918 and 1941 as well as the revisionist view of the Cold War (Nye, 1993, p. 99) only serve to underline this simple fact. From a Russian perspective, foreign policy is all about territory and under Stalin the Soviet Union returned to traditional Russian concerns about territory; issues which have become major Russian preoccupations in the face of the "indefinite expansion of NATO" since the late 1990s, and this situation has been exacerbated by the EU's policy towards Ukraine which has largely ignored these concerns. (Giddens, 2014, p. 200).

Admittedly, Robert Cooper might well have described Russia as a 'modern', rather than a 'post-modern' state, though he did not! Nevertheless, a re-reading of his seminal work *The Breaking of Nations* (2003) would put Russia within that 'modern' state bracket, far removed from the 'post-modernist' EU! Furthermore, following the disastrous mid-1990s when Russia was described as being in 'free fall' (Hudson, 2002, p. 52) it was clear that from a Russian perspective, Russia would have to regain its status in the world. Geopolitically, the Yeltsin years had been a disaster for Russia. Yeltsin had proved to be the wrong man at the wrong time. But, there are perhaps many in the West who wish that Yeltsin were in power now! In the aftermath of economic, social and political crisis, to say nothing of disastrous military campaigns of which the first war in Chechnya (1994 – 1996) served as a prime example, Russian self-pride had to be restored. This would come with the rise to power of Vladimir Putin. Putin is Russia. He fits the traditional role of the strong ruler perfectly well. Think of Ivan 'The Terrible', Peter 'The Great', Catherine 'The Great' and, of course Stalin. As Catherine had once allegedly said, 'The Russians love the feel of the knout.'

Many commentators have traced Russia's resurgence back to the Georgian conflict in the summer of 2008, which witnessed Russia's strong backlash against the Georgian invasion of Ossetia, exacerbated by US support for the 'colour revolutions' in Ukraine (Orange, in November 2004 to January 2005) and Georgia (Rose in November 2003), which witnessed the installation of potentially antagonistic regimes to Putin and his aspirations to reinvigorate Russian power (Bacon, 2014, p. 215). But, we can go back even further, to the

period just before Putin's rise to power; back to 1999 and the race to Priština airport. This was the moment when Russia began to retrieve its big-power status after years in the doldrums, as Russia also gained the upper hand in its second war in Chechnya (1999 – 2000). Indeed, the Kosovo conflict would prove to be a disaster for NATO-Russian co-operation. Already exacerbated by the NATO invitation in 1998 to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, as this deepened Russia's fear of NATO's intentions in what was, after all to be NATO's first war. Yeltsin stepped down on New Year's Eve 1999 and Putin took over. If Russia was seen as a non-threat to the West in the Yeltsin years (1991 – 1999) the West would be in for a rude awakening as the first decade of the 21st century progressed and one of Russia's most popular and populist rulers established his power base. One only has to read Putin's millennium speech to realise that under his leadership, Russia was clearly trying to reassert itself in the world. Later in 2004 seven more eastern European states gained NATO membership (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and the fact that the three Baltic states were among them was particularly galling for Putin.

However, returning to the conflict with Georgia in 2008, Stephen Blank, writing for the *Huffington Post* comments that: "Russia's imperial land and power grabs in Georgia (and now Ukraine), its efforts to undermine security in Moldova and the Caucasus, and its permanent sabre rattling in the Baltics show that Russia remains unreconciled to the 1991 loss of empire." (Stephen Blank, 2015). Blank goes on to argue that: "The quest for empire inevitably and inescapably means war. It means war because Russia, as shown in Ukraine and Georgia, cannot accept the genuine sovereignty or territorial integrity of any of its neighbours, including Eastern Europe." (Ibid.)

This might fit in well with Lucas' 'New Cold War' scenario, or rather with the less aggressively sounding scenario that this writer would more cautiously refer to as: 'The End of the End of the Cold War.' Their argument is that the crisis does not just stop at Ukraine and that any further EU/Western/ American appeasement would only lead to further conflict.

So, from a European perspective, the crisis over Ukraine is about the future of the political and security order in Europe (John Techau, 2015). Indeed: "It is more about who is willing to put military might on the line to defend Western and Central Europe" (Dempsey, 2015). The upshot is that the West and Russia are now facing their worst crisis since the end of the Cold War. Let us now consider the EU's role over the last decade before considering America's changing relationship with Europe.

The Eastern Partnership: Expanding Europe Eastwards A Step too Far?

Europe's approach, as has been demonstrated by Kagan (2003) and Cooper (2003) has been different to that of the United States. It is based on the idea that the Union should extend itself, not by military means, but through the influence of soft power and Normative Power, with the offer of a special relationship with the European Union for prospective partners. Such an approach has also avoided the need for the European Union to defend itself without becoming excessively militarized, whilst: "extending its system of co-operative empire ever wider" (Cooper, 2003, p.78).

Certainly, the integrationist project of European expansion had been the policy of the European Union in the aftermath of the Cold War. But, 25 years on can the EU continue to advocate such a policy, especially in the face of Russian ambitions since 2008, if not since 2000, when Putin came to power.

Recognizing that European integration has been one of the most dynamic processes observed world-wide in the last fifty years, Pétar Balázs the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Hungary and former member of the European Commission has developed this idea further by considering the expansion of Europe in an ever eastward direction. For Balázs:

The East is very different [to the West]: on the endless plains and mountains of the Eurasian mainland, the neighbouring countries keep being surrounded by new neighbours. In the eastern dimension, the famous question about the interpretation of Article 49 (on European Union) is very relevant: Where are the ends of Europe? (Balázs, 2012, p.173)

The question of European finitude would also be raised two years later by Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 2014, p.187) and this remains a key issue in our understanding of European security issues today, especially in the face of Russian reactions to Europe's eastward push, to states which Russia still considers to be situated within its own sphere of influence. Meanwhile, Jose Manuel Barroso had called an EU summit on the expansion of the European project to the East, in October 2008. The aim was to help the six European Partnership countries to establish strong institutions, the rule of law and NPE with a view to future EU membership within a period of ten to fifteen years.

A year later, in 2009, the European Union's Eastern Partnership initiative was launched in an attempt to boost the EU's earlier fairly ineffectual neighborhood policy by attempting to forge closer ties with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (Lungescu, 2009). This idea, which had originally been proposed by a Polish and Swedish initiative in 2008, was to create

a free trade area between the six countries concerned, somewhat akin to the free trade area that had been established earlier in the Balkans and which appeared to be working well at the time (Pop, 2008). There is little doubt that this process had been accelerated in response to the Georgian conflict over that summer and as had been in the case earlier in the Balkans, the idea had been to get countries that had not worked so well together in the past to pull together on key issues such as transport and energy. Indeed, was this not a reflection of the very processes that had lain at the heart of the European integration project in the aftermath of the Second World War, when the initial six member states, all former enemies had pooled together their resources under the auspices of the European Coal and Steel Community?

The problem was that Russia still saw these countries as part of its own sphere of influence (Lungescu, 2009). They were situated in the post-Soviet zone (Balázs, 2012, p.177), in other words they formed what Russia had considered to be its so-called 'near abroad' – a theme had already been taken up in the early 1990s by the ultra-Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky (Frazer and Lancelle, 1994). It was this that had led Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to accuse the EU of trying to carve out a new sphere of influence in what Moscow defines as its region of "privileged interest" (Lungescu, 2009). Later, in February 2015, Lavrov was quoted as having commented in a speech in Munich that: "The events in the past year have confirmed the validity of our warnings regarding deep, systemic problems in the organization of Europe" (Nougayrede, 2015) and he was quoted as having gone on to say that the West was taking sides and was not taking Russia's concerns seriously (Dempsey, 2015).

While the EU has insisted that the Eastern Partnership project is neither an anti-Russian alliance nor an attempt to create a new sphere of European Union influence (ibid.), for Balázs: The Eastern Partnership project would not be feasible without some form of Russia's inclusion as a partner (Balázs, 2012, p. 178). Furthermore, Lungescu comments:

> One word increasingly mentioned by diplomats when they talk about the EU's eastern neighbours is 'instability'. The war between Russia and Georgia last summer (2008) and the Russia-Ukraine energy row, which led to gas cuts in Europe in the depth of winter, have fuelled EU concerns about events on the bloc's eastern borders (Lungescu, 2009).

Europe cannot exclude Russia in its negotiations and agreements if the Union is to avoid exacerbating the tensions that have been growing, particularly since the start of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Furthermore, Balázs has also acknowledged that: "frozen conflicts in post-Soviet territories are also a source

of international tensions…. [and that]…the unsolved situations radiate tension to the neighborhood and the outside world" (Balázs, ibid., p. 177). It was the lingering threat of frozen conflicts, such as Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh as well as the events in South Ossetia and Abkhazia that lay at the heart of the problem. Four years earlier, when the European Partnership initiative was being drawn up, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Chairman of the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee had underlined the need for the EU to "anticipate", rather than "react" to issues in the region, mentioning the need then to assist Ukraine's majority ethnic Russian region of the Crimea with better infrastructure and other "pragmatic" solutions (Pop, 2008). The sad reality is that the EU responded too late, the EU had failed to "anticipate" the situation in the Crimea six years later in February 2014 and was left having to "react" to it. The risk is that Ukraine itself will drift toward frozen conflict status and that Vladimir Putin might succeed in dividing the West ever further (Dempsey, 2015).

Alina Inayeh comments that: "After the developments of 2008 (namely the conflict between Russia and Georgia) and the return of Vladimir Putin to the Russian presidency in 2012, there has been a growing sense of the inevitability of Moscow's aggressive behaviour towards the region" (Inayeh, 2014, p.2). Fears of military invasion, trade wars (especially over Russian oil and gas resources) and political pressure have been exacerbated by frozen conflicts in the region. Indeed, Russian leverage over Russian oil and gas resources has been central to the more bullish stance that Putin has been able to take, especially given the EU's reliance on imported energy sources and its failure to develop a coherent energy policy. Then, in 2011 and 2012, two pipelines bringing gas from Russia into Europe provided Russia with further leverage in EU politics (Giddens, 2014, p. 197). The problem was that the EU remains so dependent on Russia for gas, especially in the case of Germany (Hudson, 2014, pp.34-35). Similarly, the EU-aspirant states in the Western Balkans are also dependent on the potential revenues from Russian pipelines that could be built through their countries. In December 2014, the South Stream pipeline project controlled by Gazprom to transport natural gas from the Russian Federation through the Black Sea to Bulgaria, and through Serbia, Hungary and Slovenia and on to Austria was abandoned. This was in response to objections and sanctions from Bulgaria, an EU member state and the EU as a whole, in response to Russian involvement in the Crimean and eastern Ukraine crises.

Of the six countries which make up the European Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) three (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) have also entered into Association Agreements with the European

Union, thereby accelerating their closer relationship with the EU, so that Russia's aggressiveness would seem to have backfired in the case of these three countries. Nevertheless, it should be noted that all three of the signatories to the EU Association Agreements are confronted with lingering tensions and frozen conflicts. Ukraine is blighted by internal instability brought about by the loss of Crimea and the frozen conflict in eastern Ukraine, where Russia still maintains considerable leverage. Georgia is comparatively more politically stable than Ukraine, in spite of its armed conflict with Russia over Ossetia in 2008. Along with Moldova, Georgia is confronted with lingering tensions and issues concerning the reintegration of the secessionist territories of Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In the case of Moldova, the parliamentary elections in November 2014 returned the pro-EU parties as the majority grouping, although the strongly pro-Russian Socialists became the largest single party in the country. All the same, for the time being at least, the Association Agreement with the EU would appear to remain safe. Although, as Inayeh noted the three Association Agreement countries have encountered diminished support from their populations for the European Partnership because of growing fears over Russian intentions. Meanwhile, the other three Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus) have no immediate plans for official relations with the EU to develop (Inayeh, 2014, p. 3) and the events in Ukraine have: "…pushed the issue of national security to the top of the six governments' priority lists'" (Inayeh, 2014, p. 4) which has led Ukraine and Georgia to seek security guarantees with NATO, whilst Armenia and Belarus have turned instead to Russia, and Moldova has sought refuge in its neutrality. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has turned to the United States.

For Inayeh (2014, p. 4): "Western support for, and involvement in the region remains critical from the perspective of all six countries" because "…instability in the region has spillover effects, threatening the security of the EU and NATO's eastern members and heightening concerns for energy supplies and routes" (Inayeh, 2014, p. 3, Hudson 2014, pp. 34-35). In sum, Inayeh makes two key observations from the point of view of the security of the region, noting that the EU and United States should:

1) Focus on the situation in Ukraine, but not forget the rest of the region.

2) Address regional security by addressing the frozen conflicts in Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Nagorno Karabach (See also, Hudson, 2002).

The real issue at stake is that for the last 23 years, both the EU and the US have largely ignored the frozen conflicts in the region which has enabled

Russia to prolong them (Inayeh, 2014, p. 5) by introducing "peacekeeping forces", which make one think of the role of the so-called "Little Green Men" during the occupation of Crimea in February 2014 (Hudson, 2014, p. 32), and this in turn raises the issue that the OSCE has largely been hamstrung in the region by the presence of Russian 'peacekeeping' forces, as indeed was the case of the OSCE in eastern Ukraine in the summer of 2014 (Hudson, 2014, p. 40).

America and the Euro-Atlantic Project

The current security dilemmas confronting Europe should be seen as the End of the End of the Cold War, rather than as a return to the actual Cold War itself, or as a new form of Cold War. Nevertheless, the situation in Ukraine has inescapably re-opened old Cold War wounds. This was most clearly demonstrated last summer, with the shooting down of MH17 in July, when a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 was shot down by a Buk surface-to-air missile over Hrabove, near Torez in the Donetsk Oblast of the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, only forty miles from the Russian border. This was, perhaps, the lowest ebb in the conflict at the time.

As such, the return of war on the European continent, only fifteen years after NATO's first war over Kosovo and twenty years after the Dayton peace accords which had ended the conflicts in Bosnia-Hercegovina, came as a deep shock to the West. Europe, which since 2008 had been struggling with its financial and economic woes, was caught completely off-guard by the situation in Ukraine and Russia's complicit role in conducting that hybrid war. But what seemed worse was that the transatlantic project, the friendship between the EU and the US seemed to be at its lowest ebb too. The US now clearly saw Asia as the region that would define the course of the 21st century. Its interests were in the Pacific, not in Europe, and Washington's eyes were no longer so-keenly focused on Europe, and not for the first time in recent years.

Nathalie Nougayrede, writing in *The Guardian* on 13 February 2015, commented that:

> For years, Europe built its common project with a Kantian view of the world – A Venus syndrome (with the US as Mars), as described by Robert Kagan: a continent incapable of envisaging war because for so long it had lived under the post-war US security umbrella.

The upshot is that without the transatlantic link enshrined in NATO, Europe has no security and defence policy of its own to speak of and never has had one, neither at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, nor

since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. Returning to Giddens, as commented above, Europe had fallen at the very first hurdle over Yugoslavia, back in 1991. For in the run-up to signing the Maastricht Treaty that would usher in the European Union amidst the latent euphoria of German re-unification, the then EEC interpreted the events taking place in the former-Yugoslavia as being very much part of its own "back yard", whilst the United States, with the exception of intervention in Macedonia as part of a UN peace-keeping mission, only entered into the wars of Yugoslav Transition relatively late in the day, and then only with airstrikes around on military installations in the *Republika Srpska* (Bosnian Serb Republic). Perhaps lessons could be learned from this. Another commentator, Jan Tachau of the Carnegie Foundation has argued that:

> For the time being, America is back, albeit reluctantly. With renewed US commitment, NATO is reinforcing its eastern flank, marking the boundary at which Western security responsibilities end. Ukraine is left dangling in an in-between position, with part of its territory becoming another frozen conflict that ensures lasting Russian influence over this part of post-Soviet space. The Europeans in the meantime, are trying desperately to keep their economies and their always-fragile political order from disintegrating. Can this form of Western retrenchment, European halfheartedness, and a slightly beefed-up US security presence in Europe be the future of European security? Not for long. The lingering power vacuum invites external probing. Europe seems capable neither of policing nor of integrating its neighbourhood. Germany, Europe's temporary leader, is an incomplete strategic player, while Europe's traditional key players –France and the UK- have, at least for the moment, sidelined themselves because of internal weakness. (Tachau, 2015).

This does make the future of transatlantic relations look rather bleak, especially when one returns to the recurring theme that: "the US has openly identified Asia as a region that will defined the course of the 21st century." (Nougayrede, 2015). Judy Dempsey adds that:

> Europe is far from security self-reliance. In fact, instead of becoming more autonomous, its governments keep increasing their dependence on US security services by steadily reducing their own capabilities. This is partly because of economic stress, partly because of acute strategic dyslexia. Europeans seem to be unaware of their own security dilemma: that the United States must focus elsewhere while Europe's security is

> increasingly threatened by its wide, unruly neighbourhood. (Dempsey, 2015).

Yet, although the US might well be focusing its attention on the Pacific region and the rise of China, to say nothing of the current threat from ISIS, would it not be an over-exaggeration to advocate that the United States has abandoned Europe? The United States and several EU member states are currently cooperating directly in the conflicts both in Ukraine and the struggle against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Giddens, 2014, p. 187). Perhaps, as Giddens argues, now is the time for Europe to seek to establish new transatlantic ties which is the key argument in the security chapter in his book.

Conclusion

The return to armed conflict on the European continent in 2014 came as a deep shock to the West and this was set against the background of the continuing economic crisis. Indeed, the economic crisis has meant that there are not the financial resources to strengthen and increase military budgets, resources and commitments in the wider Europe. In addition to this, it would seem that the transatlantic bond, which had been crucial to European peace and stability since the end of the Second World War, has been significantly weakened at the same time as Russia, under the leadership of Putin has been striving to re-establish its great power status (Nougayrede, 2015). The European Union is currently confronted with a renewed and potentially defining struggle against the re-energised forces of internal division and fragmentation, external hostility and encroachment. For the first time since the end of the Cold War twenty-five years ago, there are doubts as to whether or not the European Union's borders will remain secure any longer.

The reality for Europe is that without the transatlantic link enshrined in NATO, Europe has no real defense and security policy of its own. So, in an ever changing world, how can Europe ensure the defense of its own interests? Europe's position is not helped by the obvious absence of either any doctrine or any deployable joint forces capable of ensuring the safety of Russia's neighbors, if the worst-case scenario were to unfold. Possibly for the first time since the end of the Second World War, European governments find themselves in a position where they will have to: "sort the continent out more or less on their own." (Nougayrede, 2015).

Certainly, as mentioned by Tachau and Nougayrede above, NATO has beefed up some of its capabilities in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis. But the fact

that debates continue about NATO's ability to enact Article 5 of its treaty (the all-for-one, one-for-all security guarantee set in place for its members) demonstrates just how uncertain the transatlantic bond has come to be perceived. However, the real fear for Europeans at the beginning of 2015 was that: "US military aid to Ukraine, whether defensive or lethal, can have only one effect: to escalate the standoff further..." between Russia and the West. (Dempsey, 2015). But, this said, perhaps Russia too has recently shifted its main focus away from Ukraine to Syria, especially given the West's abysmal failure to gain any influence on that country's internal conflicts. For Dempsey, the real issue is not the situation in the Ukraine, but something bigger. Who is willing to put military might on the line to defend Western and Central Europe? According to her argument this is set against the background that the US must and wants to shift its geopolitical focus to Asia (Dempsey, 2015).

At the end of the day, forty years after the Helsinki Final Accords (1975) which witnessed the birth of the CSCE (forerunner of the OSCE) and twenty-five years after the Paris Charter in 1990, which laid the foundations of a peaceful post-Cold War order in Europe, all seems to have come adrift. It would seem that the European Union, and the West as a whole has made an unintentional contribution to the current state of security in Europe by impinging on territory which Russia considers to be in its own sphere of influence, both in terms of Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership. This has happened at a time when the United States might not be so willing or ready to guarantee European security and at a time when Russia is committed to reasserting its position in the world.

As for the West, it is facing its worst crisis since the end of the Cold War, when Europeans and Americans need to remain united at a time when Putin would seem to be determined to split the transatlantic alliance. Without the transatlantic relationship enshrined in NATO, the European Union does not have any defense and security policy of its own worth speaking about. The only obvious solutions would seem to be to: Draw NATO and the EU closer together; to develop an integrated European Defense policy under the aegis of NATO in which, in a time of continuing economic crisis, individual European nation states would take full responsibility for specified security and defense initiatives, thereby avoiding duplication by particular nation states, in particular Britain and France. Attention too should be focused on the tendency of European governments to make serious cuts to defense budgets in the light of the imposition of austerity measures following the 2008 economic crash. Ultimately, there needs to be greater solidarity within the European Union and a move away from the European exit strategies and machinations of internal populist political parties.

Future generations of historians will obviously get the opportunity to re-write the story from a position of hindsight. From the current standpoint, the twenty-five year period known as the End of the Cold War appears to have finally come to an end. Europe would seem to be truly standing on the precipice of a new era. What is less clear is whether its leaders and institutions have the capacity or the political vision to chart a new direction for the Continent.

However, on perhaps a more positive note, the situation might not be as bleak as it currently seems. Russia has recently committed ground troops, weaponry and airstrikes to the conflict in Syria. Admittedly, Russia is backing the Assad regime, for which Western governments do not really care for very much. Yet apart, from supporting the Assad regime, Russia is also taking the focus off the situation in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, it might even be that Russia is trying to assuage its involvement in this region. In addition, it might also be that by involving itself in striking out against ISIS forces, Russia has bitten off more than it can chew, and that political Islam might well strike back against the Russian homeland yet again, as it has done so many times over the past twenty-five years. Russia, also suffered as a result of its invasion of Afghanistan in 1980 as have western states more recently. Furthermore, it is not just the US that is concerned about the potential expansion in the Pacific region and the South, so too is Russia. Twenty years ago, in February 1995, Russia signed a common defence agreement with Kazakhstan, which was important to Russian security needs at the time, given that Kazakhstan shared a 625 mile border with China. The significance of this agreement is perhaps best explained within a demographic context, given that east of the Urals there are only 32 million inhabitants in the Russian Federation; with more than a million Chinese in Russia's Siberian territory, this is seen as a potential threat to Russia, should China ever wish to expand in a westerly direction. Here, one is reminded of the events of February 1969, when fighting broke out between Soviet and Chinese troops over Domanski island on the disputed frontier zone between the Armur and Usari rivers.

Given that the United States also sees Asia as the region that will "define the twenty-first century", it might well be that both Russia and the United States will eventually find themselves having to work together. Perhaps, one might see a future in which Russo-US cooperation will reflect the more convivial days of Russian and US cooperation in IFOR and SFOR in the mid-1990s.

Alternatively, co-operation between China and the US is equally possible. The critical point is that we are heading into a much more multi-polar world than either the Cold War era or the US dominated post-Cold War decade.

It is not clear how Europe will co-ordinate its own defence in this new era and undoubtedly the relationship between the US, NATO and the EU may well be complicated further if Britain goes into a reverse gear with the European project. Europe's insularity in terms of its political debates, its lack of vision and its lack of leadership is coinciding with a period when outside issues are beginning to overtake the Continent's agenda. The next few years will either see a transformed EU, in response to these challenges, or an EU that will begin to crumble. Only time will tell.

At the end of the day all sides concerned are mutually interdependent on each other, and Europe and the United States should take more care in consulting with Russia in future. From the point of view of European security, Europe and the United States have to make sure that Russia does not feel isolated, and that they recognise again the potential of Russia's 'great power' status, whilst ensuring that democratic and economic reforms will eventually prove successful in Russia, especially in the area of human rights.

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