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## Toward a New Strategic Vision for the Euro-Atlantic

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*NATO needs more than a strategic concept: It needs an entirely new strategic vision aimed at creating the security contours for the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic confederation that better coordinates the defense and security interests of the United States, European Union and Russia. The creation of at least three International Centers for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/Peacekeeping in Sevastopol, Kaliningrad and Cyprus would represent a practical step toward such a Confederation.*

As NATO ministers finish their preparations for the NATO summit on November 19-20, it is clear that NATO needs much more than a "strategic concept." A number of commentators have argued that NATO faces a grave existential crisis which it might not be able to surmount largely due to its divergent interests and threat perceptions. Unlike the Cold War, NATO appears unable to prioritize these new perceived threats.<sup>1</sup>

(photo credit: Piero Cauduro/flickr)

Against the wave of pessimism confronting the Lisbon Summit, I would like to argue that NATO needs a new strategic vision aimed at creating the security contours for the establishment of a Euro-Atlantic confederation that better coordinates the defense and security interests of the United States, European Union and Russia, as well as the general



development interests of the Euro-Atlantic region, including the Black Sea and Caucasus.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States, NATO and the European Union (EU) have engaged in very different approaches to security and defense concerns for Central and Eastern Europe. This process has been taking place without any real coordination between the US and EU, and without the active and willing participation of the Russian Federation.

Toward the end of the George Bush Sr. administration, former Secretary of State James Baker had proposed a new "Euro-Atlantic security system" covering the space between Vancouver and Vladivostok. It is time to revive that concept in new circumstances in the aftermath of Russian President Medvedev's call for a new European Security Architecture, coupled with the Obama administration's efforts to « reset » US-Russian relations.<sup>2</sup>

Since 1991, in the aftermath of the Cold War and Soviet collapse, the Americans and Europeans have engaged in five very different—and largely *uncoordinated* approaches—to Euro-Atlantic security and defense:

1) NATO enlargement under Presidents Clinton and George Bush—with promises of potential NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia;

2) European Union enlargement, plus the new Eastern Partnership with former Soviet bloc states,

<sup>1</sup> Marko Papic, "NATO's Lack of a Strategic Concept" (Stratfor: 12 October 2010) [http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20101011\\_natos\\_lack\\_strategic\\_concept?utm\\_source=GWeekly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=101012&utm\\_content=readmore&elq=ad697e8c5ac44f62ab5654c3cd1ddbc7](http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20101011_natos_lack_strategic_concept?utm_source=GWeekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=101012&utm_content=readmore&elq=ad697e8c5ac44f62ab5654c3cd1ddbc7)

<sup>2</sup> For one effort to reset US-Russian relations, see East West Institute, *Euro-Atlantic Security: One Vision, Three Paths*, East West Institute <http://www.ewi.info/euro-atlantic-security-seminar-brussels-0> This report was presented at the OSCE conference of Foreign Ministers in Corfu in June 2009 which helped to re-start US-European-Russian talks after the August 2008 Georgia-Russia war.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine;

3) Unilateral deployment of Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems by the United States, plus significant conventional weapons sales by the US and other European countries, to central and eastern European states;

4) The 1990 Conventional Force in Europe Treaty, framed before the break-up of the Soviet Union, which was then adapted in 1999 but which has not yet been ratified.

5) The December 1994 *Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances* in which Russia, the US, France and the United Kingdom agreed to extend the security assurances to Ukraine (as well as Belarus and Kazakhstan), in accord with the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Final Act.<sup>3</sup>

Of these five—largely uncoordinated—activities involving security and defense concerns of central and eastern Europe, only the fourth and fifth—the adapted 1999 CFE treaty and the December 1994 *Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances*—involves Russia as a major stakeholder in European security.<sup>4</sup> A major issue, however, is that Russia “suspended” its participation in the adapted 1999 CFE treaty in 2007 for a number of reasons to be explained. As to be argued, there is a real risk that this treaty might collapse if the issues involving the so-called “frozen conflicts” are not soon addressed.

What I am suggesting today is that the concept of joint and overlapping US-Russian-European security guarantees for Ukraine as proposed in 1994, and reconfirmed in 2009, can be enlarged to a much wider space that would include not only Ukraine, but a much larger Black Sea/ Caucasian “regional security and development community.”<sup>5</sup> Such an approach can provide the basis for a much larger system of security and defense for the entire Euro-Atlantic, but without weakening the basis of NATO

<sup>3</sup> In effect, Russia, the United States, France and the UK agreed to respect Ukraine's borders and abstain from the use or threat of force. <http://web.archive.org/web/19990220113731/http://www.osceprag.cz/docs/chronos.htm>

<sup>4</sup> This includes the formation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 which has provided Russia a voice, but not a veto, over NATO actions.

<sup>5</sup> On “security communities,” see Karl Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level* (Doubleday, 1954). See also my argument internationalized, yet interlocking regional security communities, dedicated to conflict mediation and development, Hall Gardner, *Averting Global War: Regional Challenges, Overextension and Options for American Strategy* (New York: Palgrave, 2010). Here, I argue that one can not engage in “development” without providing basic “security.” Yet “security” must not become an end in itself, but must serve as a means to conflict resolution/ transformation, reconstruction, as well as social, economic, political and ecological “development”— so that all societies involved can reach their fullest potential.

Article V security guarantees for states that are already members of NATO. In effect, this proposal would provide a *double security* system, at least in the near term, until Russia can be fully integrated into a new Euro-Atlantic confederation.

My concept is relatively simple in conception, and perhaps not so difficult to implement in practice, as might be presumed.

The proposals are the following:

- 1) The formation of at least three International Centers for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Kaliningrad, Cyprus, and Sevastopol under general OSCE or UN mandates. These three internationalized Centers would help develop confidence building measures to coordinate security and defense activities in each region. They would also help provide the architecture for conflict



resolution/ transformation, and peacekeeping and likewise assist human development and post-conflict reconstruction.

(Russian navy in Sevastopol, 2005 - photo credit: Argenberg/Flickr)

- 2) An International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol would help strengthen the political and security role of the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) with Russian, European, and American supports in the creation of a new Black Sea/ Caucasian Confederation in the longer term.
- 3) An International Center in Sevastopol would also assist the implementation of the Turkish proposal for a “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform” with Russian, European, and American security assurances in the formation of an internationalized “regional security and development community” for the Black Sea and Caucasus, likewise in working with the Black Sea Economic Organization (BSEC).
- 4) The implementation of this project would involve the deployment of Partnership for Peace peacekeepers or joint NATO-Russian-European in a Dayton-like agreement<sup>6</sup> within the not-entirely “frozen conflicts” in the Caucasus and Transnistria (Pridnestrovie),

<sup>6</sup> After the 1995 Dayton accords, US and Russian peacekeepers worked side-by-side in a number of areas inside ex-Yugoslavia under a general UN mandate.

among other possible areas, under a general OSCE mandate for a transitional period.

(Cyprus Airport abandoned in UN buffer zone – photo credit: UN/flickr)



- 5) The creation of an International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/Peacekeeping, to be located on Cyprus, would additionally help strengthen the “Union for the Mediterranean.” This would represent a means to help reconcile Greek and Turkish Cypriots, as well as help achieve a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. Such an International Center under a general UN Mandate could engage in peacekeeping on Cyprus (if still deemed necessary) and between Israel and the Palestinians (if a diplomatic settlement can eventually be found). It would likewise help bring Turkey into a new relationship with the European Union,<sup>7</sup> in addition to assisting the socio-economic and political development of a new Palestine, with Turkey as a key actor linking the Black Sea, Caucasus, and Euro-Mediterranean regions.
- 6) The formation of a Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council would seek to coordinate US, European Union, Russian policies.<sup>8</sup> A new EU-Russian Strategic Council has already been proposed in embryonic form by Angela Merkel and Dmitri Medvedev in their meeting in June 2010 and in subsequent meeting with France in Deauville in October 2010, in which the “frozen conflicts” were discussed. A Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council could potentially link representatives of the European Union with the American-Russian “Bilateral President Commission,” which has begun to expand American-Russian interactions on a range of issues, including emergency disaster response, space, counternarcotics, counterterrorism, energy efficiency, and trade and investment.
- 7) The proposed formation of a Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council implies a new role and mission for NATO and a new form of NATO “Associate Membership” with Russia, Ukraine among other possible states. At the same

time, NATO should be re-structured and re-named—becoming a Euro-Atlantic Peace Force. The primary purpose of such a new Euro-Atlantic Peace Force would be to jointly protect energy pipelines and transit routes, and to prevent conflict from re-occurring within the

entire Euro-Atlantic area, through Dayton-like peacekeeping deployments, for example, while also defending against potential threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area, such as acts of terrorism or threats from ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

### General Overview

Despite the protest of numerous critics who opposed NATO enlargement (including the two “fathers of containment,” George Kennan and Paul Nitze), NATO expanded its membership deep into central and eastern Europe under the Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. The April 2008 Bucharest NATO summit subsequently promised the possibility that both Ukraine and Georgia could ultimately enter NATO; the possibility of a MAP (membership action plan) has likewise been promised, but not yet activated.<sup>9</sup> Following the August 2008 Georgia-Russia war, however, it appears necessary to find new ways to guarantee the security of Georgia and Ukraine, while concurrently cooperating more closely with Moscow.

My proposal is to find new ways to guarantee the security of the entire Black Sea and Caucasus region that do not end up dividing the region into what are essentially bureaucratically mandated NATO and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) “spheres of influence and security.” From this perspective, instead of letting the US and Russia continue to engage in their dangerous rivalry to bring Georgia or Ukraine into either NATO or the CSTO, the US, Russia and Europe should opt to work together to forge a “regional security and development community” for the entire Black Sea and Caucasus, as a step toward greater multilateral cooperation throughout the Euro-Atlantic area.

The proposed establishment of at least three International Centers for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/Peacekeeping in Sevastopol as well as in Kaliningrad and Cyprus, would lead to more productive US, European and Russia political and strategic cooperation in attempting to reconstruct and develop a number of conflict zones and “failing” states throughout the Euro-Atlantic region, thus “transforming” a number of so-called “frozen conflicts” on the periphery of Europe in a more positive direction.

<sup>7</sup> I am proposing a new form of “Associate Membership” in the European Union with limited voting rights for populous states such as Turkey, Ukraine and Russia.

<sup>8</sup> I proposed a Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council in Hall Gardner, « Vers un Conseil stratégique russo-atlantique? » *Politique Américaine* (No. 13, Spring 2009). See also my earlier argument for a “Transatlantic Political-Economic and Strategic Council” linked to regional “Contact Groups” in Hall Gardner, “Toward New Euro-Atlantic Euro Mediterranean Security Communities,” in Hall Gardner (ed.) *NATO and the European Union: New World, New Europe, New Threats* (Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Bucharest Summit Declaration  
[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm)

For this conference, I will focus on the Black Sea/ Caucasus.

## Sevastopol

An International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol could help better “balance” relations in the Black Sea region. This would mean better coordination between the US/NATO and Russia, between Ukraine and Russia, and between Turkey and Russia, in addition to better “balancing” the political-economic and strategic concerns of the other littoral states, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Ukraine with both Russia and Turkey.

In November 1999, former Georgian President Edward Shevardnaze had proposed a Caucasus initiative under the umbrella of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and encouraged the enhancement of the BSEC’s political role in the BSEC-European Union Cooperation platform.<sup>10</sup>

In essence, I am arguing for the revival of that approach in new geopolitical conditions: The goal would be to strengthen the Black Sea Economic Organization and to link it to the 2008 Turkish proposal for “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.” Such an approach

needs greater Russian, European as well as American/ NATO supports: The US and NATO, Russia and CSTO— in addition to the EU’s Black Sea Synergy<sup>11</sup> and EU Eastern Partnership (and including the EU’s Union for the Mediterranean)— could ultimately begin to interact and interlock with a Black Sea/ Caucasus regional security and development community.

From this perspective, the concept of joint and overlapping US- European- Russian security guarantees for Ukraine (that were previously implemented by the December 1994 *Budapest Memorandum*) could be enlarged to incorporate a much wider space that would include not only Ukraine, but also involve a much larger Black Sea/

Caucasian regional security and development community. As a possible step in this direction, the 1994 Budapest security assurances that had been granted to Ukraine (as well as to Kazakhstan and Belarus after these states gave up their nuclear arsenal and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) were re-confirmed by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, in a joint US-Russian statement on December 4, 2009.<sup>12</sup>

## The Russian Black Sea Fleet

The proposed establishment an International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense, and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol should not necessarily be excluded from consideration by either Moscow or Kiev. The purpose is to implement a cooperative-collective security approach to the region that seeks to protect “vital” Russian and Ukrainian interests, while at the same time looking for new forms of regional and international cooperation.

(photo credit: pavolk /flickr)



In April 2010, Russia and Ukraine made a deal in which Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich agreed to extend the lease of Sevastopol to Russia's Black Sea fleet for 25 years, until 2042.<sup>13</sup> The deal was reached in a rush, almost as soon as Yanukovich

became president; the previous Ukrainian President, Viktor Yushchenko, had threatened to evict the Russian fleet from Sevastopol once the original lease expired in 2017. Yet, as the April 2010 deal has generated significant protest in Ukraine, but also criticism in Russia (largely over its significant cost), it is possible that a new approach may be welcome, at least once the dust settles.

<sup>10</sup> See Eleni Fotiou, “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform” *What is at Stake for Regional Cooperation* International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) Policy Brief, no 16. June 2009.

<sup>11</sup> BLACK SEA SYNERGY - A NEW REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE [http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07\\_160\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/com07_160_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> U.S.-Russia Joint Statement on Expiration of the START Treaty <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/dec/133204.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Russia provided Ukraine a 30% discount on its gas bill. Although the deal was passed in the Ukrainian parliament and Russian Duma, Ukrainian officials threw eggs and tomatoes and set off smoke bombs in the Ukrainian parliament. Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko had promised to evict Russia from Sevastopol when the original lease expired in 2017 and accused the new President, Viktor Yanukovich, of betraying Ukraine to Russia. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35vpFAE4n08>

Here, while Moscow and Kiev have ostensibly tightened their relationship with respect to the Russian naval base at Sevastopol (in part for financial reasons), this has not meant that Ukraine under Viktor Yanukovich has pivoted in a totally pro-Russian direction. President Yanukovich has not recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, for example, nor has he thus far sought Ukrainian membership in the Russian-led Cooperative Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The formation of an International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense, and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol is not intended to exclude Russia, but to *devolve* its military presence. Moscow would still play the key role in protecting its vital interests in the region (such as protecting the key energy transit port at Novorossiysk), but many of the security and defense activities in the region could take place as joint international efforts.

(Broken arms treaty – photo credit: AZRainman/flickr)

### Ballistic Missile Defense

In addition to engaging in the joint protection of energy pipelines and transport through the Caucasus and Black Sea regions, this proposed approach to Euro-Atlantic security would seek out joint measures to counter the trafficking of arms, drugs, humans, among other illicit activities. An International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol could also help coordinate Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) in case of threats to Europe and Russia from Iran or other countries.

The Iranian missile and potential nuclear threat has begun to fuel an “insecurity-security dialectic” resulting in a significant arms rivalry that involves the deployment of Ballistic Missile Defenses, among other advanced weapons systems, in the wider Middle East—an arms rivalry that has begun to draw in the United States, France and the UK, as well as Russia.<sup>14</sup>

Without a diplomatic resolution to the dispute (such as that attempted by Turkey and Brazil, among other international efforts), there is a major risk that the Iranian ballistic missile and nuclear energy program could result in the further spread of nuclear weaponry and missile capabilities throughout much of the region (in addition to already existing Israeli nuclear weapons capability).

In 2007, as one possible option to bring the US, NATO and Russia into closer defense cooperation in countering a potential Iranian threat, Moscow had

proposed the deployment of a joint US-Russian BMD system in Azerbaijan or else in Armavir, in Krasnodar Krai on Russia's Black Sea coast, near the key energy transit port of Novorossiysk and close to Sochi resort area.<sup>15</sup> It seems that this proposal could be revived in new circumstances, under the umbrella of an International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping to be located in Sevastopol.

### The CFE Treaty

In addition to seeking out a common approach to Ballistic Missile Defenses, the issue of the Conventional Force in Europe treaty likewise needs addressing. The possible resolution of the not-so-frozen conflicts of South Ossetia and Abkhazia with respect to Georgia and Transnistria (Pridnestrovie) with respect to Moldova, followed by efforts to develop and reconstruct these conflict zones, could also help lead to general accord over the November 1999 Adapted Conventional Force in Europe (CFE) treaty. Efforts to mediate these conflicts could additionally assist the prospects for a reduction, if not an elimination, of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

The major dilemma is that it has thus far been impossible to establish a general accord over the Adapted 1999 CFE Treaty. Moscow began to oppose the adapted CFE treaty after NATO expanded in 2004 to a number of eastern European states that have not yet ratified the CFE. Moscow has likewise argued that there should not be any linkage established between the ratification of the CFE treaty and Russian military withdrawals from Georgia and Moldova (in accord with the Istanbul commitments of 1999).<sup>17</sup> Moscow argues, in part, that these states are not NATO members and thus are not relevant to the CFE issue.



<sup>15</sup> Sergei Karaganov, “Global Zero and Common Sense” *Russia in Global Affairs* Vol 8, No 2 April-June 2010.

<sup>16</sup> See Wolfgang Zellner, “Can This Treaty Be Saved? Breaking the Stalemate on Conventional Forces in Europe” *Arms Control Today* [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009\\_09/Zellner](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2009_09/Zellner)

Anne Witkowsky, Sherman Garnett, Jeff McCausland, *Salvaging the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty Regime: Options for Washington*

[http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/03\\_armed\\_forces\\_europe\\_treaty.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2010/03_armed_forces_europe_treaty.aspx) See also discussion, *Salvaging the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty* [http://www.brookings.edu/events/2010/0323\\_cfe\\_treaty.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/events/2010/0323_cfe_treaty.aspx)

See also appendix, East West Institute, *Euro-Atlantic Security: One Vision, Three Paths*, East West Institute (June 2009) <http://www.ewi.info/euro-atlantic-security-seminar-brussels-0>

<sup>17</sup> <http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/SIPRIPB0901.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> The Iranian missile and nuclear program has initiated a new “security dilemma” or what I prefer to call the “insecurity-security dialectic” which involves both internal domestic and external threat perceptions. See Hall Gardner, *Averting Global War: Regional Challenges, Overextension and Options for American Strategy* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

Should the CFE accord eventually collapse altogether, there will be no way to verify conventional force reductions on both sides. The situation consequently risks initiating a new conventional arms rivalry, particularly in the so-called “flanking regions,” and most specifically with respect to US, European and Russian disputes over Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as the issues of the Transnistria, among other not-so-frozen conflicts.



in Geneva, with representatives of Russia, Georgia and the “separatist regimes.”<sup>21</sup>

(Chess in the Caucasus – photo credit: I.S.K./flickr)

Here, new thinking is required that re-defines the concept of “independence.”<sup>22</sup> The dispute between the maintenance of Georgia’s territorial integrity versus South Ossetian and Abkhazian demands for right of

self-determination and “independence” is not resolvable within the present context involving separate “nation-states” (many of which are unsustainable as viable economic actors). Yet, it may be possible to resolve this issue, among other disputes in the region, within the context of the Turkish proposal for a “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform”— and in the effort to forge a larger confederation for the entire Caucasus.

In an effort to break the logjam over the CFE issue, among others, the European Union has focused on the dispute between the Russian-backed Transnistria (Pridnestrovie) and Moldova in its talks with Russia on European security.<sup>18</sup> Here, it might be possible to find an arrangement between Transnistria (Pridnestrovie) and Moldova based on what can be called *asymmetrical federalism*. Such an option could better balance disputes between Russia and Ukraine, on the one hand, and Moldova/Romania, on the other, given strong pan-Romanian sentiment in Moldova.<sup>19</sup>

The next step is to initiate *real dialogue* with Georgia over Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>20</sup> On the one hand, Washington has publically stated its support for the territorial integrity of Georgia, and has forged a new U.S.-Georgia Strategic Partnership Commission; on the other, it has also continued talks

A Confederation of the Caucasus can be envisioned that would permit Abkhazia and South Ossetia, among other enclaves in the region, to obtain greater “autonomy” and thus to establish new confederal relationships vis-à-vis Georgia and in relationship to all the states of the region. This approach—in seeking to establish a loose confederation of Caucasian states—could also permit Russia to *devolve* its military presence (in close cooperation with the EU and NATO) in the Caucasus, both south and north, but without eliminating Russian influence altogether.

Once again, this proposal does not represent a new form of geopolitical “containment” of Russia, but a way to provide the necessary joint security architecture in order stabilize the Caucasus and then open up its tremendous economic, resource and human potential for the benefit of the entire region, if not the world.<sup>23</sup> The US, Europe and Russia

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.kyivpost.com/news/opinion/op\\_ed/detail/85839/](http://www.kyivpost.com/news/opinion/op_ed/detail/85839/)

See also Transcript of Remarks and Response to Media Questions by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference after Meeting of Weimar Triangle Foreign Ministers, Paris, June 23, 2010

[http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/F4A74167A7284734C325774D00304330](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/F4A74167A7284734C325774D00304330)

see also, [http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova\\_Welcomes\\_RussianGerman\\_Initiative\\_On\\_Transnistria/2064442.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova_Welcomes_RussianGerman_Initiative_On_Transnistria/2064442.html) See critical commentary, *Joint EU-Russian crisis management in Europe? Interesting idea...* <http://blog.gmfu.org/2010/06/12/joint-eu-russian-crisis-management-in-europe-interesting-idea/>

<sup>19</sup> “Ukraine and Russia support Moldova and Pridnestrovie as part of one nation, while stressing that Pridnestrovie should have a considerable degree of autonomy. Moldova stresses that Pridnestrovie is part of Moldova. Given the limited but potentially greater pan-Romanian sentiment in Moldova, a politically looser Pridnestrovie within former Moldavian SSR boundaries, increases the likelihood of that entity to not drift away from Russia and Ukraine. See commentary by Mike Averko, “Differences Over Disputed Territories” July 6, 2010 <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/167854> and “Haggling Over the Former Moldavian SSR Dispute” (May 26, 2010) <http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/158716>

<sup>20</sup> In October 2010, Russia withdrew some troops from Georgian territory near South Ossetia. As a bargaining strategy, Georgia has stated that it will not oppose Russian membership in the World Trade Organization, if there is an agreement on Georgian-Russian borders. See BULLETIN GÉORGIEN (25 octobre 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Philip Gordan, “Georgia: One Year After the August War” (August 4, 2009). The US has participated in the Geneva sessions “along with Russia, Georgia, and representatives of the separatist regimes. The meetings have been difficult due to our fundamental disagreement over the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but they facilitate direct contact between Georgian and separatist leaders and keep international attention focused on the dispute.” <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/126884.htm>

<sup>22</sup> See Hall Gardner, “Redefine the Concept of Independence” [http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/Redefine\\_the\\_Concept\\_of\\_Independence](http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/Redefine_the_Concept_of_Independence). The same critique of “independence” holds true for Kosovo, which is largely dependent upon EU largesse.

<sup>23</sup> The Black Sea region has an area of nearly twenty million square kilometers, with roughly 350 million people, and it straddles two continents. Its foreign trade runs about US\$300 billion annually. The region is also the second-largest source of oil and natural gas after the Persian Gulf region and thus offers an alternative source to Persian Gulf energy resources. The region possesses the key commercial rivers that flow into the Black Sea (the Danube, Dniester, and Dnieper) and largely controls the trans-Ukrainian and trans-Turkish oil and gas pipelines running to the energy markets in the north of Europe.

consequently need to consider the security and development needs for the region as a *whole* through overlapping security guarantees, that can be reinforced by Partnership for Peace (PfP) peacekeepers, for example.

(UN observer mission in Georgia – photo credit: UN/flickr)



There can be no “national” solution to the Caucasus in that a number of ethnic disputes and irredentist claims overlap presently demarcated territorial state borders. Moreover, the possible membership of these states in either NATO or in the CSTO is not panacea either, in that membership in these separate military camps and command structures, even if these camps can be aligned, as has been proposed by Zbigniew Brzezinski,<sup>24</sup> would *not* work to better integrate the *entire* Caucasus region.

The dilemma raised here is that NATO has thus far sustained its promises made at the April 2008 Bucharest summit for Georgia and/or Ukraine to enter NATO as traditional members.<sup>25</sup> Should NATO expand its membership *in the traditional sense of the term* to these latter states—without a solid joint security agreement with Russia—it would permit NATO to be able to unilaterally project its force capabilities into the Black Sea and Caucasus regions.

Thus, instead of attempting to integrate Ukraine and Georgia back into NATO’s integrated command structure,<sup>26</sup> the US/NATO, European Union and Russia should work together to help build security *from the ground up*, in fostering an ultimately self-reliant “regional security and development community.” This could take place with the assistance of all the Black Sea states, including Turkey, following the latter’s proposal for a “Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform.”

<sup>24</sup> Brzezinski argues that states such as Georgia and Ukraine should be able to choose which alliance they want to join, assuming that the two alliance systems can be loosely aligned by US-Russian compact. But this is the case of the “tail wagging the dog.” See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard* (Basic Books: Harper Collins 1997). Contrary to Brzezinski’s views, NATO, the EU and Russia (CSTO) need to take the initiative to work together to help design the parameters of Caucasian security by building a regional security and development community from the bottom up, instead of from the top down.

<sup>25</sup> “NATO welcomes Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO... We have asked Foreign Ministers to make a first assessment of progress at their December 2008 meeting. Foreign Ministers have the authority to decide on the MAP applications of Ukraine and Georgia.” Bucharest Summit Declaration (3 April 2008) [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_8443.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm)

<sup>26</sup> See argument of Ron D. Asmus and Bruce P. Jackson, “The Black Sea and the Frontiers of Freedom” *Policy Review* 125 (June-July 2004). The article depicts the Black Sea region as the “Bermuda Triangle” of Western security studies!

By contrast with the traditional NATO approach to “full membership,” an International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol could consequently help better “balance” the relations and interests among the littoral states of the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Ukraine, and Turkey) with the United States,

European Union and Russia. Such an International Center would prevent the region from being potentially divided into a either NATO or Russian/CSTO “sphere of influence” or else a Russian-Turkish energy and trade “condominium.” These latter scenarios could be prevented by fostering greater multilateral economic and development cooperation and in seeking out *joint* measures of security cooperating in the defense of energy pipelines and transit routes, for example, through *regional* Black Sea naval cooperation.<sup>27</sup>

On the one hand, the US, Europe and Russia need to consider security and development *within* the Euro-Atlantic community as a whole, to prevent further conflict between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, or between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, or between Moldova and Transnistria (Pridnestrovie), among other possibilities. On the other hand, the US, Europe and Russia also need to find new concerted approaches to disputes and conflicts *outside* the Euro-Atlantic area, with regard to Iran, Afghanistan and the wider Middle East and Arabic/Persian Gulf—in areas where the US, Europe and Russia have common interests.

An International Center for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Sevastopol would consequently engage in the joint NATO-European-Russian protection of energy pipelines and transit through the Caucasus and Black Sea regions, in addition to

<sup>27</sup> Turkey has argued for the strengthening of *regional* Black Sea naval cooperation. In March 2006, NATO member Turkey, along with Russia, openly opposed the extension of NATO’s naval Operation Active Endeavor (OAE) from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea. Ankara has argued that the OAE violates the 1936 Montreux convention that permits Turkey to control the straits. The OAE had been supported by both Bulgaria and Romania, as well as by Ukraine and Georgia. The latter two Black Sea littoral states tend to regard Russian and Turkish efforts to check NATO as a means to establish a Russo-Turkish condominium over the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. This fact has raised the question, which has priority: the Euro-Atlantic alliance or Russian-Turkish naval hegemony in the Black Sea. Ankara, however, has argued that OAE is unnecessary as it duplicates the already-existing Black Sea Naval Force of all six Black Sea riparian states, and through Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre (BBCIC) in Burgas, Bulgaria, that already possess NATO connections, plus Black Sea Harmony. Hall Gardner, See *Averting Global War: Regional Challenges, Overextension and Options for American Strategy* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

engaging in joint measures to counter the trafficking of arms, drugs, humans, among other illicit activities.

Such an International Center in Sevastopol (along with one in Kaliningrad) could also coordinate the NATO, European and Russian security and defense policy in relationship to Ballistic Missile Defenses against potential threats outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Likewise, such an International Center would engage in conflict mediation and peacekeeping in the Transnistria (Pridnestrovie) and the volatile Caucasus under a Dayton-like accord for a transitional period, under a general OSCE mandate.

## Conclusions

The creation of at least three International Centers for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Kaliningrad, Cyprus and Sevastopol, plus the formation of a Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council designed to more closely harmonize security and defense policy among the US/NATO, European Union and Russia, would represent practical steps toward a new system of Euro-Atlantic security.

An International Center in Kaliningrad would seek to mediate between Russia, Germany and the Baltic/North Sea regions, and help to find ways to bring Kaliningrad and Russia closer to the European Union. An International Center in Cyprus would seek to mediate between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, Turkey, Greece, and the wider Middle East and Euro-Mediterranean. It would seek to bring Turkey into a closer relationship with the European Union (what I call "Associate Membership"); it would also include the possibility of overseeing peacekeeping between Israel and a new Palestine, assuming a diplomatic settlement can eventually be reached. An International Center in Sevastopol would seek to mediate between US/NATO, the European Union, Russia and Ukraine and the larger Black Sea/ Caucasus/Caspian regions in the creation of new regional security and development communities.

The implementation of at least three International Centers for the Coordination of Security, Defense and Conflict Mediation/ Peacekeeping in Kaliningrad, Cyprus and Sevastopol would consequently represent a practical step to better coordinate US, European and Russian security and defense policy toward the entire Euro-Atlantic region, in the creation of a Euro-Atlantic Strategic Council and Euro-Atlantic Peace Force that ultimately replaces NATO and leads to the creation of a new Euro-Atlantic Confederation. ***Such an approach would seek to secure the entire Euro-Atlantic region instead of seeking to overstretch European defense and security capabilities toward a "global NATO."***

In the immediate future, NATO and Russia need to work together to build the Afghan government's capabilities to counter the Taliban in Afghanistan

(while simultaneously seeking a diplomatic solution to the conflict). At the same time they need to stem the drug trade from the Afghan region, and to counter other forms of "terrorism." Just as importantly, they need to work with the UN to find a common means to respond to natural and man-made disasters.<sup>28</sup> NATO and Russia likewise need to work together to oppose piracy, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in cooperating to counter Iranian missile capabilities, or those of other states that might threaten the Euro-Atlantic region.

At the same time, however, despite positive steps taken to achieve a number of NATO-Russian accords at the forthcoming November 19-20 NATO Summit in Lisbon, the possible failure to move even more decisively toward an entente or alliance with Russia in the not-so-long term could well lead to the deterioration of US and European relations with the Russian Federation—that could possibly be insurmountable—particularly if NATO, Russia and the CSTO ultimately fail to achieve a diplomatic breakthrough and are unable to find a compromise solution to the question of security in the Black Sea and the Caucasus, among other issues of "vital" concern.



(Three dancing figures, San Francisco – photo credit: wallyg/flickr)

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<sup>28</sup> See Statement by Mikhael Gorbachev in support of the Qatari proposal for a Humanitarian Operation Force (HOPEFOR) to provide rapid response to humanitarian catastrophes caused by natural disasters. [http://gorbachev.cmm.ru/articles/2010\\_10\\_28/](http://gorbachev.cmm.ru/articles/2010_10_28/). There is no reason why NATO cannot also assist in such humanitarian efforts as well under a UN mandate.