



Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

The Renaissance of the West

How Europe and America Can Shape
Up in Confronting Putin's Russia

Roland Freudenstein and Ulrich Speck





Wilfried
Martens Centre
for European Studies

The Renaissance of the West

How Europe and America Can Shape Up
in Confronting Putin's Russia

Roland Freudenstein and Ulrich Speck



Credits

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
Rue du Commerce 20
Brussels, BE - 1000

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies is the political foundation and think tank of the European People's Party (EPP), dedicated to the promotion of Christian Democrat, conservative and like-minded political values.

For more information please visit:
www.martenscentre.eu

Editor: Benjamin Barth, Junior Research Officer, bb@martenscentre.eu
External editing: Communicative English bvba
Layout and cover design: RARO S.L.
Typesetting: Victoria Agency
Printed in Belgium by Drukkerij Jo Vandenbulcke

This publication receives funding from the European Parliament.
© Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies 2015

The European Parliament assumes no responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in this publication or their subsequent use. Sole responsibility lies with the author of this publication.

Table of contents

Martens Centre profile	04
About the authors	06
Executive summary	08
The West in the 21st century	10
Dealing with the Russia challenge	16
Responsible Europe: towards a better union	20
CFSP mechanisms: necessary, but not sufficient	22
EU–NATO relations	23
Energy Union	24
A new kind of Eastern Partnership	24
Countering the Kremlin’s influence inside the EU and building a new consensus	26
A new transatlantic bargain	28
Strengthening the transatlantic economy	31
Keeping NATO relevant	32
Strengthening strategic cooperation	34
Conclusion and recommendations	36
Bibliography	40

Keywords: European Union – NATO – Russia – West – Ukraine – New Cold War – Intelligence – Security – Defence – TTIP – Energy – Propaganda – Geopolitics – Eastern Partnership – Hybrid warfare

About us



Martens Centre profile

The Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, established in 2007, is the political foundation and think tank of the European People's Party (EPP). The Martens Centre embodies a pan-European mindset, promoting Christian Democrat, conservative and like-minded political values. It serves as a framework for national political foundations linked to member parties of the EPP. It currently has 29 member foundations in 22 EU and non-EU countries. The Martens Centre takes part in the preparation of EPP programmes and policy documents. It organises seminars and training on EU policies and on the process of European integration.

The Martens Centre also contributes to formulating EU and national public policies. It produces research studies and books, electronic newsletters, policy briefs, and the twice-yearly European View journal. Its research activities are divided into six clusters: party structures and EU institutions, economic and social policies, EU foreign policy, environment and energy, values and religion, and new societal challenges. Through its papers, conferences, authors' dinners and website, the Martens Centre offers a platform for discussion among experts, politicians, policymakers and the European public.

About the authors



About Roland Freudenstein & Ulrich Speck



Roland Freudenstein is Deputy Director and Head of Research at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies. He studied political science, economics, Japan studies and international relations in Bonn and Los Angeles. He has worked for the German Council on Foreign Relations, the foreign policy planning staff of the European Commission and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (in Warsaw and Berlin). He frequently publishes and debates on international security, European integration, German–Polish relations, Eastern Europe and the future of democracy.



Ulrich Speck is a Visiting Scholar at Carnegie Europe in Brussels. Before this he was an Associate Fellow at FRIDE (Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, a think tank in Madrid) and worked for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague and Brussels. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Frankfurt, where from 1992–5 he was a member of the Graduate College for the History of Law. His research focuses on EU foreign policy and Europe’s strategic role in a changing global environment.

Executive summary



The West is being challenged in an unprecedented way: as crises and conflicts multiply in the eastern and southern neighbourhoods of the EU, terrorist movements, authoritarian regimes and especially a newly aggressive, fundamentally antagonistic Russia are threatening the core values as well as the cohesion of the West. But the West is stronger than it looks and has lost none of its normative attraction to democrats across the globe or the subversive power that authoritarian regimes fear. A West that is rising to the challenges can open the way to a bright future: a Western Renaissance.

The confrontation with a newly aggressive Russia is the most severe test. The European Union has to bury the idea of a modernisation partnership with Russia as long as the Putin regime is in power, let go of its Russia First approach, engage massively on reform in Eastern Europe and learn to accept the reality of a substantial conflict with Russia.

The EU as an organisation must become stronger economically, streamline its decision-making structures and improve its security and defence policy while intensifying links with NATO. It has to reform its eastern neighbourhood policy and reduce its energy dependence on Russia. NATO members will have to increase defence spending, reform structures and find new answers to the challenge of hybrid warfare. EU member states will also have to find answers to the growing Russian propaganda and information warfare.

Transatlantic relations remain the foundation of the global liberal order. They have to be strengthened and put on a more strategic basis. This includes much more determination on both sides to make the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership a success. But it also implies a better burden sharing, with Europe assuming more responsibility in security and strategy, and improved Euro-American coordination in global democracy support.

The West in the 21st century



Judging by the willingness of North American and European leaders to positively invoke it, the West is not in good shape. It has become a fashion among political pundits to talk of its decline, in relative or even absolute terms. (Examples are Fareed Zakaria's 'post-American World'¹ and Shapiro and Witney's 'post-American Europe'.²)

And yet, many of the detractors of Western modernity, from militant Islamists to official China and Russia, seem to take the West much more seriously than it does itself. They all define the West as their main antagonist or even their most important enemy. They all claim that liberal democracy is in decline and that the future belongs to more authoritarian systems.

We disagree with this view. It is easy to criticise the West for its failures; indeed, nothing is more popular in the West. But Western self-criticism is first and foremost a strength, not a weakness. Its goal is to 'achieve our country' as the political philosopher Richard Rorty has put it, 'working harder to realise the potential that lies in us as individuals and as societies, aiming higher and ultimately getting closer to the ideal of a better, fairer social and political order'.³

It seems that the principles of liberal democracy are being contested everywhere

Self-doubt is ingrained in the West's political discourse, and it is basically healthy. But sometimes it can also turn into a handicap. We're living in such a moment now: it seems that the principles of liberal democracy are being contested everywhere, and that North America and Europe, the geographical core of the West, has not much to offer anymore to the world.

But while the notion of the West, with its main ingredients of human rights, liberal democracy, market economy and rule of law, may have become unpopular in some quarters of the West itself, the attraction of this political model appears to grow in other parts of the world. Middle-class-based, democracy-oriented popular uprisings in the Arab worlds and in Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Hong Kong and elsewhere are a tes-

¹ F. Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York: Norton, 2008).

² J. Shapiro and N. Witney, *Towards a Post-American Europe: A Power Audit of EU-US Relations*, European Council on Foreign Relations (London, 2009).

³ R. Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).



timony to that.⁴ When asked to choose between subordination and participation, people across the globe choose to have a choice.

Personal freedom, space for individual development and improvement, and a state that is delivering public goods and protection from poverty—what people in the West take for granted is what they are envied for in many countries all over the world. In early 2014, Ukrainian protesters on the Maidan in Kiev risked their lives for the hope of bringing Western liberties and opportunities to their country. Some even died for this hope.

Today the tension between liberal democracy and autocratic forces is increasing. Neither China nor Russia is on the path towards liberal democracy. While both entered the economic sphere of globalisation and started to interconnect themselves deeply with the West, they have shielded their related political systems from democratisation and created a kind of authoritarian capitalism, run by and largely to the advantage of a class of self-defined elites. Former Communist elites have struck a new deal with the masses, delivering prosperity but denying participation. At the same

When asked to choose between subordination and participation, people across the globe choose to have a choice.

time, these elites are all too aware of the challenge put to their rule by Western soft power.

More than two decades after the breakdown of the Berlin Wall, the apparent success of this authoritarian capitalism is challenging the West's basic belief that economic and political freedom are two sides of the same coin, and that in today's world all roads lead to a Western-style democracy. China seems to demonstrate that authoritarian systems can beat the West with its own weapons, by performing better economically (and catching up technologically and militarily), while maintaining authoritarianism in the political sphere. The interdependence of political and economic freedom is thus put in doubt.

In addition to the China challenge, Western optimism has taken other hits. The bitter controversy about the American response to 9/11—from the Iraq war to the increase of spying and surveillance—has led to a

⁴ Y. Aydin, 'Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey: Socio-Political Factors and Subjective Motives', *Orient: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur des Orients* 55/1 (2012), 11–21; A. Gusev, 'The Return of the Russian Revolution: Nature of and Perspectives on the Wave of Social Protest in Russia', *New Politics* 14/1 (2014), 108–15.



disenchantment between large parts of Europe and the United States. The coherence of the West as a geopolitical actor is under increasing pressure. While governments agree that cooperation and coordination is the best way to improve security and prosperity, the willingness of people on both sides of the Atlantic to see each other as vital partners, and to invest in this relationship, is diminishing.

The latest challenge to the West comes from Russia. With its annexation of Crimea and its attempts to win control over Ukraine by military intervention, Russia has become a revisionist power that is undermining core principles of international law and challenging the European peace order. While the West has maintained unity in the Ukraine crisis, it took the EU quite a while to move towards a more confrontational stance towards Russia. Economic interests and geopolitical concerns considerably slowed down the attempts to keep Russian power in Ukraine in check.

The new attack by Russia on Western liberalism has another dimension as well. Russia is actively nurturing two political camps inside the EU, each of which is attracted by different features of the order Putin has imposed on Russia. On the one hand, far-left parties in the EU see Russia as a counterweight to the US and Western capitalism; nostalgia and long-time connections to Moscow may also play a role, especially in EU countries that were part of the Warsaw Pact. On the other hand, there is a new alliance between the Kremlin and far-right parties. While anti-Americanism plays a role in that camp as well, they equally feel attracted by what they perceive as a conservative, values-based ideology in Putin's Russia: authoritarian structures, nationalism, denial of minority rights. Even more mainstream conservative parties, such as Hungary's Fidesz, have started to fundamentally criticise the tenets of liberal democracy.⁵

The new challenges come at the surprise of many in the West. Generations have grown up in peace and have enjoyed more prosperity and more freedoms than their forebears. They started to take their way of life for granted, expecting that there wouldn't be any effort necessary to maintain it and that other parts of the world would naturally move towards that order.

But the new challenges reveal an uncomfortable truth: the liberal order is a fragile construction which needs constant care. Only if every new generation in the West can find the will to stand up for the princi-

⁵ V. Orban, [Untitled] speech delivered at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp, Tusnádfürdő, Romania, 26 July 2014.



principles on which liberal democracy and the market economy are built can the West continue to prosper and enlarge.

The West has everything to win. Its crisis is, above all, 'spiritual', rooted in a lack of belief in the future and the strength of liberal democracy, and a lack of understanding that keeping that order intact sometimes requires sacrifices.

And while it is overdue that non-Western countries get a bigger say in world affairs, it also remains true that the West stands as the flag-bearer of principles to which many in the world aspire: human rights, the rule of law, multi-party democracy—all coupled with prosperity.

Neither radical Islam nor autocratic systems are responding to the aspirations of a growing global society. Democracy may see a momentary backlash, but at the same time it has strengthened its appeal in Asia and in Eastern Europe. The principles of the market economy and the existence of a global market have lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty in the last two decades.

Europeans need to entangle themselves more in world affairs and bear a larger part of the cost for their security and prosperity.

Europe is still amazingly rich and stable compared with other regions in the world. Europeans on average have the best life they have ever had in their history. But to keep things as they are, Europeans need to move. They need to get out of their comfort zone. The US won't guarantee European security forever. Europeans need to entangle themselves more in world affairs and bear a larger part of the cost for their security and prosperity. The cheapest and safest way to do so is by increasing cooperation and coordination—inside the EU and with the US—in other words, by strengthening the West. It is true that in recent years, especially the US has, at times, gone against its own principles and needs to be reminded of that. But despite all well and less-well deserved criticism, the US remains not only the most powerful country in the world but also the most like-minded partner the EU can get, compared to all others.

The most urgent challenge for the EU in the years to come is to find ways to deal with a more autocratic and aggressive Russia. Unlike in the southern neighbourhood, where the EU is only one player among many, and where the US still takes the lead (despite being increasingly hesitant), the EU in the East is in the driver's seat of Western policies. It faces a fundamental challenge that includes aspects of EU foreign



policy as well as EU domestic policies, it has the tools to be effective and it is already in the lead, as we saw in Ukraine.

Responding to the new challenge in the East means countering Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and its neo-imperial claims in other neighbouring countries. Russia needs to understand that the time of empire is over in Europe, that all nation-states are sovereign and share some basic rights, not only the most powerful ones.

Hence, to make a resurgence of the West possible, Putin's Russia must be confronted, Europe must become more responsible, primarily through a better European Union, and the transatlantic relationship must undergo a thorough renewal. This is what we call the renaissance of the West.

Dealing with the Russia challenge



After the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, Western observers and policymakers overwhelmingly considered Russia to be on a path of transition towards liberal democracy and a market economy. The EU's Russia policy, largely driven by Germany, was based on that assumption; its main impetus was to support this transition by bringing Russia closer to Western governance structures. Economic and political modernisation were expected to go hand in hand.

But with Putin's increasingly authoritarian course internally, and with his more aggressive foreign policy, it is today clear that Russia is on a different path, at least in the short- and the mid-term. The room for dissent is constantly shrinking; the political system is monopolised and controlled by the Kremlin. A sophisticated propaganda apparatus is painting the West as an enemy, spreading the feeling that Russia is under attack.

Economic diversification didn't take place. The regime is increasingly relying on income from natural resources. Benefitting from a rising price of oil

For the foreseeable future, the West has to deal with Russia as it is today, on a more realistic basis.

and gas, the regime became the central economic actor. By redistributing the profits from the sale of natural resources, it has strengthened the dependency of elites and the broader population on the central government. A larger, truly independent middle class based on economic success and not just on political favouritism has failed to emerge, despite hopeful signs in 2012 when civic protests shook Moscow and St Petersburg. The hope that with economic diversification income would be spread more fairly and widely, based on merits, has been disappointed.

As a consequence, the EU needs to fundamentally reconsider its Russia policy. It is obvious now that every attempt to support political and economic reform from the outside is bound to fail, as long as the current regime is in place. Any reform effort has to come from within. But for the foreseeable future, the West has to deal with Russia as it is today, on a more realistic basis.

The long-term goal of a Russian transition towards liberal democracy and market economy remains valid. As long as Russia is an autocracy, it remains a dangerous neighbour, threatening European stability and security. We see now Eastern Europe emerging as a zone of competition and conflict, something that the EU wanted to prevent from happening, at almost any price.



If Russia had taken steps towards liberal democracy and a market economy, the EU and Russia probably would be able to cooperate in their common neighbourhood today with the common goal of making these countries more stable and prosperous: a win-win solution. But a regime in Moscow that feels increasingly threatened by popular uprisings has found new stability by painting the West as an enemy and by attacking one of those countries. The regime has successfully reclaimed the patriotic narrative.

Whatever the prospects of long-term regime change in Russia, for the foreseeable future the EU needs to deal with the Russia that exists, not with the Russia it would like to see. Instead of trying to change the character of the Russian regime, the goal should be to influence its behaviour, to the extent that EU interests are affected.

The main goal is to stop Russia undermining the new order that emerged in Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, built on the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Peace and security in Europe can only be maintained if Russia does not permanently challenge the basic rules of the

Russia has become a truly revisionist power, and it is highly unlikely that there will be a return to stability in Eastern Europe.

international system; it has to accept that smaller states have equal rights. Russia has become a truly revisionist power, and it is highly unlikely that there will be a return to stability in Eastern Europe.

A strategy that prevents Russia from trying to turn neighbours into satellites, by using all kinds of means including military power, must be built on two elements. First, the EU must be ready to make Russia pay a price for violating its neighbours' sovereignty and territorial integrity. Second, it must strengthen the capacity of Russia's post-Soviet neighbours to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Ukraine conflict has clarified that the West won't defend the borders of post-Soviet countries outside NATO, at least not for the time being. But sanctions are a powerful instrument to make Russia pay a price. Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia today has a great degree of economic interdependence with the West. When the 28 EU member states together with the US decide to impose sanctions on Russia, this is a powerful signal. And while it may be that sanctions unite the population behind a ruler in the first instance, the economic consequences of sanctions are increasingly felt over the mid-term and are bound to disenchant parts of the population.



The second element of a new strategy is to give more support to EU neighbours in Eastern Europe. For more than two decades, the EU has had privileged relations with Moscow and neglected relations with other post-Soviet states. As long as there was hope to modernise Russia, this approach made sense: once Russia was a liberal democracy, it would become a 'responsible stakeholder' in the international system and have fruitful and mutually beneficial relations with its post-Soviet neighbours.

But as this hope has been disappointed, the EU needs to change its approach to the whole of Eastern Europe. The EU needs to help stabilise these countries, because it is their weakness that opens up plenty of opportunities for a revisionist Russia to undermine their statehood. Stabilising means primarily two things: helping to make these countries economically and politically more successful and militarily more resilient (by means of providing weapons and training). The process of EU association with those countries that are ready to reform—at the moment Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia—must be combined with a massive, long-term commitment by the Brussels institutions and the member states.

**Responsible
Europe: towards
a better union**



Some may not have realised it, but today the European Union itself is under attack by Russia. First of all, there are security threats against some of its member states, for example, the Baltic States and Poland, as well as Finland and Sweden. Second, liberal and democratic values upon which the Union is based are under attack—not only in Ukraine and other neighbouring countries but actually also through Russian support for extremist parties of the left and the right in the EU itself. And third, Russia is, and has been for some time, actively undermining the cohesion of the Union, trying to play member states off against one another. Apparently, one of President Putin's goals is the weakening and eventual demise of the EU.

Optimally, the confrontation with Putin's Russia should galvanise the EU into shaping up to meet the challenge. In fact, in an ideal world, the EU, its member states and citizens would have realised long ago that the old reliance on soft power alone wouldn't do.⁶ Finally, in an ideal world, the EU and its constituents would see that it is absolutely insufficient to just create new institutions, such as the European External Action Service and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs (HR). Rather, greater consensus among the member states on foreign and security priorities is key, and this process has to go hand in hand with an internal strengthening of the Union, which first and foremost implies socio-economic reform and modernisation. Without stronger economic growth, Europe will not pull itself out of the precarious lack of hard power which makes reacting to Russia's aggression so difficult. Hence, completing the Single Market, creating the Digital Single Market, cutting red tape and reforming labour markets in the member states and, of course, enhancing transatlantic economic relations in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)—all these are necessary preconditions for a Union more competitive and therefore better able to cope with external challenges.

Apparently, one of President Putin's goals is the weakening and eventual demise of the EU.

But the EU and its member states are unlikely to react quickly to the Russia challenge, just as their reaction to the Russian war against Georgia, the Russian unravelling of much of the 'colour revolutions' and the 'Arab Spring' was sadly below what was needed, and below the EU's capabilities, provided it pulled itself together. Consequently, it is no surprise that in this contingency as well the Union is hardly up to the challenge so far. But in the end, the only alternative to shaping up will be for the EU to concede defeat and thereby, in

⁶ R. Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage, 2003).



the end, risk its own existence. Besides the obvious need to get back on track economically, this process of shaping up will have to involve five interconnected fields: the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the relationship between the EU and NATO, the project of a European Energy Union, a completely remodelled Eastern Partnership, and the question of who will bring all these changes about by increasing public awareness and support, and under what circumstances this will occur.

CFSP mechanisms: necessary, but not sufficient

The years since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty should have made everyone modest regarding the EU's ability to truly coordinate the foreign policy of the member states. And yet, with a new Commission in place, a Council President Tusk (who offers a remarkable track record in foreign policy) and an extraordinarily ambitious High Representative Mogherini, there is a new chance at streamlining the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. It may also be helpful that in the new Commission, the HR is more clearly meant to be the Commission vice-president, chairing a mini-college of all commissioners dealing with foreign relations (trade, development, neighbourhood, etc.).

But after two decades of trying to develop a CFSP that deserves the name, it should be clear that mechanistic solutions, relying on institutional arrangements, can be part of an improvement at best. The other, possibly more important, part will be the acknowledgement of the fact that member states—and sometimes 'coalitions of the willing' among the member states—will continue to call the shots in EU external relations. It would be much better to openly say that, and try to make the best of it, than to continue demanding more qualified majority voting as methods to coerce the member states into positions.

Formulating a successor text to the EU Security Strategy of 2003, which was slightly updated in 2007, would be a worthwhile step towards defining a new basic consensus on European security in the new confrontation with existential threats, but here too one should not expect miracles from the process. It should be



seen as a chance to define some central points the member states can agree on, and above all, to provide a tool for EU leaders to help publicly spread the message that the Union is in a new era of threats.

Defence should occupy more space in the EU Council, and defence summits should be organised every year. This may be not a sufficient, but at least a necessary, precondition to more cohesion in EU security policy.

EU–NATO relations

The European Union must reshape its still problematic relationship to NATO. The initiative should come from the Union because it has, in relative terms, a stronger position vis-à-vis its member states than NATO. A high level EU–NATO declaration, or similar document, would be a good starting point to formalise and deepen a relationship which is still characterised by a certain amount of mutual mistrust—notwithstanding the great overlap in member states between the two organisations. It should contain a common strategic vision regarding the most pressing external threats, a clear distribution of tasks (to avoid any duplication of efforts and institutions) and a structured approach to regular meetings on all hierarchical levels.⁷

There is one concrete obstacle to any further formalisation of EU–NATO relations: the Turkey–Cyprus prob-

EU and NATO need a common strategic vision.

lem. As Turkey will not become an EU member in the foreseeable future, efforts by the EU and its member states should be redoubled to help solve the most important controversies between Ankara and Nicosia in this context, and also to improve cooperation between north and south on the island. Besides that, even if the conflict itself cannot be significantly mitigated, at least Turkey's and Cyprus's partners in the EU and NATO should offer more incentives to make the conflict less of an obstacle to an EU–NATO rapprochement.

⁷ H. Hopia, *Breaking Down the Walls: Improving EU–NATO Relations*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2013).



Energy Union

The EU has to become less dependent on Russian energy deliveries. This has been recognised by many of the 'new' member states since their accession in 2004, as energy blackmail (with delivery cuts, as well as exorbitant prices) has been a more and more regularly used instrument of Russian policy vis-à-vis the 'neighbourhood'. But it has taken on a particular urgency since Russia began its 2014 aggression against Ukraine.

First, and logically, a lower degree of dependence on Russian energy can primarily be achieved through a diversification of sources. That particularly applies to liquefied natural gas, especially when brought by ship from North America. Exploiting more energy resources in the EU itself will be another important component: EU member states should soften their opposition to shale gas exploitation. Poland's proposal for a European Energy Union must be more seriously discussed.⁸

The second important strategic development that the EU should follow up is enhanced solidarity among the member states in case of Russian pressure. This implies the political will to not let Moscow play EU member states off against one another, as well as improvements in the EU pipeline network and better storage facilities.

Third, there has to be a stricter prosecution of Gazprom's abuse of market rules. Russian money laundering, price fixing and insider trading on global energy markets must be countered more effectively.⁹

⁸ D. Tusk, 'A United Europe Can End Russia's Energy Stranglehold', *Financial Times*, 21 April 2014.

⁹ E. Lucas, 'Russia is Winning', *DELFI: The Lithuania Tribune*, 4 September 2014.



A new kind of Eastern Partnership

The EU's effort to export stability, the rule of law, democracy and prosperity to six former Soviet republics is now in shambles, at least as it was originally conceived in 2007. Russia has created frozen conflicts, or begun hot wars, against five of the six countries (exception: docile Belarus).¹⁰ The European Union will have to rethink its strategy in a fundamental way: First of all, it will be more important than ever before to take the long haul, and not expect results too quickly. This is difficult in democracies, but here it is indispensable. The speed with which most of the Central and East European EU members transformed in the 1990s is probably not replicable in most countries of the former Soviet Union, with different historical experiences and a much more destructive role played by Russia today.

Second, the focus of EU efforts must be shifted from the emphasis on elections and political process to a new emphasis on an independent judiciary, the fight against corruption and inclusive economic growth. Democracy remains important, but without a stronger focus on the rule of law and higher GDP per capita, democracy will be much less sustainable in the partnership countries.

Third, and probably most important, the Eastern Partnership should focus much more on civil society. The current focus on governments is, first, a product of the rather bureaucratic approach of EU institutions, which traditionally deal more with governments than any other actors. Second, it is based on the illusion that governing elites in the partnership countries actually want the comprehensive transformation envisaged by the EU. This is very often simply not the case (in contrast to Central Europe after 1989). Hence, to shift the focus to those parts of society that actively seek reform and modernisation, the EU must make the effort to engage NGOs, political organisations, independent media and other civil society actors much more intensively. A special role is played by religious communities in the partner countries: In recent years, they have often been staunchly on the Russian/authoritarian side of the divide and increasingly opposed to Western-style modernisation. But with a bit more attention from Western churches and other civil society organisations, this tendency can be stopped and possibly even reversed. There is no guarantee of immedi-

¹⁰ S. Samadashvili, *Building a Lifeline for Freedom: Eastern Partnership 2.0*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2014).



ate success; on the contrary, this will be a trial-and-error process. But in the long run, it is the only way to help build future elites that are truly interested in transformation.

Countering the Kremlin's influence inside the EU and building a new consensus

Russia has vastly increased its efforts at influencing public opinion and decision-making in the West. In particular, key countries of the European Union, such as Germany, have experienced an unprecedented level of Russian effort to this effect. According to the new Russian doctrine of 'hybrid war', information warfare is an integral part of twenty-first century conflicts, involving traditional media, web-based social media and other forms of communication. All these efforts are ultimately coordinated by Russian intelligence (see the forthcoming paper by Salome Samadashvili on Russian information warfare). All this is, of course, compounded by a new type of fellow traveler in the EU itself, people in politics, the media and so forth who voluntarily defend the Kremlin perspective, out of ignorance or a mistaken sense of realism, for money or for other reasons.

The West's answer to Russia's influence and information warfare will be networks in Western societies themselves.

Western democracies cannot and should not respond in kind, on either the defensive or the offensive side. Comprehensive, state-controlled information warfare is incompatible with the core values upon which NATO and the EU are built. Persecuting dissenters, including those on Russia's payroll, is out of the question for liberal democracies. But on the other hand, Russia's structured approach, involving tremendous personnel and financial resources, and revolutionary concepts, cannot go unanswered.

The Western answer must rely on two basic principles. First, Russia's information warfare is not invincible and has, in fact, some very weak points that should be exploited: radical political parties still look suspicious



to the people in the European mainstream. Disinformation by Russian media and their allies in EU member states can be exposed for what it is. Think tanks, consultants and NGOs with financial ties to Russian institutions can be taken to task in analyses, and through public debates. Most importantly, the enormous contradictions in the Russian narrative can be pointed out: How can European leftists condone and support a Kremlin whose narrative is increasingly ultraconservative, homophobic, and even fascist, racist and occultist, for all we know and see? How can European conservatives apologise for the unabashed Soviet nostalgia of Putin's Kremlin, and the blatantly collectivist anti-individualism in Eurasian ideology? And how can they accept his trampling over the national sovereignty of other countries?

Second, to gain the upper hand or at least re-establish some balance, civil society in the EU itself has to become better organised. This will not work if it is based on government institutions, or even governmental initiatives. The impetus must come from the institutions and individuals of civil society. The West's answer to Russia's influence and information warfare will be networks in Western societies themselves: networks of political parties, think tanks, NGOs and individuals will carry the main burden of responding. Government agencies may be helpful, but they cannot be the leading forces in this. There are bound to be overlaps, loss of efficiency and lack of central coordination. But the end result is bound to be positive, and certainly better than the current situation in which there is no Western response to Russia's assault against the West at its societal core.

**A new
transatlantic
bargain**



During the Cold War, the transatlantic alliance was bound by a common enemy, the Soviet Union. Today what had been a partnership of necessity seems to have become a partnership of choice. Increasingly, both sides wonder whether their partnership is still worth the effort.

Each side has its stereotypes of the other. Americans often complain about Europe's lack of cohesion—there is still no single telephone number when Washington wants to 'call' Europe. Europe lacks coherence, and is moving slowly, if at all. With a Middle East in flames and the challenge of a rising China, there's a tendency to dismiss Europe as a non-player in global politics.

Europeans, meanwhile, complain about US arrogance. They often see the United States as a trigger-happy sheriff who lacks sensitivity and understanding of others, and is in his own actions not very consistent with what he preaches to others. The Iraq war, and revelations about torture and mass surveillance, has led in Europe to a substantial loss of trust in America's capacity to lead the West.

Another challenge for transatlantic relations is the risk of losing the personal, emotional kit that has held the alliance together in the past. New generations of

Together they [the West] are unmatched in military and diplomatic power and in economic weight.

leaders may be less ready to invest in this relationship. As Robert Gates warned in his last speech as US Secretary of Defense: 'Future U.S. political leaders—those for whom the Cold War was not the formative experience that it was for me—may not consider the return on America's investment in NATO worth the cost.'¹¹

But whenever a crisis breaks out, both sides realise very quickly that together they are much more efficient in defending their interests. The US needs support and legitimacy when it wants to act, and Europeans need the US to take a lead and to build a coalition. Together they are unmatched in military and diplomatic power and in economic weight. And on most issues they easily find agreement, because they have a decades-long history of working together and because they share the values of liberal democracy.

In the more than two decades since the end of the Cold War, both sides of the Atlantic have remained the best of partners, despite some disagreements. They have dealt with crises on the Balkans together; they have gone to war together in Afghanistan and elsewhere; they worked in tandem in dealing with global

¹¹ R. M. Gates, [Untitled] speech to The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO), Brussels, 10 June 2011.



challenges at the level of the G8 (now G7), the G20 and the UN and in other global fora. They remain each other's most important markets.

Furthermore, Russian attempts during the 2000s to split key European countries—Germany and France—away from the US and to form some kind of Eurasian geopolitical alliance excluding the US, weren't successful, despite the deep rift over the Iraq war. Today the Russian assault on the European peace order has brought the two sides together again in formulating a joint, closely coordinated response.

Apparently, Europe and the US and Canada still form the core of what has come to be known as the West—an alliance of like-minded, closely connected liberal democracies and market economies. Together they have, despite all disagreements, built and enlarged a zone of stability, liberty and prosperity that stretches across all continents and serves as the backbone of globalisation.

But the liberal world order is not a natural order; it needs constant attention and maintenance. Global rules and norms need to be backed up by power and defended when under attack. Today this order is clearly under stress, challenged by autocrats who feel threatened by liberal democracy, and also challenged by Islamists who want to impose a radically different order.

Strengthening the transatlantic alliance is not a goal in itself; it is a means that serves the broader goal of strengthening the liberal world order. And it is the existence of this liberal world order which allows Europeans to live more safely, more freely and in most cases more prosperously than in any time of their history.

There are three fields in which transatlantic cooperation could and should be improved: economic cooperation, security cooperation and broader strategic cooperation.



Strengthening the transatlantic economy

The transatlantic economy is still the largest and wealthiest market in the world. Despite the rise of China, the US and Europe remain each other's most important markets. Together they represent 40% of global GDP.¹²

If the negotiation of a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership can be concluded successfully, more trade barriers will be removed, and both economies will be further integrated. TTIP will boost growth. According to one estimate, the EU could benefit by 119 billion euros per year, the US economy by 95 billion euros.¹³

TTIP would bring the opposite sides of the Atlantic closer together not only through trade and investment but also through the need for regulatory bodies on both sides to cooperate more closely in shaping a common regulatory framework. A bigger, more integrated transatlantic marketplace would counter the centrifugal forces on both sides, locking the US and the EU together in a common economic space, a transatlantic marketplace. It would also give them the opportunity to successively include other partners such as Turkey and Canada.

TTIP would 'enable the United States and the EU to remain standard makers rather than standard takers.'

TTIP would 'enable the United States and the EU to remain standard makers rather than standard takers',¹⁴ as Daniel Hamilton has put it. It would be 'a powerful instrument to ensure that standards informed by basic values shared across the Atlantic can advance globally'.¹⁵

¹² D. S. Hamilton (ed.), *The Geopolitics of TTIP: Repositioning the Transatlantic Relationship for a Changing World*, Center for Transatlantic Relations (Washington, DC, 2014).

¹³ European Commission, 'In Focus: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership—Questions and Answers'.

¹⁴ D. S. Hamilton, 'Judy Asks: Is TTIP Really a Strategic Issue?', 8 October 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.



And last but not least: If Europe is losing some trade with Russia as a consequence of growing tensions, growing trade with the US could make up for some of the losses.

The risk is that both sides are going to hollow out TTIP by insisting that many areas be excluded because of specific sensitivities or lobby interests. It will not always be necessary to harmonise standards. Often, mutual recognition will be sufficient. However, for TTIP to unleash its full economic and geostrategic potential—as one core element of a renaissance of the West—it needs to be comprehensive and wide ranging.

Keeping NATO relevant

Russia's attack on Ukraine has served as a stark reminder to Europeans that they cannot take their security for granted, and that the US continues to play a decisive role in European security affairs. However necessary our efforts to strengthen European defence, NATO indeed remains the 'backbone of our security',¹⁶ as German Foreign Minister Steinmeier has said.

Russia's aggression has brought back into focus what has been traditionally the core of the alliance: collective defence. As Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty states, '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.'¹⁷

While European powers were taking the diplomatic lead during the Ukraine crisis, the US was taking the lead on the 'hard power' side of the joint response, by reassuring the members on the eastern flank of NATO that the promise of mutual defence remains unchanged.

But to remain credible, defence in Europe must address two challenges. One is the adaption of its instruments and doctrine to the character of the warfare that Russia has used against Ukraine, a mix of conventional and unconventional tools (cyber, information, etc.). NATO must reconsider what 'armed attack'

¹⁶ F.-W. Steinmeier, 'Inaugural Speech at the Official Handover of the Foreign Office', Berlin, 17 December 2013.

¹⁷ The North Atlantic Treaty (Washington, DC, 4 April 1949).



means. Article 5 may not have to be reformulated. But a concerted use by a foreign power of cyber warfare, propaganda and/or irregular forces ('little green men') should become part of the generally accepted interpretations of 'armed attack'. Moreover, and even more importantly, NATO and its member states are only at the beginning of a process of developing methods to defend against, and to deter, hybrid threats.

The creation of new multinational military structures, as specified in the Readiness Action Plan after NATO's Wales Summit in September 2014, is not enough to achieve this. It will have to be followed up by permanent redeployments of units, including ground troops, closer to the eastern border of the alliance. It may also have to include an overhaul of national force structures, making them more flexible and able to cope with the new threats.

Second, Europeans must take on more responsibility for NATO. During the Cold War, the US was contributing roughly half of the military expenses of NATO; today the number has risen to three-quarters.¹⁸ As Robert Gates has warned, this is not sustainable over the longer term. Europeans must stop the tendency to demilitarise and once again take hard power much more seriously. Besides, there is a strong economic case to be made for more investment in Europe's defence industries.¹⁹ Focussing on territorial defence should of course go hand in hand with an equally renewed focus on taking responsibility for preventing, managing and solving crises beyond NATO's borders. There is a considerable risk that Europeans will just try to seal their own borders and give up on the ambition to shape the world outside the defence alliance and the Union.

NATO is only at the beginning of a process of developing methods to defend against, and to deter, hybrid threats.

But that would be a dangerous illusion. Europe's success is built on its interaction with the world, on a globalisation that opens borders for all kind of streams: goods, people, information. In an interconnected world, a powerful grouping of countries such as the EU must step up its responsibility for order, which also includes an engagement on the military side.

¹⁸ J. Ringsmose, 'NATO Burden-Sharing Redux: Continuity and Change After the Cold War', *Contemporary Security Policy* 31/2 (2010), 319-38. See also L. F. Kaplan, 'Open Wide', *New Republic*, 26 April 2011.

¹⁹ European Defence Agency, 'Spending That Matters: The Economic Case for Investing in Europe's Defence Industry', Brussels, 28 July 2014.



While longer-term, costly state-building exercises are unlikely to find support among American and European taxpayers in the next years, other military tasks remain important, including crisis prevention and intervention, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and training.

Strengthening strategic cooperation

For several years now, there has been an understanding on both sides of the Atlantic that cooperation is not any longer primarily about Europe or the US. It has become a commonplace in transatlantic debates that in order to tackle global challenges and crises, both sides must cooperate closely. By working together, Europe and the United States have a good chance to further enlarge the zone of security, freedom and prosperity.

But on a practical level cooperation is often weak, whether it concerns dealing with the challenges that come with China's rise, with the popular uprisings of the Arab Spring or with Russia's return to autocracy and an aggressive foreign policy. The short-term crisis management at the top level usually works well; when things get rough, US and European leaders pick up the phone and call each other. Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a great effort to improve cooperation with former EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, in an attempt to upgrade the new foreign policy structure that the EU has provided itself with the Lisbon Treaty.

But otherwise, both sides too often just follow their own priorities and their own logic. There is no systematic cooperation on a strategic level, and there is little cooperation on the ground. As a consequence, both sides miss the great opportunity to advance their common interests and goals by joining forces.

However, given the dangerous new global disorder, a more systematic, organised, regular cooperation has become an imperative. Leaders and their teams need to meet regularly, exchange views, compare notes and agree on goals, strategies and a division of labour.



One way to get there would be to turn the EU–US summits into a real forum for mutual strategic engagement. On the EU side, member states would have to be represented at the highest levels, maybe with a system of rotation for smaller member states. This would not have to weaken the smaller countries' standing, as the example of the rotating members of the UN's Security Council shows, especially if the smaller ones manage to rally support among the permanent members beforehand.

Conclusion and recommendations



Both in its external as well as its internal aspects, the current crisis is also an opportunity. Here are some strategic proposals and concrete policy suggestions for the West in general and the European Union in particular, based on the four sections of our paper.

The EU has to get its house in order.

The European Union and its member states are challenged by a combination of sluggish growth, demographic risks, weak immigration/integration strategies and a lack of political will to play a more active role in the world. The EU must continue to reform itself, above all, completing the Single Market, to rekindle optimism and generate the economic surplus needed to take on new global tasks and increase defence spending.

The West should prepare for a more antagonistic relationship with Russia.

The West's traditional 'Russia First' attitude must end. Russia will not return to a cooperative attitude as long as Vladimir Putin is in power. Europe and North America are in for a longer-term conflict, and must prepare for it politically, economically and militarily. There is likely to be a mix between cooperation and confrontation, but the latter will probably dominate. The EU should pursue its own interests and stop being overly concerned with what Russia's reactions to individual policies may or may not be. It should at the same time be mentally prepared for change in Russia once the current regime falls, ready to extend a helping hand if the next government is cooperative, but ready to step up defence and deterrence if it becomes even more aggressive.

The EU has to renew efforts to support reform in the eastern neighbourhood.

One answer to Russia's revisionism in the post-Soviet space is to strengthen statehood in the countries under attack or under threat. Countries with weak governments with low levels of popular support invite



Russian meddling. Countries with decent governments which can deliver public services and support the integration of minorities are much more resilient. The stronger the post-Soviet countries are, the better able they will be to resist Russia's new imperialism. Stronger neighbours are better neighbours for both the EU and Russia. The EU must finally get serious about helping those countries in its eastern neighbourhood that are interested in reform, by investing more resources, adding more long-term planning and giving more weight to civil society.

The EU should reduce energy dependence.

While dependence in the field of energy is mutual—Russia needs the EU as a customer—the EU is much more vulnerable to pressure from a Russia that regularly uses energy as a political weapon. Diversification of energy sources and countries/regions of origin, more investment in pipelines, promotion of renewable energy sources and a much better intra-EU network of pipelines are ways to prevent the EU from being open to blackmail by the Kremlin. The EU also must make full use of its instruments to make sure that Russian energy companies that operate in the EU do not violate or circumvent EU regulations and standards.

Both EU and member states need to strengthen foreign and security policy.

No European country can tackle international and global issues alone; if Europeans want to remain masters of their own history and not just be pushed around by larger powers, they need to coordinate and cooperate closely. The EU must continue to improve its foreign policy decision-making. The Lisbon Treaty was a start, but just a first step. The institutional structure remains far from perfect, and the political will to come to joint, powerful policies is often very weak. One way to improve this situation would be to make leaders much more responsible for the joint foreign policy by making foreign policy and security a core element of every EU summit. But the EU should also come to terms with the fact that much of future external action will remain intergovernmental and linked to 'coalitions of the willing'. NATO and the EU should strive for a common strategic perspective in a joint declaration on transatlantic security.



NATO has to better prepare for territorial defence and hybrid threats.

While maintaining its ability to globally intervene, NATO has to adjust to the threats posed by a new kind of warfare practised by Russia. It should, among other things, review the interpretation of 'attack' in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. And Europe must put much more effort into keeping NATO alive and active. Transatlantic burden sharing has to be taken more seriously. Otherwise, the US will feel even less inclined to spend its resources on European security and may stop considering Europe a reliable partner.

TTIP must generate as much growth as possible.

The risk is that lobby groups will manage to keep so many sectors out of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that it won't become the locomotive of growth that it could and should be. Policymakers should not only make the economic case for the agreement; they should also underline that this is a project that strengthens the West politically, binding both sides of the Atlantic together through economic activities and regulatory frameworks. It is important as well that TTIP remain inclusive, giving allies and partners such as Turkey the option to integrate into the future transatlantic marketplace.

The EU and the US need a forum for strategic dialogue.

Transatlantic cooperation cannot be taken for granted anymore; things are changing on both sides of the Atlantic. Also, both sides are increasingly challenged by the revisionism of competing powers (Russia and China) and by the re-emergence of radical Islam as a military and terrorist force. Coordination of the EU and the US on broader foreign policy is more urgent than ever, as they have very similar views and interests. Leaders and their teams must meet regularly, compare notes and agree on joint agendas and strategies. A biannual EU–US summit that includes leaders of big EU member states, with a rotating system for smaller member states, should be established.



The EU should build closer relations with like-minded democracies.

While the US and the EU remain the core powers in support of democracy and the market economy, many countries outside the West have become liberal democracies too. The EU should prioritise those countries in its foreign relations, first, because they are more likely to agree with Europe on goals and means, and second, because it is in Europe's interest to strengthen and widen the zone of liberal democracy.

The renaissance of the West depends on its citizens.

Pessimism is invading the public discourse and undermining our ability to act. Economic reform in the EU; a successful conclusion of TTIP negotiations; and a new, much more serious focus on foreign policy and Europe's global responsibility could re-energise Europe and create a new sense of optimism. Western civil society will have to bear the brunt of this effort: Governments should enact the right policies, but they cannot fulfil the task of recreating a sense of renaissance. That is the task of political parties, foundations, think tanks and NGOs, and their networks.



Bibliography



Aydin, Y., 'Reflections on the Gezi Park Protests in Turkey: Socio-Political Factors and Subjective Motives', *Orient: Deutsche Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur des Orients* 55/1 (2012), 11–21.

European Commission, 'In Focus: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)—Questions and Answers', accessed at <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/questions-and-answers/> on 3 December 2014.

European Defence Agency, 'Spending That Matters: The Economic Case for Investing in Europe's Defence Industry', Brussels, 28 July 2014, accessed at <https://www.eda.europa.eu/info-hub/news/article/2014/07/28/spending-that-matters-the-economic-case-for-investing-in-europe-s-defence-industry> on 3 December 2014.

Gates, R. M., [Untitled] speech to The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO), Brussels, 10 June 2011, accessed at <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581> on 3 December 2014.

Gusev, A., 'The Return of the Russian Revolution: Nature of and Perspectives on the Wave of Social Protest in Russia', *New Politics* 14/1 (2014), 108–15.

Hamilton, D. S., 'Judy Asks: Is TTIP Really a Strategic Issue?', 8 October 2014, accessed at <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=56869> on 3 December 2014.

Hamilton, D. S. (ed.), *The Geopolitics of TTIP: Repositioning the Transatlantic Relationship for a Changing World*, Center for Transatlantic Relations (Washington, DC, 2014), accessed at http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/publications/books/The%20Geopolitics%20of%20TTIP/Complete_book.pdf on 3 December 2014.

Hopia, H., *Breaking Down the Walls: Improving EU–NATO Relations*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2013), accessed at <http://martenscentre.eu/publications/breaking-down-walls-improving-eu%E2%80%93nato-relations> on 3 December 2014.

Kagan, R., *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Vintage, 2003).

Kaplan, L. F., 'Open Wide', *New Republic*, 26 April 2011, accessed at <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/crossings/87377/libya-nato-military-power-europe-us> on 3 December 2014.



Lucas, E., 'Russia is Winning', *DELFI: The Lithuania Tribune*, 4 September 2014, accessed at <http://en.delfi.lt/opinion/edward-lucas-russia-is-winning.d?id=65745272> on 3 December 2014.

Orban, V., [Untitled] speech delivered at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp, Tusnádfürdő, Romania, 26 July 2014, accessed at <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp> on 3 December 2014.

Ringsmose, J., 'NATO Burden-Sharing Redux: Continuity and Change After the Cold War', *Contemporary Security Policy* 31/2 (2010), 319-38.

Rorty, R., *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Samadashvili, S., *Building a Lifeline for Freedom: Eastern Partnership 2.0*, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (Brussels, 2014), accessed at <http://martenscentre.eu/publications/building-lifeline-freedom-eastern-partnership-20> on 3 December 2014.

Shapiro, J. and N. Witney, *Towards a Post-American Europe: A Power Audit of EU–US Relations*, European Council on Foreign Relations (London, 2009).

Steinmeier, F.-W., 'Inaugural Speech at the Official Handover of the Foreign Office', Berlin, 17 December 2013, accessed at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2013/131217-BM_Antrittsrede.html on 3 December 2014.

North Atlantic Treaty (Washington, DC, 4 April 1949), accessed at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm on 3 December 2014.

Tusk, D., 'A United Europe Can End Russia's Energy Stranglehold', *Financial Times*, 21 April 2014.

Zakaria, F., *The Post-American World* (New York: Norton, 2008).



