

“Sovereign Democracy” and Russia’s Relations with the European Union

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Abstract: This article examines European Union-Russia relations against broader trends in Russian foreign and security policy. It assesses the prospects for a new agreement to replace the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, analyzes the recently appeared Russian concept of “sovereign democracy,” and considers the challenges Moscow’s more assertive foreign policy presents to Europe.

Keywords: democracy, European Union, foreign policy, Russia, security, sovereignty

Introduction

How are relations between the European Union and Russia, two entities whose interaction—especially in term of trade, energy markets, and security—is crucial to the future of the continent, conceptualized? On the one hand, positive developments appear to hold out the prospect of Russia’s inclusion in a wider European political community. The establishment of high-level institutional arrangements—biannual summits, the Permanent Partnership Council Ministerial, and Ministerial EU Troika-Russia meetings—and the development of an increasingly dense network of contacts between officials and experts across wide areas of sectoral cooperation give Moscow a privileged and perhaps unique position among Brussels’s many external partners. Russia’s leaders frequently stress the importance of the country’s “European choice.” On the other hand there are growing strains in the relationship. The lack of a coherent European policy for engagement with Russia or a common strategic vision, particularly regarding their shared neighborhood; a relatively narrow agenda for security cooperation; disputes over trade and energy issues; Moscow’s insistence on a partnership between equals and the reluctance of Russian elites to accept the imposition of European norms and models; the “values gap” and concerns among Europe’s policymakers about Russia’s political, social, and economic development—all of these factors have combined to silence talk of Russia’s “systematic integration” into Europe, or of “Europeanizing” Russia, and create a climate of limited pragmatic cooperation. One authoritative Russian commentator, not alone in his assessment, recently char-

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acterized the relationship in terms of “economic rapprochement accompanied by complete geopolitical stagnation . . . relations [with Europe] are respectable and calm but are not going anywhere in particular.”¹

This article identifies the key assumptions underpinning Russia’s dealings with the EU and examines them against broader trends in Russian foreign and security policy, which has recently undergone a notable—and perhaps decisive—shift. It falls into three parts. First, a brief critical analysis of the existing basis for EU-Russia relations as contained in the road maps for the four Common Spaces,² adopted at the May 2005 summit, and proposals for a new agreement to replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), whose initial term is due to expire at the end of November 2007, are presented and assessed. Second, we investigate the views of Russia’s governing elite on the country’s role in the international system and examine the ideas underpinning the concept of “sovereign democracy,” promoted by some elites as a kind of new national ideology. Finally, the challenges presented to Europe by Moscow’s more assertive foreign policy, and particularly the implications for their shared neighborhood, are considered. Russia’s foreign policymakers perceive an external security environment where Russian interests and values must be pursued competitively and that the underlying tension—unlikely to be resolved soon—between Moscow’s preoccupations with sovereignty and national security on the one hand and, on the other, closer political, economic, and social engagement with Europe will continue to cause problems in the relationship.

Beyond the PCA: What Kind of Future Agreement?

The Common Spaces format signalled the failure of Brussels’s earlier attempts to devise a suitable framework for relations with Russia through the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)—essentially an attempt to project the integrationist logic of the European project into a wider “external” European security space by promoting convergence with EU norms and models.³ Although the road maps contain references to broad shared values, the dominant motif—most evident in the road map for the Common Space of External Security—is one of functional cooperation between two sovereign, equal subjects of the international order. Russia’s ambassador to the EU, Vladimir Chizhov, recently reiterated the argument made repeatedly during the difficult period of talks leading up to agreement on the Common Spaces, asserting that Russians are “equal partners, not consumers of EU blessings.”⁴ Russia has stepped up pursuit of its own parallel integration project in the shared neighborhood through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other structures, notably the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community, backed up by broader regional cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO); Moscow’s idea—which has prompted little or no response from Europe—is that these organizations should form a web of cooperative economic and security arrangements with the EU and NATO. In a recent speech Chizhov delivered an implicit challenge to Brussels to take account of Russian interests in the shared neighborhood when negotiating the new post-PCA agreement: “Ultimately we must find a *modus vivendi* in what is a kind of ‘integration triangle’: between Russia and the EU, between Russia and our partners in the post-Soviet space and between these countries and the EU.”⁵ With Russia effectively rejecting the label of a “good neighbor” prepared to adopt EU norms and values as a means to help increase prosperity and security in its neighborhood, Brussels is forced to seek different approaches to external policy engagement with Russia.

Given that the Common Spaces road maps represented little more than an interim political framework for the development of the relationship, without legal provisions or any changes in the decision-making mechanisms, the first real test for Brussels comes with negotiations for the new legally binding agreement that will replace the PCA. Both sides raised the stakes in advance of talks. In agreeing to draft negotiating directives the European Commission declared its hopes for a more far-reaching framework for the EU-Russia relationship, containing “ambitious objectives on political and external security cooperation” and based not only on shared interests and interdependence but also on shared recognition of common values.⁶ Moscow responded by proposing a juridically binding Treaty on Strategic Partnership—encompassing all areas of interaction and determining the aims and principles of EU-Russia cooperation, and supplemented by sectoral agreements—and challenging the EU to agree on a common approach to Russia.⁷

The desire of both sides for a comprehensive agreement to enshrine what has been achieved so far and lay the ground for the further development of relations may yet founder on disputes on what it should contain, however, and on exactly what the respective “domestic” constituencies—the EU member states on the one side, and Russian political and business elites on the other—will accept.⁸ Brussels wants the inclusion of trade provisions, with the regulatory alignment of Russia to EU rules and standards, as the basis for a “deep” free trade agreement following Russia’s anticipated WTO accession.⁹ Moscow has hitherto been reluctant to adapt to EU rules and standards and vested interests in Russia may attempt to block some of these provisions, despite the apparent willingness of trade officials to open negotiations on a free trade area. The commission is also keen to include provisions based on Russia’s acceptance of the principles of the European Energy Charter Treaty, but again this has been a matter of dispute and it is unclear to what Moscow—given the strategic importance of Russia’s energy sector—will agree. Finally, Brussels will—as in all its external agreements—insist on the commitment to common values via the inclusion of provisions on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; however, with Moscow repudiating any suggestion that Russia is deficient in this area and protective of its own interpretation of these values, it is uncertain how the two sides will square the circle and come up with a meaningful agreement.

As experts at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels have shown,¹⁰ any legally binding agreement concluded with Russia would have to be based on EU treaties (particularly the treaty establishing the EU and the Treaty on European Union) and ratified by all EU member states. Quite apart from possible delays due to the lengthy and complicated ratification process, achieving consensus over a substantive agreement may be problematic; disparate political sentiments toward Russia in Europe, particularly among recent accession countries mistrustful of Moscow, and widespread concerns over Russian policy in the shared neighborhood may militate against according Russia a privileged position among the EU’s external partners. Indeed, there is a danger that the “lowest common denominator” effect—roundly criticized by Moscow—will again come into force and that the views of the least accommodating member states will be seen to be “driving” commission policy. The Polish veto (not yet rescinded at the time of writing) on the mandate to start negotiations, although unlikely ultimately to derail the process, has already delayed finalizing the agreement and demonstrates the difficulty of devising a common approach. To summarize, the precise shape and content of the new agreement is still far from certain.

The Commission is now playing down political issues and prioritizing concrete terms on economic cooperation with Russia, and particularly a secure legal framework for energy supplies, as the key element in the future “strategic” relationship. As previously suggested, however, the EU is having to deal with a Russia less concerned with accepting European demands and fiercely protective of its position as a major global player. Brussels’s attempts to persuade the Putin administration to commit itself to investor protection and property rights and to allow European companies access to Russia’s energy production and transport infrastructure by persuading Moscow to ratify the European Energy Charter Treaty and sign the accompanying Transit Protocol have run into difficulties due to Gazprom’s reluctance and Moscow’s preference for a bilateral trade model such as the North European Gas Pipeline agreement with Germany.¹¹ Moscow has not ruled out the possibility of working within the framework of the treaty or allowing access to its extraction and transport infrastructure, but it has insisted on reciprocal concessions—for example, access for Russian capital to key industries in EU countries and the removal of barriers to Russian access to advanced technologies. There is some justification for these demands: Moscow has already made regulatory adjustments in the energy sphere, and analysts have criticized the extent of liberalization of Europe’s own internal gas network.¹² With energy likely to be a central issue in negotiations on a new post-PCA agreement, there is still no sign that Moscow is ready to accept inclusion of key provisions of the charter in the new agreement without substantial concessions from Brussels.

The implications—much debated of late—of Russia’s emergence as an “energy superpower” need to be considered. Moscow has justifiably pointed to its record as a reliable supplier of energy resources to Europe. However, despite the economic justification for cutting gas supplies to Ukraine in an attempt to recoup an estimated \$3–5 billion in annual subsidies, Putin’s frank admission—that “if anyone wants to support certain [political] forces [in Ukraine], then by all means, only not on our account”¹³—has inevitably prompted unease about the use of energy resources for political ends. This unease is reinforced by clear trends in the domestic energy sector in Russia, which is increasingly linked with ideas about state sovereignty. Vladislav Surkov, deputy head of the presidential administration, has asserted that “our concern for sovereignty envisages certain economic restrictions . . . national capital should either control or dominate in several [strategic] areas,” including oil and gas.¹⁴ Recent moves by Moscow to limit foreign companies’ participation in energy projects—development of the Shtokman gas field, for example—are motivated by similar considerations.

As Hanson and Teague argue, against the background of the unpopularity in Russia of “shady” privatization in the 1990s, high dependence of the economy on natural resources, lack of political competition, lack of clear lines of demarcation between the state and the private sector, and a subservient judicial system—and with Russian business after the Yukos affair driven to acquiesce to state monopoly control of the natural gas industry and oil export pipelines—current circumstances “put exceptional power over business in the hands of a leader who cares to exert himself to wield it.”¹⁵ One Russian commentator interprets recent developments as a key shift in the balance of economic power with inevitable political implications; Russia and other emerging energy suppliers are “henceforth not submissive raw materials appendages but fully-fledged participants in the market, participating on equal footing with the West in forming its rules and norms.”¹⁶ Some have argued that Europe’s concerns should concentrate less on whether political rather than commercial considerations will henceforth drive Russian energy policy and more on the potential impact on European

economies of a drift to a more *étatiste* approach to the management of Russia’s large-scale resource industry, making it vulnerable to corruption and poor economic governance and leading to less efficiency and slower output (and hence export) growth. In any case, it is clear that the new EU-Russia agreement, if provisions dealing with energy relations are incorporated into it, could become hostage to vested interests and mistrust on both sides.

“Sovereign Democracy” and Russia’s Role in the International System

The evolution of EU-Russia relations as described above should be viewed in the broader context of Moscow’s foreign and security policy, and its response to the challenges posed by the contemporary international system and the changing character of international society.¹⁷ Recently, several keynote articles by leading Russian officials have represented a clear attempt to challenge the international order; this challenge is based on a claim for equal status within formal

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and informal international institutions and attempts to establish the legitimacy of Russian approaches to foreign policymaking with the aim of gaining a more influential role in international affairs. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has characterized the contemporary international system as undergoing a period of transition and unpredictability in which the status quo is under threat, attacking the notion of “victors and vanquished” in the Cold War and the consequent attempt by “certain Western capitals” to impose their ideals of freedom and democracy on their erstwhile opponents: “15 years ago Russia acquired freedom and the right to look in a broad and unblinkered way at things, including international affairs . . . it would be naïve to expect us to be prepared to be content with a role in the world as one of the led.”¹⁸ In Lavrov’s narrative, Russia has emerged from the ideological confrontation of the Cold War era to pursue interdependence and play a major role in solving global problems. He advances the idea of “democratic multipolarity” based on interaction between international organizations within the framework of international regimes and agreements, many of which an increasingly influential Russia is a member of and is seeking a greater role in shaping.¹⁹ The G8 summit in St. Petersburg in July 2006, where Russia positioned itself at the center of international efforts on a wide range of issues—energy security, education, the battle against infectious diseases, the struggle against corruption, antiterrorism, nonproliferation, Africa, and the Middle East—demonstrated Moscow’s new-found confidence.

Indeed, Lavrov’s more recent statements have underlined Moscow’s dissatisfaction with “the common misfortune of global politics . . . a status quo which is understood as the privileged position of certain states in the evolving international system”²⁰ and featured an unambiguous call for collective leadership or a “global concert” in the face of global challenges and threats.²¹ Underlying this is the perception that the Western alliance, which dominated the first post-Cold War decade, has fractured. Lavrov

points to splits between the United States and Europe on a range of political issues (the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention verification protocol, the Kyoto agreement, the International Criminal Court, the death penalty) and between their economic development models; he also refers to the problems caused by the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the failure of attempts at political engineering in the Middle East. He argues that the realities of shifting power relations and the reduced influence of Western leadership mean that henceforth Russian policy should not have a single “Western vector”; the growing importance of Asia and its integration processes, together with Russia’s need to develop Siberia and the Russian Far East, makes it natural to develop an “Asian vector” while avoiding confrontation with the United States and Europe. A “strong, self-confident Russia” is also striving to forge new relationships with countries in other regions, staking a claim for a role as a “cultural-civilizational bridge” in conflicts such as those in the Middle East while refusing to stigmatize “problem” states.²²

This assertive claim to a leading global role has been reinforced, rather controversially, in political-military terms in the “new Russian doctrine” outlined by the then–Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov.²³ Ivanov has argued that the renewed emphasis on military force in world affairs has manifested itself not only in attempts to counter shared threats, such as weapons of mass destruction proliferation and drug trafficking, but also in “challenges to [Russia’s] national security” arising from attempted interference in Russia’s internal affairs and from a “violent assault on the constitutional order of some post-Soviet states.” In response, he underlined Russia’s commitment to “a highly effective military capability” via the modernization of its armed forces, prioritizing the strategic nuclear deterrent, and the development of high-alert forces as the backbone of its conventional capability, a commitment translated into reality in recently announced increases in defense spending.²⁴ Finally, he emphasized that, although cooperation with NATO will continue, Moscow will continue to reinforce its own regional political-military arrangements through the CSTO and SCO.

The regional dimension of Moscow’s evolving foreign policy thinking is also important. Andrew Hurrell contends that emerging “second-tier” states often seek to promote themselves as representative of a region, defined either in geographical or cultural/civilizational terms, as a means of aggregating power and fostering a regional coalition in support of their external negotiations, which may include active and even assertive involvement in regional crisis management to ensure that they cannot be excluded from efforts undertaken by external players. This “managerial or order-producing” role within a region, often conducted through regional organizations, can also be an important element in the emerging state’s relationship with international institutions or external powers. Vulnerability arising from regional instability means that regional policy may involve temporary or partial alignment with external powers—via informal understandings, ad hoc cooperative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions—to secure political or economic advantages, rather than “balancing” by creating military alliances or building up military power. Finally, the regional context may play a central role in the emerging state’s historical self-understanding.²⁵

As noted earlier, part of Moscow’s recent foreign policy strategy has been to initiate and position itself at the center of regional organizations, in particular the CIS, CSTO, and SCO, as a means of addressing weaknesses in regional security governance and developing legitimate fora capable of interacting with external states and organizations. Speculation

that Moscow is trying to develop the SCO into a political-military alliance as a counterweight to U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific region ignores the fact that China still sees the SCO as primarily an economic organization, and that political-military relations between its member states are still largely organized on a bilateral level; nevertheless, its enlargement to include India (which recently initiated political-military involvement in the region by locating its fighter aircraft in Tajikistan), Pakistan, Iran, and Mongolia as observer states, and the inevitable expansion of coordinated political exchanges, arguably reinforces Lavrov’s concept of “democratic multipolarity.” The SCO’s fifth anniversary declaration²⁶ reads as a kind of manifesto for “sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity” of states in the region, allowing them to maintain security cooperatively and on their own terms without interference from outside and the imposition of external models and values. The CSTO also plays an order-producing role by providing “political” support to regimes to avoid “color” revolutions, as its secretary-general, Nikolai Bordyuzha, has emphasized.²⁷ Russia’s “post-colonial” security policy in the post-Soviet space is thus based on an attempt to legitimize regional organizations in which it is a central, if not dominant, actor; the subtext is support for regional regimes where challenges to them might spill over into wider regional instability.

The volatile situation in other countries across the post-Soviet space represents a fundamental challenge both to Moscow’s regional policy and to Russia’s historical self-understanding as the major political and cultural power in the wider region. The emergence of competing blocs, and the aspirations of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, in particular, to establish a closer relationship with Europe, is being managed by Moscow via the use of a range of political and economic instruments, including more active support for the separatist regimes in the latter two countries.²⁸ As a result relations with Georgia have deteriorated steadily in the recent period. Hostile rhetoric from the Saakashvili administration, accusing Moscow of plans to “annex” the separatist regions and pledging to recover them by force—even, according to Moscow, making military preparations for hostilities—have been met with the severance of transport links, economic sanctions and, perhaps most controversially, the deportation of unregistered Georgian immigrants. Moscow insists that Tbilisi must negotiate via the Joint Control Commission and has criticized the latter’s resolution calling for the discontinuation of the peacekeeping mission in the conflict zone, warning it not to seek a military solution to the conflict with South Ossetia. As for Transnistria, Moscow has—in contrast to the EU and OSCE—backed the recent referendum there in which an overwhelming majority voted for independence from Moldova, and has interpreted the introduction of a new customs regime on the border with Ukraine as a politically motivated economic blockade by Chişinău and Kyiv. Moscow, still smarting over Europe’s rejection in 2003 of Russian proposals, has attacked Chişinău’s plans to impose a unitary state model as a breach of the 1997 memorandum aimed at settlement of the conflict. Although Moldova and Georgia have sought the greater involvement of external players in resolving the separatist conflicts, Moscow continues to insist on a central role as the main external guarantor of security based on existing conflict resolution mechanisms.

In analyzing Russia’s international relations it is also crucial to consider Moscow’s response to the liberal idea, embedded in the “European project,” that international society should go beyond simple coexistence and embody internationally agreed on core principles—human rights, democracy, self-determination, and constraints on the use of

force—and, in particular, to the challenge posed by the liberal democracies' intrinsic belief in the “gradual but progressive fusion of liberal values” of economic liberalization and democratization, in which global civil society incorporating transnational movements and advocacy networks play an important role.²⁹ Russia has come under increasing pressure from the West to adopt liberal principles; the perception, now widespread in Europe and America, is that under Putin the governing elite is resisting democratic change and the development of civil society in favor of increasing the power of conservative state institutions, bringing with it the risk of authoritarianism.

It is only in the recent period that Moscow has formulated a coherent and vigorous response to this criticism, both in terms of governance—by defending the strong-state model—and in terms of ideas, many of which are reflected in the concept of “sovereign democracy” promoted by some leading officials, notably Vladislav Surkov as deputy head of the presidential administration.³⁰ Putin was confident enough to talk openly about Russia's political development as host of the G8 summit in St. Petersburg, where he defended Russian democracy and likened external calls for the “democratization” of Russia to colonialism's “civilising role,” emphasizing that Russia will not bow to external influence. He argued that, although Russia shares with Western democracies basic principles without which a modern society and state cannot exist, the creation of a middle class and a multiparty system in Russia is a long-term affair and that differences must be acknowledged: “We are ready to cooperate with all our partners under equal conditions and we are attentive to benevolent criticism . . . but we will categorically object to the use of all possible levers, including the use of argument about the need to democratize our society, in order to interfere in our internal affairs. We consider this absolutely unacceptable.”³¹ In the same interview he also registered his concern that Western support for “certain political forces in Eastern Europe”—shorthand for the democracy movements in some of the USSR successor states—recalls Cold War-era attempts to constrain Russia. Lavrov has taken up these themes more recently, speaking of a global competition over values systems and attacking “civilisational discrimination” that ignores national traditions and erects new dividing lines similar to the “bloc politics” of the past.³²

Indeed, this offensive has been broadened to challenge the legitimacy of the values underpinning Western approaches to foreign policymaking. Russia's governing elite argues that attempts to dictate policy often replace the “dialogue on democracy,” while states criticizing Russia themselves act undemocratically. Sovereignty and nonintervention, in Moscow's eyes the founding and universally recognized principles of modern international law, are often disregarded by some Western states that use human rights as a pretext out of political expediency. Difficulties with establishing democracy in Russia are exacerbated by “double standards” in Western policy, such as “secret CIA prisons in Europe, illegal use of force in Iraq, anticonstitutional ‘orange’ coups in neighbouring countries.”³³ Strong invective has been directed at the activities of nongovernmental organizations, both in neighboring countries—particularly during the “color revolutions”—and in Russia because of their perceived threat to sovereignty. One foreign ministry statement launched a bitter attack on the organization Freedom House, arguing that it is funded by the U.S. government, which, as in the Soviet era, is using a human rights stick to beat Russia and other supposedly “undemocratic” states.³⁴ Another criticized the statement in the revised U.S. National Security Strategy that Russia's opposition to democratic developments in neighboring states will undermine relations with the United States and Europe, arguing

that it marks the “further ideologization of US foreign policy,” which makes U.S.-Russia relations dependent on Moscow’s behavior in terms of democracy and human rights.³⁵

In a key article, again timed to appear right on the eve of the St. Petersburg G8 summit, then–Defense Minister Ivanov talked about a “cardinal change in the general vector of [Russian] state policy, the formation of a new national elite which thinks strategically” and proclaimed a new “triad” of national values, based on “sovereign democracy, strong economy and military power.” A strong economy, buoyed by Russia’s new status as an “energy superpower,” underpins the material needs of the people while allowing for a high level of defense capability, which constitutes the most important guarantee of Russia’s independence. “Sovereign democracy,” he argued, is “the quintessence of our internal structure, meaning the right of citizens themselves to determine policy in their country and defend this right against external pressure by any means, including military.” In Ivanov’s narrative, Russia has joined the “hard and uncompromising competitive struggle” among states, which includes the “sphere of ideology, comprising various value systems”; the state is envisaged as an “ideological project competing for the right to determine the global agenda and future prospects for the development of all humanity.” In this struggle Russia is facing opposition from “partners in the community of democratic states” who seek to undermine and weaken it; Russia’s own historical experience and cultural legacy will, however, enable it to reemerge as a strong country able to defend its interests. Ivanov concludes by stating that the Russian people are beginning to “feel like citizens of a great power and realize their values in the contemporary world . . . today we have not just the means of defending ourselves but, much more important, something to defend.”³⁶

To what extent should the European policy community concern itself with “sovereign democracy”? Does it form the basis for a genuine national ideology that will inspire a future foreign policy based more on political and ideological rivalry than partnership, or does it constitute little more than a what one leading commentator has contemptuously dismissed as “the ceremonial phrases typical of Moscow’s bureaucratic glitterati”³⁷ while a self-serving elite struggles to accomplish structural economic reform and overcome deep-rooted security problems? One interpretation is that it is primarily for domestic consumption, a kind of social contract between the electorate and United Russia, the “party of power,” which aims to provide an ideological framework for national unity and Russia’s reemergence as an autonomous great power on the international scene as a means of enhancing its own legitimacy in the run-up to parliamentary elections taking place in Russia in late 2007.³⁸ It should also be noted that the concept has been questioned within the ranks of the government, where there is evidently a more nuanced debate; First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has attacked it as conceptually incoherent.³⁹

Nevertheless, the ideas underpinning the concept of “sovereign democracy” have taken root in mainstream foreign policy narrative and reflect a fundamental dilemma that lies at the heart of Russia’s putative “European choice.” Ivanov has stated that, although Russia has made “unprecedented steps to integrate into a single Europe,” it will defend its national interests and avert any attempt to intervene in its internal affairs and impose alien norms.⁴⁰ In the governing elite’s attempt—at least that of its more conservative wing—to consolidate its vision of Russia’s modernization, the “sovereign” element of “sovereign democracy” becomes paramount: the state-building project, key to Russia’s reemergence as a great power, has to be defended from external influence at all costs. This narrative is in danger of becoming self-reinforcing, drowning out alternative narratives portraying a

Russia ready to consider more extensive engagement with Europe. Thus, Liliya Shevtsova argues that, although there is still a degree of pluralism within the ruling elite “so long as Russia tries to achieve political and social consolidation through a return to the idea of great power status, its ambition itself will continue to reproduce a traditional regime and traditional phobias, myths and illusions.”⁴¹

Russia’s governing elite is frank about the problems the country faces and continually reiterates its willingness to cooperate with the Western democracies. However, Mos-

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cow’s ambitions now go beyond damage limitation, which shaped relations with the EU during the first few years of Putin’s tenure:⁴² rivalry, including in ideational and normative terms, is beginning to predominate over cooperation at any cost. Perhaps significantly, in recent speeches both Putin and Lavrov appeared to bracket the EU and NATO together as organizations seeking to dictate policy.⁴³ Concessions and compromises made in the interests of deeper engagement with

Europe have neither brought expected security gains nor prevented increasing criticism of the legitimacy of Russian models of governance. Europe’s negative reaction to Moscow’s more assertive foreign policy is now less of a consideration as the current Putin administration attempts to consolidate the country’s regional and international influence.

Challenges for Europe and the Shared Neighborhood

To summarize, Russia’s governing elite accepts some of the principles on which current international relations are based but perceives external attempts to reshape Russia’s political, economic, and social models, including via the “political technologies” of advocacy networks, as an imminent threat to its sovereignty, statehood, and influence. If the West has (to rekindle an old idea) again “lost Russia”—or at least proved unable to prevent Russia being lost to the core tenets of liberal democracy—this stems from a failure to appreciate the elite’s perceptions of the country’s modernization and the evolution of the international system. With the post–Cold War era now at an end, the Putin administration has shifted the parameters of the debate over the country’s strategic course, which no longer centers on the extent to which Russia should adopt Western prescriptions, in what is essentially a battle of ideas: “Russia has once and for all given up confrontational approaches in international affairs. . . . [I]f there are disagreements between us, they are primarily of a politico-philosophical nature and pertain to views on a new world order.”⁴⁴ Moscow is intent on defending its interpretation of “universal” principles of international law, democracy, and human rights in international organizations (the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe) and in its dealings with the EU; at home, Russian values and models—open for discussion but nonnegotiable—will underpin the building of a modern and effective state capable of taking its place in the world. Although “sovereign democracy” arguably contains nothing new, but is simply the coalescence of certain ideas and political views evolved over the painful decade and a half since the emergence of post-Soviet Russia, Moscow now feels

ready to challenge European values and approaches to foreign policy and claim an equal role in collective leadership and decision making.

The domestic implications of this—whether a Russian state with a limited pluralist political system and weak institutional structure is capable of delivering security and prosperity for its citizens—are not considered here.⁴⁵ To what extent Russia can cooperate successfully with other leading states and organizations is the key question. Putin has identified the United States as the principal antagonist insofar as unwelcome attempts to “democratize” Russia are concerned but “sovereign democracy” arguably has a greater impact on relations with the EU, which relies on its external policy of incentives to converge with its norms and values.⁴⁶ As Nadezhda Arbatova argues, rather than drawing on the European model to assist Russia’s systemic transformation “[the ruling establishment] argue[s] that upping the level of relations with the EU symbolizes Russia’s importance in the modern world and its status as a ‘core’ state with a special responsibility for international security and stability.”⁴⁷ Chizhov’s call for the “joint responsibility of Russia and the European Union . . . for the security and prosperity of Europe and support for international stability”⁴⁸ contains an implicit challenge to the EU. Can Brussels accept—is it constitutionally and philosophically capable of accepting—a far-reaching “strategic partnership” with Moscow in light of growing concerns over the latter’s internal development, energy strategy, and policy in the shared neighborhood?

Commentators differ over to what extent the EU, unlikely soon to enlarge further east and wary of more extensive engagement with countries in the shared neighborhood, can be expected to promote its own “strategic vision” in what is traditionally a region of Russian political and cultural influence. The coherence of the EU’s Eastern strategy and willingness to consider more robust involvement in the region is questionable.⁴⁹ The ENP, despite its laudable concern with preventive diplomacy and failed states, remains “too unfocused, unattractive and under-resourced to drive political and economic change in the countries surrounding the EU.”⁵⁰ Brussels has hitherto avoided direct involvement in the separatist conflicts there and has instead supported the OSCE’s efforts in South Ossetia and Transnistria, leading some analysts to conclude that “the EU’s rhetorical reach exceeds its grasp.”⁵¹ Yet, as one commentator argues: “A starting assumption in EU thinking should be that the EU-Russia strategic partnership would be constructed in the shared neighborhood *or not at all*.”⁵²

The Black Sea-Caspian Sea region, strategically vital for Europe not only in terms of its concerns over new security threats stemming from weak or conflict-ridden states but also in terms of its links with Central Asian energy producers, will place growing demands on Brussels’s external policy in the future. A number of fledgling subregional cooperation fora have emerged—the Community of Democratic Choice, the Georgia-Ukraine-Azerbaijan-Moldova group (set up several years ago but restyled as the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development at a Kyiv summit in May 2006), and the Romanian-sponsored Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (launched at a Bucharest summit in June 2006).⁵³ With Romania’s and Bulgaria’s, and eventually Turkey’s, accession, the EU will become a Black Sea power; some argue that the current lack of a strategic approach by Brussels and the absence of a lobby pushing for Black Sea integration, and the deference to Russia of some European states, should be replaced by a long-term perspective on what is a key region to “enhance linkages with regional organisations to ensure a smooth integration of the wider Black Sea region into the European architecture.”⁵⁴ Ukraine is sup-

porting the establishment of “an interstate commonwealth Community of democracies of Black-Caspian Sea region” aimed at addressing regional security problems.⁵⁵ In an uncompromising speech, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili promoted a similar vision of a Black Sea subregion integrated into “Europe’s institutional arc of stability,” contrasting it specifically with the intransigence of “repressive regimes that fear openness, transparency and freedom” in Georgia’s Russian-backed separatist regions—thus raising the specter of dividing lines between a Europe of democratic freedom, security, and justice and an eastern neighborhood characterized by authoritarianism, insecurity, and repression.⁵⁶ This is inevitably interpreted by the Russian political elite as a challenge to Russian influence in the CIS. Thus, Lavrov has voiced Moscow’s skepticism about “abstract forums with a fuzzy agenda, attempting to cover the Black, Caspian and Baltic Seas on the basis of some kind of unnatural criteria detached from reality” that seeks only to politicize solutions to real problems.⁵⁷

Beyond the ENP and the appointment of EU special representatives to the southern Caucasus and Moldova, there has been a limited response to these regional developments from Brussels to date. Against the turbulent background of the “color revolutions,” the gas crisis with Ukraine, recent trade disputes between Russia and the pro-European neighborhood states, and Moscow’s support for the separatist regions of Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia—not to mention the added complication of Georgia’s NATO ambitions—Brussels is struggling to construct an active foreign policy in the region. EU support for the ambitions of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova to be recognized as sovereign, independent states with a firm European orientation must take into account the constraints placed on them by both domestic weaknesses—which in the case of Ukraine have led to a more cautious approach to regional policy recently—and Russia’s involvement in the region. Moscow is likely to consent to their European orientation only if they recognize Russian interests; otherwise it may well prefer to navigate between the competing political interests of elites in these countries and maintain what would amount to fiefdoms in the secessionist entities. A more assertive Moscow, with a foreign policy outlook that places greater emphasis on rivalry in its external relations, may well be more inclined to oppose further encroachment into its traditional sphere of influence.

The problems faced by the EU are perhaps most evident in Belarus, a key country in the context of Russia’s alternative integration project. As one commentator notes “by providing the Lukashenka regime with economic support, political legitimacy, and an alternative to European integration, the prospects for the [proposed Russia-Belarus] union state subvert the potential for democratization in Belarus and, in effect, insulate it from the democratic trends in Europe.”⁵⁸ The lack of effective instruments at Brussels’s disposal to persuade the governing elite in Minsk to alter fundamentally its internal political course is compounded by the differing views in security dialogue with Moscow and the differing interests of member states regarding Russia: “The EU’s ability to create a sense of urgency is weakened by its own policy contradictions and inconsistency. . . . In fact, EU coercive diplomacy has become part of the foundation pillars of Lukashenka’s authoritarian regime, allowing him to portray Belarus as beleaguered and victimised by a hostile ‘West,’ and with no choice but to rely on Russia and, ultimately, its own resources.”⁵⁹ It is no accident that Lukashenka’s pronouncements, contrasting Western liberal values and conceptions of democracy with those in Belarus and opposing any “ideological offensive” to impose them, bear a striking resemblance to those of the proponents of sovereign democracy.⁶⁰

Yet Moscow’s growing distance from Europe means that it has less to offer these countries in terms of support for their modernization. The logic underpinning “sovereign democracy” nurtures an obsession with countering democracy movements—following the sharp lessons of the “color revolutions”—which not only places Moscow on the other side of the fence to Europe but may also mean that it is missing the chance to influence internal developments in these countries and help create stable polities that still retain ties to Russia. Moscow must undoubtedly be part of the solution, not least where Belarus and the separatist conflicts are concerned, particularly in the Caucasus; however, it needs first to free itself from this logic and, ultimately, engage the efforts of Europe to create a genuine external common security space. The shared neighborhood is on the agenda of EU-Russia negotiations but the approaches of the two sides differ sharply and progress has hitherto been marginal.⁶¹ The prospects, in the short term at least, are bleak.

Conclusion

As Hurrell argues, it is often difficult to establish clear-cut connections between a state’s model of development and its foreign policy choices when powerful external pressures for change come up against deep-rooted domestic social, political, and economic structures and distinctive national traditions. It is crucial—and indeed this should form part of a future research agenda in the case of EU-Russia relations—to “deconstruct the complex processes of breakdown and adaptation” occurring in Russia and their impact on foreign policy; external norms may be at least partially internalized, but this process is likely to result in “new configurations of national beliefs and new patterns of national self-understanding” rather than conforming to a general external model and leading to greater pluralism. One outcome may be the continuation of the “strong state” model, where economic development is balanced with considerations of power and autonomy.⁶²

In response to the political and institutional challenges posed by the rapidly evolving international situation—in particular what Moscow perceives as renewed emphasis on the utility of military power and on the rivalry between competing national interests—influential sections of Russia’s governing elite are claiming a widely shared domestic consensus on values and identity based on a profoundly conservative definition of sovereignty, economic and military strength, and peculiarly Russian political models, formulated in the concept of “sovereign democracy.” This elite is exploiting fears of external instability and of threats posed by powerful nations to reassert national security concerns as a key prop to its state-building project. This is unlikely to lead to a renewal of Cold War–like hostilities with Europe; overriding common interests and Russia’s partial commitment to European norms and values—what Shevtsova calls “the Russian hybrid system”—make much more likely an uneasy, selective partnership: “The ambiguity of the Russian hybrid system is reflected in its simultaneous movement in several directions, both in its domestic policies and on the world stage. The Russian elite talks tough in its dealings with the West, but it seeks to avoid conflicts that would compromise its own interests as well as the integration of the elite . . . into Western society.”⁶³

The current Russian foreign policy paradigm has inevitable implications for its immediate neighborhood and relations with the EU. In devising its external strategy Moscow recognizes the still-asymmetrical nature of relations with the leading powers and major organizations, namely the EU and NATO; these asymmetries are mitigated by maximizing its possibilities as a regional security provider—achieved through the use of politi-

cal and economic levers and through a central role in organizations (the CIS, CSTO, SCO, Eurasian Economic Community) where it can pursue specific common economic and security interests with limited pooling of sovereignty. Moscow's growing international ambitions also inspire active membership in multilateral fora (UN, G8, OSCE, Council of Europe) and interest in other organizations in rapidly developing regions of the world (ASEAN, APEC, Islamic Conference Organisation). As Chizhov has stated "relations between Russia and the EU . . . represent only one element, albeit a very important one, of a wider picture of multifaceted links of our country with Western and Central Europe, along with bilateral relations and interaction within the framework of other multilateral and regional formats."⁶⁴ There are likely to be constraints on Russia's foreign policy ambitions; however, Moscow's new assertiveness and the state-directed use of economic resources to gain political leverage may be part of a long-term strategy. As one Russian political analyst has argued "there is nowhere for us to integrate into and sacrifice our sovereignty"⁶⁵; Russia's position as an autonomous center of power means that independence in foreign policy and sovereignty in domestic affairs will be the guiding principle.

The narrative shaped by the governing elite is made possible not only by what it portrays as an unstable external environment—not least in the shared neighborhood—but also by the absence of political forces in Russia which might provide an alternative. The debate in Russia has shifted in recent years. Significantly, even the leading liberal politician, Grigory Yavlinsky, analyzing the current institutional and political challenges facing the international community, has concluded that the "new political thinking" of earlier times has fallen victim to the realpolitik of a new generation of politicians and that the legitimizing foundation of the post-World War II democratic world order—a values-based conception of human rights and freedoms—is crumbling.⁶⁶ Yavlinsky's article is critical of Russian standards of democracy but, equally, demonstrates the crisis of Russian liberalism that no longer accepts uncritically the legitimacy of Western norms and values as a solution to Russia's attempts to modernize.⁶⁷

So what are the prospects for EU-Russia relations, with a matter of months before a decision is made on a new post-PCA agreement, against a background of intensified political and economic rivalry and differing approaches to security across the shared neighborhood? With Brussels wary of appearing to be too close politically to Moscow and talk of Russia's integration into the Euroatlantic community fast disappearing, are the two sides ready for serious dialogue or—as some commentators have argued—are they returning to the Soviet-era logic of "peaceful coexistence" with commerce rather than politics predominating? Is this, given Moscow's worldview and Europe's apparent inability to formulate a coherent approach, the most that can be achieved?

This conclusion is premature. The increasingly dense network of contacts at the level of technical experts and the business community—where there are some Russian officials and actors with more liberal views and greater experience and understanding of the EU—holds out the promise of extensive "transactionalism," perhaps amounting to a substantial degree of convergence of norms and standards without formal common institutions.⁶⁸ This should, given the common will to sustain the relationship through a new agreement, have a positive influence across the EU-Russia agenda and may in time lead to a pluralist community of political, economic, and social actors. Nevertheless, ideas matter; and the emerging gap between "transactionalism" at the lower levels and a foreign policy inspired by a system

of competing ideas and values, which emphasizes Russia's equal role as a sovereign power and rejects any external interference, is bound to impact the relationship. Europe is having to adjust to new terms of reference in its relations with Moscow. Although the “post-Soviet space” arguably no longer exists as anything more than an historical reference point, it is far less easy to draw clear-cut conclusions and conceptualize the common space of external security. The European democratic community will be forced to take an increasing interest in its neighbors to the East while a whole new constellation of regional organizations and groups of states jostle for influence, with Moscow trying its best to carve out a central role.

NOTES

1. Interview with Aleksei Pushkov in Vladimir Mokhov, “Paradigmy vneshnei politiki,” *Krasnaya zvezda*, October 5, 2006.
2. Road Maps for the Common Spaces, http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/russia/russia_docs/road_map_ces.pdf (accessed February 10, 2007).
3. See Derek Averre, “Russia and the European Union: Convergence or Divergence?” *European Security* 14, no. 2 (2005): 175–202.
4. Katerina Labetskaya, “Mezhdu Rossiei i ES sushchestvuyet prostranstvo konkurentsii,” *Vremya novostei*, May 25, 2006.
5. Vladimir Chizhov, speech to Bergedorf Round-Table, October 1, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/1A957661BCB6496AC32571FD00492936 (accessed November 16, 2006).
6. “European Commission Approves Terms for Negotiating New EU-Russia Agreement,” document IP/06/910, Brussels, July 3, 2006.
7. Chizhov used the phrase “Treaty on Strategic Partnership” in his speech to the Bergedorf Round-Table quoted above.
8. The following owes much to interviews held at the European Commission External Relations Directorate-General and Council of the European Union on January 23, 2007. See also Sami Andoura and Marius Wahl, “A New Agreement Between Russia and the European Union: Legal and Political Aspects,” *The EU-Russia Review*, no. 2 (November 2006): 11–16.
9. The Commission President has proposed negotiations on a free trade agreement after Russia's WTO accession; see Sergio Carrera, Julia De Clerck-Sachsse, Christian Egenhofer, Michael Emerson, Daniel Gros, Elspeth Guild, Sebastian Kurpas, and Andrea Renda, *Priorities for the Finnish Presidency of the EU July–December 2006*, Centre for European Policy Studies working document, no. 248, July 2006.
10. Michael Emerson, Fabrizio Tassinari, and Marius Wahl, *A New Agreement between the EU and Russia: Why, What and When?* CEPS Policy Brief, no. 103 (May 2006): 1–11. This paper presents a number of scenarios and argues for three-stage approach: a document limited to sector-specific agreements in the short term; a political declaration on strategic partnership if the post-Putin EU-Russia relationship develops positively and economic and energy issues are settled (Russia's WTO accession and ratification of the European Energy Charter Treaty); and finally—likely to be very much a long-term prospect given the current state of relations—a treaty on strategic union if and when the “values gap” narrows.
11. Dmitry Suslov, “Mezhdu Berlinom i Bryusselem,” Council for Foreign and Defense Policy Paper, www.svop.ru/live/news.asp?n_id=24588, June 26, 2006 (accessed July 17, 2006).
12. Sergio Carrera et al., *Priorities for the Finnish Presidency*, 17.
13. Putin interview with German TV channel CDF, July 14, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/7ADA345932B71CFAC32571AB002133D6 (accessed July 17, 2006).
14. Transcripts of a “secret speech” by Surkov appeared in July 2005; see www.svoboda.org/programs/tp/2005/tp.071105.asp#1 (accessed September 5, 2006). See also Philip Hanson, “Observations on the Costs of the Yukos Affair in Russia,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 46 (2005): 356–57. Hanson notes criticism by the OECD of Russia's “drift towards a more interventionist, less rule-governed—and sometimes predatory—state behaviour” (362).

15. Philip Hanson and Elizabeth Teague, "Big Business and the State in Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 5 (2005): 675.
16. Dmitry Suslov, "Zachatki ravenstva v mirovoi energetike," *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, September 11, 2006.
17. Andrew Hurrell, "Hegemony, Liberalism and Global Order: What Space for Would-be Great Powers?" *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2006): 1–19. This section owes much to the analytical framework provided in Hurrell's article.
18. Sergei Lavrov, "Russia in Global Politics," *Moskovskie novosti*, March 3, 2006.
19. Speech in State Duma, June 7, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/04B22C68FB4AA980C3257186004C3DF6 (accessed June 29, 2006).
20. Sergei Lavrov, "Vneshnepoliticheskaya samostoyatel'nost' Rossii—bezuslovnyi imperativ," *Moskovskie novosti*, January 18, 2007.
21. Speech to Council on International Affairs, Los Angeles, September 25, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/ACB3FD1C5ED62B37C32571F500306650 (accessed November 16, 2006).
22. Sergei Lavrov, "The Rise of Asia, and the Eastern Vector of Russia's Foreign Policy," *Russia in Global Affairs* 4, no. 3 (2006): 68–80; also at <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/16/1041.html>.
23. Sergei Ivanov, "The New Russian Doctrine," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, January 11, 2006.
24. Sergei Ivanov, speech at a session of the Russian Federation State Duma, February 7, 2007, <http://www.mil.ru/847/851/1291/12671/index.shtml?id=20809> (accessed February 12, 2007).
25. Hurrell, "Global Order," 8.
26. "Deklaratsiya pyatiletiya Shankhaiskoi organizatsii sotrudnichestva," June 16, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/0FAE90658F48F1DEC325718F002C7559 (accessed June 29, 2006).
27. Igor Plugatarev, "Moskva zovet Gruzii i Ukrainu v 'soyuz shesterykh,'" *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, January 13, 2006.
28. For a detailed account see Nicu Popescu, "Outsourcing" *de facto* Statehood: *Russia and the Secessionist Entities in Georgia and Moldova*, CEPS Policy Brief, no. 109 (July 2006).
29. See Hurrell, "Global Order," 3, 7–8.
30. See Surkov's "secret speech," July 2005, www.svoboda.org/programs/tp/2005/tp.071105.asp#1.
31. Interview with G8 countries' TV companies, Moscow, July 12, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/DAA28C3E422FDE67C32571AA0023ACD5 (accessed July 17, 2006).
32. Speech to Council of Europe forum, Moscow, October 18, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/EA3341ABE3B76C95C325720B00340871 (accessed November 16, 2006).
33. Vladislav Surkov, "Suverenitet—eto politicheskii sinonim konkurentosposobnosti," *Moskovskie novosti*, March 10, 2006.
34. Russian Foreign Ministry Department of Information and Media statement, June 20, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/7C8FAF4AC2507BE3C325719300500538 (accessed June 29, 2006).
35. Russian Foreign Ministry Department of Information and Media statement, March 20, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/040215896D97687AC325713700352895 (accessed July 13, 2006).
36. *Izvestiya*, "Triada natsionalnykh tsennostei. Sergei Ivanov o suverennoi demokratii, silnoi ekonomike i voennoi moshchi," July 13, 2006, www.izvestiya.ru (accessed July 17, 2007). Lavrov recently commented similarly that "for the first time in the last decade and a half, a real competitive environment is being created in the market for ideas about the world order which is adequate for the modern phase of the world's development"; Lavrov, "Vneshnepoliticheskaya samostoyatel'nost' Rossii."
37. Comment by Yuri Fedorov, Russia Profile Experts Panel: The Lavrov Doctrine, *Russia Profile*, September 8, 2006, www.russiaprofile.org/experts_panel/2006/9/8/4359.wbp?&content_type=print (accessed September 19, 2006).
38. "Putin ne smog obyasniti zapadnym politologam smysl 'suverennoi demokratii,'" *Lenta.ru*, October 3, 2006, http://lenta.ru/news/2006/09/11/putin/_Printed.htm (accessed October 3, 2006). See also Ariel Cohen, "Putin's Legacy and United Russia's New Ideology," *Backgrounder*, Heritage Foundation, no. 1940 (June 1, 2006): 2.
39. Valery Fadeev, "Dlya protsvetaniya vsekh nado uchityvat' interesy kazhdogo," *Ekspert*, no.

28, 2006, www.expert.ru/printissues/expert/2006/28/interview_medvedev/ (accessed December 1, 2006). Putin himself, when speaking to Western political analysts at the Valdai club, reportedly failed to give the concept a ringing endorsement; “Putin ne smog obyasnit zapadnym politologam smysl ‘suverennoi demokratii.’”

40. *Izvestiya*, “Triada natsionalnykh tsennostei.”

41. Liliya Shevtsova, “Russia’s Ersatz Democracy,” *Current History* (October 2006): 314.

42. A speech by Putin early in his second term—amidst bitter and difficult negotiations with the EU over the Common Spaces—suggested that the need for damage limitation dominated relations: “The latest wave of EU and NATO enlargement has created a new geopolitical situation on the continent, and we now have not so much to adapt to it as, first, minimize potential risks and damage to the security of Russia’s economic interests and, second, discover its advantages and in fact turn them to our benefit”; speech at conference of Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives, Moscow, July 12, 2004, www.ln.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/D90D89CE3886993AC3256ED00022077A (accessed August 19, 2004).

43. In response to a remark by the Italian defense minister at the high-level Munich Conference on Security Policy Putin stated that “The use of force can only be considered legitimate when the decision is sanctioned by the UN. And we do not need to substitute NATO or the EU for the UN”; see transcript of Putin’s speech, February 10, 2007, www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/02/10/1737_type63374type63376type63377type63381type82634_118109.shtml (accessed February 14, 2007). Lavrov, while emphasizing that Russia does not desire the failure of the European project, has argued that “The process of enlargement of NATO and the EU gives food for thought. In spite of the differing character of these two organisations, the consequences of politicising the enlargement theme—and the facts show that enlargement was originally a political project—are in many respects of the same order.” See Lavrov, “Vneshnepoliticheskaya samostoyatel’nost’ Rossii.”

44. Lavrov, “The Rise of Asia.”

45. Shevtsova provides a balanced contribution to the debate; see “Russia’s Ersatz Democracy,” and “Imitation Russia,” *The American Interest* 2, no. 2 (2006).

46. Interview with G8 countries’ TV companies, Moscow, July 12, 2006.

47. Nadezhda Arbatova, Yuri Borko, Sergei Kashkin, Paul Kalinichenko, and Mark Entin, “Russia-EU Quandary 2007,” *Russia in Global Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2006): 100–10. In the debate among experts in Russia on how future relations with Europe will be codified post-PCA, Arbatova—one of a small group of specialists for whom “Europeanization” remains a preferred option, has proposed an “advanced partnership agreement,” with the ultimate aim of association, based on the four Common Spaces, and gradual convergence with European legislation, though she accepts that the majority of Russian political elites currently reject association. Closer to the official view, another group of experts—with a more critical opinion of the prospects for normative convergence and legislative harmonization—has advocated “selective integration” based on agreed common interests in the form of a “declaration of strategic alliance” incorporating a specific agenda, with only sectoral agreements requiring ratification by parliament. See Timofei Bordachev, “Toward a Strategic Alliance,” *Russia in Global Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2006): 112–23.

48. Vladimir Chizhov, speech at St. Petersburg Dialogue forum, Dresden, October 9–10, 2006, www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/92499E8B7D0B6AC1C325720600522D82 (accessed November 16, 2006).

49. See Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards, “The Strategic Culture of the European Union: A Progress Report,” *International Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2005): 801–20. Others have argued that the EU is increasingly willing and able to act as a strategic security actor in its neighborhood; see Dov Lynch, ed., “What Russia Sees,” Chailot Paper, no. 74, EU Institute for Security Studies (January 2005): 116, 124.

50. Katynka Barysch, “The EU and Russia: From Principle to Pragmatism?,” Center for European Reform Policy Brief (2006): 5.

51. Quoted in Karen E. Smith, “The Outsiders: The European Neighborhood Policy,” *International Affairs* 81, no. 4 (2005): 770. The main results of EU policy so far have been the appointment of special representatives in Moldova and the South Caucasus; the EUJUST Themis mission in Georgia (now completed) and the EU monitoring mission on the Ukraine-Moldova border; a role as observer in the Joint Control Commission on economic issues; and a role as observer (together

with the United States) in the five-party format set up to support negotiations over Transnistria.

52. Dov Lynch, "Why Georgia Matters," Chaillot Paper, no. 86, EU Institute for Security Studies, (February 2006): 73. Emphasis in original.

53. See Fabrizio Tassinari, *A Synergy for Black Sea Regional Cooperation: Guidelines for an EU Initiative*, CEPS Policy Brief, no. 105 (June 2006).

54. Mustafa Aydin, commentary on Ioan Mircea Pascu article ("Now the EU must awaken to Black Sea security"), *Europe's World* (Summer 2006): 101.

55. Anatolyi Grytsenko, "Resolving Conflicts through International Cooperation" (speech at Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 4, 2006), www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?sprache=en&id=161& (accessed April 14, 2006).

56. Mikheil Saakashvili, "Georgian's Role in International Security Policy" (speech at Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 3, 2006), www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?sprache=en&id=163& (accessed April 14, 2006).

57. Interview with Turkish media, May 29, 2006, www.ln.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/E863E4E7726661CAC325717F0025F592 (accessed June 29, 2006).

58. Thomas Ambrosio, "The Political Success of Russia-Belarus Relations: Insulating Minsk from a Color Revolution," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 3 (2006): 412.

59. Dov Lynch, "Catalysing Change," in *Changing Belarus*, Chaillot Paper, no. 85, EU Institute for Security Studies (November 2005): 106.

60. Ambrosio, "The Political Success of Russia-Belarus Relations," 423.

61. Interviews at the European Commission and Council of the European Union, January 23, 2007.

62. Hurrell, "Global Order," 17–18.

63. Shevtsova, "Russia's Ersatz Democracy," 312.

64. Chizhov, speech at St. Petersburg Dialogue forum, Dresden.

65. Vyacheslav Nikonov, "Pochem nynche demokratiya?," *Trud*, April 15, 2006.

66. Grigory Yavlinsky, "Rossiya otvechaet luchshim mirovym dvoynym standartam," *Novaya gazeta*, July 13, 2006.

67. Shevtsova argues that, in the current climate of political thinking—in thrall to "the seduction of great power status"—"even Russian liberals doubt that Russia can survive as a 'normal country,'" "Imitation Russia."

68. See Jackie Gower, conclusion to *The Two-level Game: Russia's Relations with Great Britain, Finland and the European Union*, ed. Hanna Smith, Aleksanteri Papers 2/2006, University of Helsinki (2006): 260; Emerson, Tassinari, and Wahl, "A New Agreement between the EU and Russia," 6.