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Inclusive European Security? Russia and the EU in the Post-Western World

Veronika Sušová-Salminen

There has been a lot of talk of a new Cold War between the West and Russia, even though the metaphor itself is not appropriate in today's globalised context. It is not a very fitting analytical description. Firstly, there is no clear ideological and systemic struggle between Russia and the West; this means that Russia does not offer any alternative system or ideology. It is acting through the same system – the capitalist one, with post-Soviet nuances and deformations.

Secondly, the confrontation between Russia and the West is strongly positioned in gaps in communication and shared virtual spaces. Here, the key feature is the battle between competing narratives, their intermingling deconstructions and mutual blame of propaganda, fake news and so on. This makes it extremely difficult to nurture a spirit of dialogue and objectivity.

The recent strife with Russia is a composite part of the next cyclical crisis of capitalism and cannot be viewed beyond systemic circumstances – in particular, the dynamics of the 2007-2009 crisis, or “Great Recession”, represent an important factor. Furthermore, it is important to remember the key principle involved in the organisation of foreign relations: an anarchy, intended to mean the non-existence of supreme authority over nation states, which are fundamental (although not the only) political actors. Despite talks of liberal order, this is its principal characteristic.

Thus, classical instruments and characteristics of an international conflict are in motion, as well as a new version of a security dilemma without a fixed point to indicate the beginning of its downward spiral. However, the results are clear: growth of insecurity (located along the EU-Russian border and in so-called new Eastern Europe), militarisation and, of course, an increase in military spending and an arms race.

In Western mainstream discourses, Russia is to be blamed alone for the failure of the European security architecture. As in the past, it is Russia's otherness that represents a key argument here.¹ Russia is pictured as being a non-democratic, non-European and neo-imperial rogue state. It is also blamed for disintegration processes in the EU, for aggression against Ukraine, for breaking the international law (interestingly, by those who were breaking it before too) and for cyber interventions in political processes. All these problems are presented as Russian issues, not as failures in interaction and mutual relations within the international system characterised by a conflict of interests. In the EU, Russia is portrayed as an old-fashioned and outdated power with conservative or even neo-fascist ideology contrary to Europe's liberal ideal.² Russia's ideological peculiarity is perceived as problematic.

NATO, a Cold War organisation, is back on track and the EU is trying to use Russia as a common enemy and antipode of European liberal prosperity and ideals. And so, nearly 30 years after the celebrated fall of the Berlin Wall, new walls are being built, some of them symbolic and some of them real.³ It is difficult not to view this as a failure and as the modern version of the old European story: a new division in Europe that echoes European imperial history and the warmongering discourses of both sides, using more or less sophisticated images of the enemy as a consolidating instrument.

1 See for example: Martin Malia, *Russia under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum*, Belnap Press: Harvard 2000; Paul Sanders, *Under Western Eyes. How meta-narrative shapes our perception of Russia – and why it is time for a qualitative shift*, <http://www.iwm.at/transit/transit-online/under-western-eyes/>.

2 See for example: Dmitri Trenin, *Should We Fear Russia?*, Polity Press: London 2016.

3 Reuters, *Bracing for Russian military exercise, Lithuania puts up a border fence*, 5 June 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-lithuania-russia-fence-idUSKBN18W237>; Business Insider: *A nation bordering Russia is building a fence along a third of its border*, 16 Dec. 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/latvia-border-fence-russia-2015-12>.

UKRAINE AS A CATALYST

The Ukrainian crisis represents an important part of this story, but it is not the only source of recent alienation/confrontation between the West (the EU and USA) and Russia. The 2014 crisis became a catalyst of already existing problems that are both internal and external in their nature. In Ukraine, it was a never-ending story of internal stagnation, corruption, state capture by competing oligarchic clans, lack of justice, underlying inequalities, lack of rule of law and the need to channel the new wave of popular discontent via fresh “revolution” led by old political faces with new pro-European slogans. In the end, EU neighbourhood policies were much tested in Ukraine and can hardly be evaluated as a success in terms of security and peace in Europe. The Ukrainian crisis, as a European crisis, was an embodiment of ignorance in terms of geography and its role in the formation of foreign politics and security concerns. This is true not only for Kiev but also in the European metropolises that invited Ukraine into the club as an associated coun-

try (in fact, a new type of imperial euro-hierarchy: member state – candidate – associated country). It occurred even when a negative dynamic of two Eastern enlargements for the EU was evident in the context of the Great Recession/euro crisis. And the negative consequences for Ukraine and its relationship with Russia were inevitably imprinted on the internal and external dynamics of the EU.

Of course, it was flattering to see that the European Union still had its magnetism in the middle of deep structural crisis. But it was here, in Ukraine, where EU weakening soft power collided with the classical great power arsenal and Realpolitik. If Ukraine was caught in an identity-based conflict (West or Russia, both mutually exclusive), then the EU was trapped in the dynamics lying between two versions of Europe: new Atlantism and neo-continentalism. The ideology of EUrope (and not Europe, as a diverse place where different experiences, cultures, political systems and histories intersect) contributed to the final blow.

RUSSIAN RED LINE

The Russian reaction to this one-way ticket towards a new European Ukraine was based on geopolitical calculations. Ukraine’s NATO membership and the map of Eastern Europe were to play for. Russia wanted a military neutral Ukraine, where her political influence would mean that NATO, defined in Moscow as a foreign policy instrument of the USA, would not expand further and weaken Russia’s security position. Together with Ukraine, it was also a member of the newly created Eurasian Economic Union, seen in Moscow as a composite part of pan-European common space. In the West, the EU, and in the East, the EAEU as complementary parts of wider Europe; this was the Russian proposition defined by Vladimir Putin in 2012. It was a continental and pluriversal approach to Europe (as a composite part of broader Eurasia), which however refused the idea of Europe as the European Union with its normative power arsenal or “moral geopolitics” (József Böröcz).⁴ In fact, it was a post-Western vision which reflected the idea of multipolarity and which may be understood as a phenomenon of the post-Western world.

Moreover, Moscow tends to consider primarily security/geopolitical categories, taking into account geographical conditions and frameworks. Her *peripheral* position means that Moscow cannot rely on a strong soft power arsenal. So far, every former Soviet Bloc country that has joined the EU has also been integrated into NATO. These occurrences, as recent history shows, have gone hand in hand. This is one of the reasons why relations between the EU and Russia turned quite bitter from 2007 onwards.

NATO was one of the key generators of Cold War dynamics in Europe. It was a clear instrument of US predominance after 1945 and, more harshly, its parallel existence made the EU rather “a civil wing” of NATO as Richard Sakwa argues.⁵ The processes of association/accession to the EU related to NATO membership also meant that NATO expanded geographically eastward.

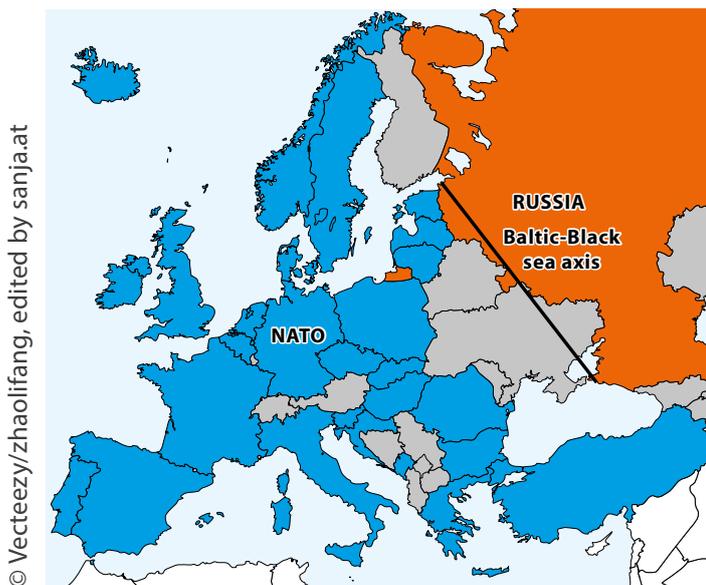
On the map, the picture is simple: NATO moved closer to Russian borders, letting Russia out, but not offering any kind of diplomatic compromise. These processes left Russia on the margins of Europe, which expected it to either “deal with

4 József Böröcz, ‘Goodness is Elsewhere: The Rule of European Difference’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, pp. 110-138, 2006. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1082435>

5 Richard Sakwa, ‘The death of Europe? Continental fates after Ukraine’, *International Affairs* 91: 3/2015, pp. 553-579.

it" or "change" (to become democratic and liberal according to Western criteria) to even be considered for inclusion. The missionary approach which worked in Central East Europe failed in Russia with its great power identity. Badly.

Figure 1: The Baltic-Black sea axis, a key Russian security space, and NATO



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ATLANTIST EUROPE

The old instruments of international politics were in motion, even when many believed that they were extinct thanks to the EU. Of course, this was a shock. The tragedy of the EU, its strong defence and security dependency on NATO, and its main sponsor – the USA – was once again brought to the fore. In terms of soft power, the EU still succeeded in pro-reform Ukraine, but Russia was a completely different story. For peace and security on the European (and not European) continent, it would be the next source of insecurity. At this point, it was clear that an *ideologically* based deal could not be made with Russia.

The Ukrainian crisis has shown little autonomous space for the EU in its own continent. This limited independence may be strategically viewed as a key sign of the irrelevancy of the EU as a continental world power, typified by shifting global power (from the Atlantic towards Asia). And finally, this reduced autonomy, granted by security dependency on overseas USA, is asymmetric with potential as well as

Russia, whether Yeltsin's or Putin's, or "pro-Western" or "anti-Western", has always been critical of NATO enlargement. Euromaidan in Ukraine brought its potential membership of NATO back to the table, something which was a pronounced aim of many Ukrainian politicians in the past (see 2008 Bucharest NATO summit). After Euromaidan, it is a matter of chosen security and Ukraine's political future. From a geopolitical and security perspective, it represented a destabilisation factor in the strategic space along the Baltic Sea and Black Sea axis – historically, a geopolitically crucial area for Russia in terms of cultural geopolitics and security. Thus, the potential of Ukrainian NATO membership is likely to be a source of confrontation and security concerns in Russia. The European Union, its politicians but also many academics, were surprised by Russia's radical reaction. It took an unprecedented step, taking over Crimea with Russian naval bases on the peninsula and covert political/military intervention in eastern Ukraine. This created a new spot of frozen conflict in post-Soviet space. Suddenly, it was clear that the EU's geopolitics of morality (or soft power) would not be effective here. Instead, it met with an old-fashioned resistance that combines *Realpolitik* and force with a rather new version of postmodern communication style.

real impacts of the Ukrainian conflict – since it is situated in a shared continent, in the direct proximity of the EU, creating an EU buffer zone that became territorially destabilised. On the other hand, the USA are overseas and outside Eurasian dynamics of power shifts and destabilisation centres, securing them from any critical impacts.

The key player – the USA – was set to limit Russian influence in the post-Soviet sphere and to react to Russian military modernisation, undertaken during Putin's third presidency. A consolidated and modernised army, and a new Eurasian regional platform with Russia as its leader was certainly not in US interests. As John Mearsheimer writes, the USA strategy in different regions of the world is based on the following: do not allow an emergence of any regional hegemon.⁶ With this logic, the regional hegemony of Russia in Northern Eurasia would certainly not be welcome in Washington. A strong strategic partnership based on plu-

6 John J. Mearsheimer: *The Tragedy of Great Powers Politics*, W.W. Norton & Company: New York/London 2013.

rality or pluriversality between the EU and Russia would change the dynamics and balance of power in Eurasia.

The composite part of the US strategy is a full delegitimization of any kind of compromise with Russia. It usually depicts Russia as a country which is plotting the great war against Europe to resurrect its old empire. Russia as an independent player in world politics is made practically illegitimate: it has no legitimate concerns or interests. The struggle for legitimacy is a traditional part of international politics and this is one of the latest examples. Under current circumstances, it works based on postmodern communication strategies where deconstruction meets new narratives and simulacra become “facts”, etc.

The compromise based on traditional diplomacy and negotiation is presented as immoral, while the factual unilateral dictate of the USA, with tragic consequences for global stability, is rather concealed. It is Western normativity which is used as a weapon: Russia is *other* and needs to change first before being able to speak to it. Russia must commit to Western values and transform itself in order to become a proper partner for the West. In fact, it means that Russia must abandon its position, humbly submit and

change. There is little interest in having sources of Russian differences, such as the failure of transformation, neoliberal capitalism, and post-Soviet syndrome, merging with it. For too many, *verstehen* (in the Weberian sense) has become the same as an apology. This attitude (which has its roots in imperial/colonial hegemony) is a source of Russian conservative stance – it is reactionary in a way, but emancipatory in another way. It should not be forgotten that the denial of access to Europe has a deep consequence for Russian national as well as geocultural identity.

This missionary approach of the West is a hegemonic strategy of domination. The failures of transformation processes and weakened post-Soviet statehood, mixed with cultural globalisation impacts, have caused Russia to turn to its roots once again (like in the 1880s and 1890s). It has begun its “invention of traditions”, such as Neo-Eurasianism and its newfound popularity, and the revival of Russian traditions in politics and popular culture. As before in history, Russia is currently positioning itself as “an authentic” guardian of European traditions and values, appealing to conservatism in European societies.

RUSSIA IN AMERICAN POLITICS

We have also witnessed Russia become a key issue in US domestic politics⁷ and a weapon to neutralise and delegitimize any suggestions to change the post-Ukrainian confrontational style of politics towards Russia. To this regard, there are some echoes of the Cold War as a specific genre. Indeed, as a very recent article in *Foreign Affairs* admits, the enemy image (of Soviet Union and Soviet system) is much missed in today’s USA as a strategy to keep domestic politics together.⁸

Furthermore, the Trump administration formally finalised NATO’s next enlargement in the Balkans: Montenegro was taken into the club, and there are signs that the next in line could be Macedonia. A lack of a radical shift in such politics has represented a main security irritant for Russia.

On the other hand, the Trump position towards US global hegemony is different and less convenient than many would expect. Trump plans to transform US foreign politics into openly egoistic policies without courting hypocrisy.

Such hypocrisy often masked the USA’s real intentions – meaning that it was universalising US interests as the interests of all humankind – but it also created certain limitations to the openly vulgar unilateralism.

But even so, President Trump is pushing NATO members to spend more money on “defence” (2% GDP), despite being well aware that it is the US military-industry complex which will cash in on the new investments. It is a new kick to the militarisation of Europe and the global arms race. This is a new form of neo-imperial tribute to be made in order to “make America great again” at home. But it hardly means that with new obligation the power will be shared more equally on a decision-making level. Or, more precisely, that the USA leadership under Trump will be more shared and based on dialogue and cooperation.

Thus, despite and due to the anti-Russian campaign against the US President at home, Trump has not challenged or changed any of the ongoing processes launched

7 Compare with Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russophobia. Anti-Russian Lobby and American Foreign Policy*, Macmillan: New York 2009.

8 Jeff D. Colgan/Robert O. Keohane, ‘The Liberal Order Is Rigged. Fix It Now or Watch It Whither’, *Foreign Affairs* vol. 96, no. 3 May/June 2017, online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2017-04-17/liberal-order-rigged>

by the previous administration. So far, his administration continues with militarisation of the Eastern border in Europe – by means of a higher military presence of the US army in the Baltic states, Poland and Romania, and NATO military exercises in Eastern Europe. Only in July 2017, a new military exercise took place in the Black Sea, which was unprecedented in form and content according to an official statement.⁹ Trump's visit to Warsaw in July 2017 recently demonstrated that the road to détente is rather bumpy, unclear and very partial (limited to one deal about ceasefire in Syria). No doubt, the Russian side is reacting to these steps on the Western border (of Russia) in the same way, bringing about an accumulation effect and reproducing insecurity.

This is a typical example of a "security dilemma", a spiral of actions and reactions that lead to increasing militarisation and arms racing.¹⁰ More guns are presented as a security measure while the other side reacts in the same way. This means increasing tension and uncertainties in the European continent which cannot be separated from the wider Eurasian land mass. Both sides will claim that the actions of the other side force them to respond "adequately".

THE TRUMP EFFECT AND THE TRAGEDY OF EU-EAST

Trumpism and its new approach towards the international role of the USA, including egoistic pragmatism and demands, has been challenging for Brussels as well as other European capitals, particularly Berlin and Paris. Trump is also less enthusiastic about the EU, which should not be forgotten. The Trump effect somewhat revived the idea of the European security system within the EU. But it is still questionable to what extent this is a serious and plausible process, and how much it is considered alongside Russia in a different role from that of "the enemy".

It is especially painful to observe the tragic role of Central East European states in the space between Germany and Russia over the course of the last 25 years. In short, their governments converted historical grievances into politics for the future, including those towards Russia. To escape their traumatic pasts (including the systemic *peripherality*), they failed to construct a cooperative mediation policy

If we look beyond Europe, we find the next potential hot spot of security competition and tensions. This is the situation on the Korean Peninsula where the USA continue to install a new THAAD anti-ballistic system. This US military infrastructure is part of the US defence system and was not welcomed by China or Russia, both countries in geographical proximity. Besides NATO enlargement lies the second major irritant to Russia: USA withdrawal from the ABM agreement. Russia interprets it in terms of "strategic balance", including that of nuclear deterrent forces, and argues that a disbalance will end in more global insecurity.

And of course, the next hot spot reflects Russian-USA competition over Syria, or more broadly, Near East gambit, which transferred this competition to the key region of Eurasia and of US geopolitical interest. Recently, there have been some signs of a possible partial cooperation in Syria, but we are still far from being able to say that one agreed ceasefire is a road to complex détente between the USA and Russia. Finally, the new sanctions imposed against Russia mean that this will be not the case.

between the EU and Russia. Historical grievances, fear or phobia, and Orientalist prejudices, within the ideologically defined "return to Europe" (Europe intended as the European Union), became a key foreign political paradigm. Meanwhile, the region relies on the USA and has repeatedly proved its loyalty by supporting the US government's most controversial steps, including the intervention in Iraq and Middle East destruction. This peripheral Europe, culturally ambivalent ("Eastern margin of the West" – "Western margin of the East" if we use such a metageographical dictionary) and insecure came to be a source of liability, fear and uncompromising anti-Russian politics in the EU and NATO.

Instead of stepping in and learning from the past's harsh lessons, warning against confrontation with Russia, trying to build bridges and dialogue based on a strong knowledge of Russia, and searching for strategic balance, Central East Europe mostly supported and still supports one

9 Reuters, *U.S., partners plan European military exercise with 25,000 troops*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-military-europe-idUSKBN18Y23Q>

10 For general understanding: Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1978, pp. 167–214, online: www.jstor.org/stable/2009958.

great power against another. To secure peace and its historical survival, it accepts the game of confrontation and militarisation. It seems it matters little that it is this region to become a main area of uncertainties and confrontation as a direct consequence of such politics. It is on the border of Baltic states (Baltic Sea), Poland and in the Balkans (Black Sea) where tensions, military/spy incidents and other forms of militarisation are, and will be, increasingly present. But these are countries which prefer to enforce anti-Russian militarisation and which are involved in Orientalising Russia. They are compensating their own Ori-

entalist (inferior) status in Europe, fixed during the accession process of "Europeanisation" as a way to integrate into West European political institutions.

It also seems to be of little importance that there is a new fence being built between Russia in the East and Europe on the border areas in a way we recognise from the past. Those who were left – often involuntarily – behind the Iron Curtain are involved in moving it on their own borders. In fact, they are filling the buffer-zone role once again, if we apply the terminology of classical geopolitics.

IS THE WEST READY FOR GLOBAL COEXISTENCE?

However, there is a more general question. What does the future hold for the West and the EU in the global but *diverse* world? Or to put it differently, what if Russian *otherness* is one of many in the increasingly post-Western world, which will be much more *hybrid* than normatively West-centric in the future? Are the West and the EU ready? Does military force provide the answer to weakening economic and cultural power?

The time of Western hegemony comes slowly but clearly to an end. Not only is the European core living under the long shadows of two imperialistic wars in 1914 and 1939; both were a composite part of "*Finis Europae*", which meant that the gravity of the capitalist system was moved to the USA, on the Western shores of the Atlantic. Thus, ideology of Atlantism is the product of this systemic history of Western capitalism – partly historically necessary and a bitter result of self-destruction of West European imperialism, and partly ideological. The still-existing security system of Europe with NATO (and the USA) as its pillar was an unplanned consequence of Cold War competition between two superpowers.

In today's diverse but interconnected world, the soft power based on narcissist Eurocentrism is not and will not be enough. The war for weakening hegemony of the West (including the USA) is not the answer. Western normativity is meeting, and will meet more openly, different types of hybridity as a result of globalisation and colonialism. Western universalism (which is itself nothing less than a product of an empire) will be ever more challenged culturally and politically as well as economically.¹¹

Thus, relations with *other* Russia act as a litmus test for the EU of the future. Russia is questioning the position of the EU in the European (not EUropean) continent, to which it is a significant and inevitable neighbour. That is, in two different ways, at least.

The first is associated with already mentioned soft power or cultural hegemony of the West and the EU. What is Europe? This question has got different answers – and Russia has its own answer which is not necessarily wrong because it is *not the same* as that within the EU. The second set of problems relates to power asymmetries in terms of military capabilities and economy on the continent as well as in the rest of the world. Russia is still relatively strong in terms of military force, but more vulnerable in an economic sphere and quite weak in terms of ideological power. But it doesn't seem that the economic power of the EU will expand or dominate in the future. On the contrary, the question arises of how to feed West European (postcolonial) ambitions within such negative dynamics.

11 See Andrea Komlosy, 'Prospects of Decline and Hegemonic Shifts for the West', *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2016, pp. 463-483.

INCLUSIVE EUROPEAN SECURITY?

Peace is not just any value, it is a precondition for any social and moral values to exist. We can hardly have any “European values” in conditions of war. War has its own values and rules. To prevent war should be the principle aim and crucial leftist strategy. In its historical origins, the EU was the project against a new great power war in Europe. The last two, with global consequences, were proven as a road to catastrophe. But it was based far less on the rejection of Eurocentrism as an instrument for Western hegemony with its universalist designs. On the other hand, it is clearly necessary to find a fragile compromise between diversity in the world and nurturing liberal and socially progressive values at home, i.e. in the EU.

The Great Recession of 2007-2009 was a typical capitalist crisis, which however contributed to the crisis of the West and the EU. This is a structural crisis of course, not just a crisis of hegemony. Recently, with the growth of populist backlash in the EU (and the USA), talk is more focused on inclusivity. What about peace and inclusive security architecture?

Security is a network of asymmetric relations and interdependencies. It is virtually impossible to enforce or warrant security at someone’s expense and then expect there to be no consequences. It is even more naïve or arrogant to blame the consequences on the failure to warrant the secure environment. To claim that US-led NATO is not a reason but a remedy for insecurity in Europe is demagoguery.

Europe, as a subcontinent of Eurasia, needs a new security paradigm which is inclusive and not strictly exclusive based on normative power of the weakening West – be the same or stay outside as “*Hannibal ante Portas*”. Western Europe (the Atlantic core of the EU) needs to ponder its own historical situation with new shifts on a global scale and the rise of Asia, considering how to adjust to the world of hybrids. Russia is just one of them, only located in the direct (not just geographical) proximity. In terms of military force, it is still a relevant actor on the continent.

As I have already mentioned, it is not possible to ponder the European security system in terms of ideological kinship, such as liberal Europe and liberal Russia. Europe must realise that it is hybrid Russia, both politically and culturally, which will be its partner. It must find a real value in the *Realpolitik*, as an instrument to achieve liberal (not

neoliberal!) goals, including balance and equilibrium in a complex world that does not revolve around universally accepted Western values.¹² Russia ponders its own security in classical terms and acts as a great power (although peripheral) with pragmatic approaches. It considers capabilities, not intentions, while European politics is all about good intentions linked to the powerful self-representation of a “rightful” and liberal Europe. The paradox is that confrontation with Russia did not make the EU stronger.

If Europe wants to be relevant as a global actor and not as a global object, it can hardly continue to follow the strategy of Eurocentric predominance. To follow the Eurocentric path in a direct alliance with destructive neoliberal capitalism is not the way to secure the future. Instead, it is a way to continue to weaken internally and sow conflict or war. Ending strife with Russia is just a beginning to start to reform the European Union and make it more open to its own continental diversity, overcoming imperial borders that still divide Europe not just on a symbolic level.

Of course, there are many constraints. The radical Left is underrepresented in recent post-democracy and can only push new foreign political agendas with great difficulty. But we must still try to discuss new issues such as democratisation of foreign policy publicly, promoting dialogue across cultural and other differences, and pondering a new and more just global order to influence public opinion.

But one must be a realist rather than an idealist. The limits are those imposed by US interest in Europe, its military predominance and EU dependency on Washington. The US is clearly the most powerful state in the world in terms of military capabilities and the Trump era does not intend to sit back on its hegemonic status. Rather, it represents politics in search of redefinition, based on calculations and externalisation of high hegemonic expenses.

On the other hand, Russia should be seen as a great power pragmatist with many internal weaknesses and a power which is a composite part of *Finis Europae*. This means that there is no reason to underestimate Russia, but we must also understand that power gravity is moving to the East and outside Europe. So far, due to recent confrontation with the West, Russia moves towards rising China. Is this strategically advantageous for the EU?

12 John Bew, *Realpolitik. A History*. Oxford University Press: London/New York 2016.

Thus, building European security beyond NATO will be a very complicated process that involves not only strategy but also classical diplomacy. It includes deals based on compromise with the USA on the left and Russia on the right. Of course, it would not mean that the USA could and would stay out. Nevertheless, new inclusive security architecture in Europe without NATO is the only real way to restart and change not just the essence of relations with Russia on the common continent. In fact, this topic represents a key point on the EU's radical reform agenda. And I am afraid that for the EU there are not many choices left. It is either *reform or perish*.