

The need to overcome this uneasy partnership, and to replace it with a stable, predictable, and more harmonious relationship arguably represents the most important challenge to political leaderships throughout the continent, and will be a central determinant of the prevailing political conditions in Europe for decades to come.

Jackie Gower and Graham Timmins  
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## INTRODUCTION

# RUSSIA AND EUROPE: WHAT KIND OF PARTNERSHIP?

Jackie Gower and Graham Timmins

### Russia and Europe in the Post-Cold War World

At the opening of the twenty-first century there was widespread optimism that the relationship between Russia and Europe was entering a new era of unprecedented cooperation and constructive engagement. Growing economic interdependence and the recognition of shared political, security and environmental challenges provided a powerful rationale for the development of a genuinely strategic partnership. However, by the summer of 2006 when this research project was completed it was clear that there was deep disappointment on both sides that so little had actually been achieved either in terms of practical outcomes or in developing mutual understanding and trust. As is usually the case when relationships are strained, the reasons are complex and rooted in the legacy of the past as much as in the difficulties of the present.

The sudden implosion of the Soviet-type system in central and eastern Europe (CEE) in 1989 and, ultimately, the Soviet Union two years later in 1991, initiated a traumatic period of socio-economic and political disruption and decline in Russia during the 1990s which was to culminate in the collapse of the rouble in August 1998 and the political humiliation of its impotence in the face of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led military intervention into Kosovo in 1999. During this decade there was a fundamental transformation of the European political landscape which introduced a situation of extreme uncertainty within the international community. The enlargement of the European Union (EU) and NATO to the East may have provided a 'return to Europe' for the states concerned but in the process Russia found itself increasingly marginalized from an expanding western institutional order and subsequently ambivalent regarding its place in the 'New Europe'. Russia

country is part of the European continent. It has a significant economic relationship with the western European states stretching back for centuries and has in many respects a shared cultural and intellectual history with the West. Yet in political terms Russia traditionally looks Janus-like towards both Europe and Asia which makes locating it within the contemporary European political debate extremely problematic. It is unlikely at present that Russia would be offered membership of either the EU or NATO or that Russia would seek it. But to imagine a stable European political order without the inclusion of Russia in some sense would be nonsensical. Its size alone dictates a degree of inclusion. Moreover, growing western European reliance on Russian natural energy resources together with Russia's economic dependency on energy exports makes the maintenance of at the very least a cooperative working relationship between Russia and Europe a political necessity. The question is not whether Russia has a contribution to make to the creation and maintenance of European order but rather how Moscow's voice is heard; within which venues, under whose terms and regarding which issues?

When Putin rose to power in 1999, little was known about the man or his policies. His New Year speech in December 1999 set out the broad direction of his agenda which was to prioritize the establishment of internal stability and, in the process, rekindle national pride and identity at home and abroad.<sup>1</sup> By 2006 and approaching the latter part of his second and assumed final presidential term, Vladimir Putin has become one of the most recognized political faces in world politics and has achieved his core objectives. The Russian economy has recovered from the shock of 1998 and living standards have demonstrated consistent improvement albeit from a very low base and not always in a universal manner. Most important, however, Russia has rediscovered its voice and has a place at the table in shaping the international agenda. As President of the Group of Eight (G8) for 2006 and with membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) pending, Putin has made considerable progress in establishing Russia as a 'normal' state. But Russia's domestic recovery and international influence has been based very much on its energy resources and the much-needed revenue provided rather than broadly based economic growth. Large parts of the Russian economy remain fragile and would be unable to cope with full exposure to global market competition. Moreover, with Putin required by the Russian constitution to stand down at the presidential elections in 2008 and with no obvious successor waiting in the wings, there is growing political uncertainty as Russia looks towards the future.

## The European Response to the New Russia

But if the end of the Cold War had required Russia to redefine its international identity, the same was true of its European neighbours to the West and the international organizations to which they belonged. If the key western European institutions e.g. the European Community (EC) as it was known until the signing of the *Treaty on European Union* in 1992 and NATO, were to remain in place beyond the Cold War it was imperative that they too provided credible justification for their continued existence. For the EC the end of the Cold War provided the opportunity to extend its historic mission of forging European peace and stability eastwards, a process which was to lead to ten new members joining in May 2004. In the case of NATO, its future after the Cold War was much less certain. Its rationale at the time of the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949 was to establish a collective defence mechanism to protect the West against the Soviet Union. Once western Europe no longer needed to live in fear of Soviet aggression, the argument began to develop in the early 1990s that NATO was no longer required and this followed the logic that successful alliances invariably fall apart once they are no longer needed. The *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance* published in July 1990 and the new strategic concept agreed in Rome in November 1991 successfully argued that NATO remained an essential component of the post-Cold War security architecture in providing a 'stable security environment' within which democratic reform could be nurtured in the East.<sup>2</sup> As with the EU, the logical culmination of this policy was an eastern enlargement leading to the entry of three central and eastern European states in 1999 and a further seven in 2004.

EU and NATO policy towards Russia during the 1990s developed along much the same lines as it had for the central and eastern European states. In January 1994 NATO launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative with Russia as one of its participants and in June of the same year the EU signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia. These moves came soon after the publication of the Russian Foreign Policy Concept in June 1993 which suggested that a stable basis for Russia's relations with its European neighbours was in the process of formation. But the outbreak of hostilities in Chechnya prompted western condemnation of alleged human rights abuses in the region and resulted in a cooling of relations. It was not until 1997 that further movement was made. In May the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed and in December, following the declaration of a ceasefire in Chechnya, the PCA was finally ratified and implemented. But this proved to be yet another false dawn in Russian-European relations. Although Russia had finally come to terms with NATO enlargement towards the end of the 1990s albeit in a

tetchy manner, it was finally waking up to the implications that EU enlargement would have for Russian economic interests. Furthermore, the economic crash in Russia in 1998 and the NATO intervention into Kosovo the following year provoked a rapid deterioration in Russia's relations with the US and seemed at the time to have been a situation from which the EU could profit when the new Foreign Policy Concept produced by the Putin Administration in June 2000 identified the EU as a key partner. But although the end of the 1990s had undoubtedly presented the EU with a window of opportunity, Putin was irritated that the EU had produced a Common Strategy on Russia in June 1999 without any Russian input and was sceptical that the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), also agreed in June 1999, would become a credible alternative to NATO. The closing of the 'EU window' accelerated after 9/11. The US looked to Russia to become a partner in the 'war on terror' and this provided Putin with increased scope for manoeuvre in Chechnya. This period coincided with an increase in oil prices which also played into Russian hands in reducing Moscow's reliance on western loans and trade in manufactured goods with the West. In May 2002 Putin made considerable progress in achieving Russia's priority of a place at the table when the EU agreed an Action Plan on the ESDP at the EU-Russia summit in Moscow and NATO established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) at the Reykjavik summit.

### **Russia and Europe: What Kind of Partnership?**

The central objectives of this book are to investigate the current state of Russia's relations with Europe, how these relations have developed and to consider the future prospects. A basic assumption is that neither Russia nor Europe can be viewed as monolithic polities and there is a need to disaggregate our understanding of both. Contrary to the impression given in the western media, which can lead the reader to believe that little has changed since the end of the Soviet Union, political exchange does take place in Russia and it is therefore essential that the West better understands the Russian foreign policy agenda, how foreign policy is formulated and the actors involved. Likewise, Europe is far from being a cohesive political actor and this book resists the temptation to conflate the concept of Europe with the EU but draws NATO and bilateral relations into the investigation.

Within this evolving relationship it is argued that there are three potential modes of cooperation between Russia and Europe; strategic, normative and pragmatic. A strategic mode of cooperation would suggest that there is fundamental agreement between Russia and Europe on the challenges both face and the means by which this common agenda is to be addressed. A

normative mode of cooperation would imply that there is a shared set of norms and values underpinning the relationship which informs and guides behaviour and the pragmatic mode suggests that cooperation will be conducted in accordance with short-term, tactical calculations.

In order to address which mode of partnership best fits the contemporary relationship between Russia and Europe, this study has been divided into three parts. The first part, 'Russia looking West', considers the development of Russian foreign policy since the end of the Cold War and, in specific terms, under the Putin Administration. In the opening two chapters Richard Sakwa and Neil Robinson address the evolution of Russian foreign policy thinking and the interaction between foreign and domestic politics. At the heart of the second chapter is a discussion around the notion of 'normalization' and whether the Russian state is moving towards a more predictable pattern of behaviour. The four chapters from Stephen White and Margot Light, Dmitry Polikanov, Irina Busygina and Derek L.Averre which follow cover various aspects of the internal dialogue on Russian foreign policy with the focus on Russian-European relations.

The second part, 'Europe looking East' considers the development of European policy through the two levels of multilateral relations with the EU and NATO and bilateral relations with Germany, France and the 'New Eastern States'. Jackie Gower and Hiski Haukkala examine EU policy development with the latter of these two chapters focusing on the question of norms and values while Mark McGuigan introduces the transatlantic dimension to Russian-European relations via NATO. The three chapters which follow by Graham Timmins, Julie M.Newton and Kristi Raik address the two key relationships that Russia has with Germany and France and looks at the impact on EU-Russian relations of the 2004 enlargement into CEE.

The third part 'Partnership in Practice' attempts to draw the discussions in the first two parts together to consider the extent to which genuine partnership between Russia and Europe has developed. Thomas Frellesen and Clelia Rontoyanni consider the political relationship between the EU and Russia while Marco Pantini focuses his chapter on the development of economic relations. The final chapter by Mark Webber investigates cooperation in the area of European security governance.

This study does not make any claims towards comprehensive inclusivity. There are a range of issues which could easily have been included in this investigation and there are obvious omissions regarding institutions and actors. But what we as authors hope we have achieved is a modest contribution to the setting out of an agenda which will facilitate and inform further research. It is only by recognizing the complexity of the emerging Russian state and the multifaceted nature of its interaction with Europe and, indeed, the complex nature of European multilateral organizations themselves that we can begin to

meet the challenges that face practitioners and analysts alike in understanding and responding to the evolution of this most critical of relationships.

### Notes and References

1. Vladimir Putin, Russia at the Turn of the Millennium Speech, 31 December 1999. Available in translation at: [http://www.government.gov.ru/english/statVP\\_engl\\_1.html](http://www.government.gov.ru/english/statVP_engl_1.html) (accessed 10.06.03).
2. See NATO, 'Declaration on a transformed North Atlantic Alliance issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council (The London Declaration)', 6 July 1990 at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/b900706a.htm> and 'The Alliance's Strategic Concept agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council', Rome 8 November 1991 at <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/b911108a.htm> (accessed 15.02.06).

## PART I

# RUSSIA LOOKING WEST