Russia, the European Union and NATO: Is a "new normal" possible?

Staack, Michael

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Monographie / monograph

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

Verlag Barbara Budrich

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der

Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

Michael Staack

Russia, the European Union and NATO

Is a "new normal" possible?

Michael Staack
Russia, the European Union and NATO

Michael Staack

Russia, the European Union and NATO

Is a "new normal" possible?

This book is available as a free download from www.budrich.eu (https://doi.org/10.3224/84742177). A paperback version is available at a charge. The page numbers of the open access edition correspond with the paperback edition.

Contents

1. Introduction

Relations between Russia on the one hand and the European Union and NATO on the other are currently the worst they have been since the early 1980s before Mikhail Gorbachev took office in the former Soviet Union (1985). Security analysts are even more critical, arguing that the *Cold War* proceeded in a relatively orderly manner, with both sides endeavouring to avoid *risks* resulting from inadvertent military clashes. At present, there is a lack of such well-established *mechanisms* and *self-control*, and the network of Confidence and Security Building Measures and crisis-prevention tools established within the framework of the OSCE is neither taken seriously nor used (cf. Panel 2015: 11). *Inadvertent military escalation* has become a more likely scenario than it was in the 1980s. It would be wrong, however, to speak of a *new Cold War*. Economic, political, and civil society ties and contacts, particularly between the EU nations and Russia, are now much closer than they were at that time. The crisis in the relationship between Russia and the West has damaged these ties but not destroyed them. The current state of *Cold Peace* with its susceptibility to crisis cannot therefore be compared with the old East-West conflict but constitutes a new form of conflict *sui generis*.

Although Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its intervention in East Ukraine *prompted* the crisis that has been on-going since 2014, the actual *causes* of this development go back a lot further. Russia's official criticism of a whole range of political decisions made by the West has been widely known at least since President Putin's sensational speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference. These decisions include NATO's involvement in the Kosovo War, which took place without a UN mandate, the Iraq War, which violated international law, NATO's eastward enlargement, the establishment of a missile defence system in Eastern Europe, and approval of a unipolar instead of a multipolar world (Putin 2007). One year later, in August 2008, mutual provocations led to the *war between Russia and Georgia* and the formal secession of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions from the Georgian state. Although Germany, France, and Spain had blocked specific steps to admit *Georgia* and *Ukraine* into the Western alliance during the April 2008 NATO summit, this issue remained on the political agenda.

Initial efforts by the Obama administration (2009-2017) to *reset* relations between the United States and Russia, which had been shattered under his predecessor in office, George W. Bush (2001-2009), led to the conclusion of a significant arms control treaty (*New START*) on strategic nuclear weapons. However, the West's intervention in the change of regime in Libya (2011), which was not conducted as mandated by the UN Security Council, and the ensuing conflict regarding the civil war in Syria (since 2011), soon put an end to these efforts. From a Western perspective, *domestic developments* in Rus-

sia also contributed to further alienation. While it seemed that a window had been opened for liberal reforms under President Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012), this window was soon closed when Vladimir Putin was re-elected in 2012. Instead, the Russian leadership introduced several measures designed to hamper the activity of oppositional political and civilian forces. When the period of upheaval began in Ukraine in the autumn of 2013, it was evident that the *resource of trust*, which had certainly still existed between Russia and the West at the beginning of the 21st century, was now exhausted. As a result, a key condition was missing for the *coordination of Russian and Western strategies* for dealing with the upheavals. At present, confidence in the *reliability* and *consistency* of the other side, which is fundamental to stable relations, has completely disappeared on both sides.

This paper presents the view that the Ukraine conflict marks a *structural break* in relations between Russia and the West. A *strategic partnership* which, although difficult, both sides wanted (at different times with varying intensity), was replaced in 2014 by open *strategic rivalry*. Although it could have been avoided, this structural break had been looming for several years. Western politics, it must be said, did not take the many signs of the crisis seriously enough and even favoured or became increasingly accepting of a confrontational relationship (cf. Pradetto 2017b). This was due to a *change of priorities* in the policy of some major Western nations. In the 1990s, a strategic partnership with Russia was regarded as a *value in its own right* and as an *indispensable requirement for pan-European security*. At the beginning of the 21st century, however, the West began to demand that Russia fundamentally *adjust its foreign and domestic policy* to Western standards as a precondition for a (junior) partnership. In the United States, as in parts of the EU, there was a growing belief that European security was only possible *without* or *in opposition to* Russia, but not *with* it.

Poland and the Baltic States repeatedly used their NATO and EU membership to try and position these Western organisations against Russia. Russia accepted NATO enlargement but was not prepared to become involved in a true balance of interests and a new political beginning with these neighbouring countries. As a result, an *action-reaction spiral* developed, continually fuelled by past burdens, security perceptions determined by a *worst-case* mentality, and a growing lack of *empathy*. President Putin's successful project of re-establishing the Russian Federation on the basis of its energy resources as a relevant pole of global politics further intensified this spiral, as did Russia's transformation into an authoritarian political system. With the Ukraine conflict, the already fragile strategic partnership came to an end and was replaced by renewed confrontation. Facing this situation, leading EU members, most notably Germany and France, took the initiative to *manage the crisis* and to at least partially contain it, which was in Europe's interest. This strategy resulted in the signing of the *Minsk I and II* agreements, which

still form the framework for a resolution of the Ukraine conflict. Given the fundamental structural break in the relationship between Russia and the West, it will only be possible to *alleviate the tension* or even to achieve a *partnership under new*, *jointly defined conditions* and not in the near term. To this end, it is vital to resolve the Ukraine conflict. In view of continuing shared interests and ties, as well as the military risks of a confrontation, *management of the new antagonism* currently presents the main challenge for the EU, NATO and Russia.

This essay first discusses the two main problems that led to the break in the partnership between Russia and the West, namely the *organisation of international order in a multipolar world* and the *integration and security dilemma in Europe*. It then goes on to address *German policy*, which plays a key role in this conflict. The essay concludes by presenting *five proposals* that could be suitable for achieving a new normality beyond managing the antagonism. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that the persistent *volatility of the international environment* could further complicate this already difficult process.

2. Dissent over the Organisation of International Order in a Multipolar World

The end of the conflict between East and West in 1989/91 – from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union – marked the end of four and a half decades of a relatively stable bipolar world order. The conflict came to a peaceful end after Soviet leader Gorbachev rejected the *ideological competition between East and West*, which had been the main component of the conflict, and instead advocated the prioritisation of what he referred to as "universal human interests". While the ideological conflict of systems between the liberal Western order and communist authority could not be resolved, other elements of the conflict – *competition for power* and *competition for arms* – were related dimensions in which a balance of interests, containment, and greater regulation were, and still are, generally possible (cf. Czempiel 1991).

The United States and the West as a whole saw themselves as the *winners of the East-West conflict*, whose widely differing development phases, ranging from confrontation to antagonistic cooperation, have since been reduced to the analytically vague and misleading term *Cold War*. In 1991, the Russian Federation became the legal successor of the former Soviet Union and – among other things – took over its permanent seat in the UN Security Council as well as its huge nuclear arsenal and numerous international agreements, including the *Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to*

Germany (Two Plus Four Agreement). Although Russia legally succeeded the USSR, its political leadership never regarded Russia as the *loser* of the East-West conflict but as a nation with a long historical tradition that had emerged from the Soviet empire in a state of renewed independence. Large parts of Russian society saw things differently. In their view, *leaving the empire* meant a (collective and individual) economic demise, a loss of social security, and the tearing apart of a large geographical area in which people had been able to travel without border controls.

Francis Fukuyama's theory that the end of the East-West conflict also marked the "end of history", i.e. a global assertion of democracy and capitalism as the best systems of order that could no longer be surpassed in terms of their content and functionality, determined the way the West viewed the world in the 1990s (cf. Fukuyama 1992). The *promotion of democracy and market economy* became the guiding principles of Western foreign policy, albeit with different emphases from country to country. *Activation of the United Nations*, along with a Security Council that had become increasingly influential since the late 1980s, was also an expression of this new value consensus. The United States and its allies were more or less in a position to determine world politics of the 1990s on their own. Throughout this decade, *Russia* under the leadership of President Yeltsin had been largely *preoccupied with matters of its own*: with the serious economic crisis it faced as a result of the failed transition to a market economy that also led to the rise of a group of profiteers (oligarchs), with the disarmament of its huge military arsenal, with emerging ethnic conflicts, and with disputes about future political order in the face of a flawed democracy, authoritarianism, a mafia state, and oligarchy (cf. Mommsen 1996). Nevertheless, Russia strove to earn respect as an *independent pole of world politics* and received both formal and to some extent actual support from Western leaders such as Bill Clinton (U.S.), Helmut Kohl (Germany) and Jacques Chirac (France), who maintained bi- and trilateral dialogue formats.

The *Kosovo conflict* (1999) signalled the end of this phase of the West's unrestrained dominance in world politics and must be seen as a break with the past. Keen to counter a military escalation by Yugoslavia in its renegade province Kosovo, the West decided as early as 1998 in favour of military intervention. The negative experience with the Yugoslav government under President Milosevic in the Yugoslav wars of secession concerning the independence of Slovenia and Croatia (1991) and, most importantly, Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), played a decisive role in this context. The largest part of the Albanian majority in Kosovo, an autonomous region within the Yugoslav federation, also demanded independence, and there was a minority that even used armed force to this end. Russia invariably supported Yugoslavia in all these conflicts of secession. Providing direction in this context was a traditional *pan-Slavic bond* and efforts by Russia to avoid encouraging

similar *secession attempts in its own federation* – for example in the Caucasus republic of Chechnya. For these reasons, Russia – in conjunction with China and other countries – refused to agree to a mandate of the United Nations Security Council for the West to take military action against Yugoslavia. The West dismissed the impending veto and, on 24 March 1999, began several months of *air strikes* against Yugoslavia. These attacks failed to achieve the intended goals of defeating Yugoslavia and of putting an end to war crimes against the people of Kosovo. It was only through a *diplomatic initiative* by Germany that Russia was eventually persuaded to become involved in the peace efforts and cooperated with the West to force the Yugoslav leadership to concede defeat. The Yugoslav troops had to leave Kosovo, which was then occupied by Western force contingents. Russian units were also involved in restoring security in the central sector – led by the Bundeswehr – around the capital Pristina. The future *status of Kosovo*, which under international law remained *de jure* a part of Yugoslavia, was to be clarified as part of diplomatic negotiations. The United Nations Security Council agreed to this arrangement and also retroactively mandated military intervention by the West.

Despite Russia's involvement in the diplomatic settlement (which would not even have been possible without Russian participation), the Kosovo conflict denotes *fundamental dissent* between Russia and the West in global governance. From Russia's point of view, it was not acceptable for Western powers to disregard the *authority of the Security Council on issues concerning war and peace* and the prohibition of the use of force contained in the UN Charter. Violation of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states – also guaranteed in the UN Charter – also received equally strong criticism. As Russia saw it, the West had used its military power to ignore key principles of the *rules-based international order* – a violation it was not willing to accept. Russia's position was shared not only by the veto power China but also by a majority of UN members. In particular, many countries of the *Global South* feared similar restrictions of their sovereignty and – as a result – potential military aggression. In India, Brazil and South Africa, the Kosovo conflict remains the central point of reference for criticism of Western intervention policy that violates international law.

These issues have also been the subject of lively debate in the West itself, although initially such viewpoints found little support among the large majority of governments. They argued that military intervention was necessary to prevent or put an end to war crimes against the people of Kosovo. To substantiate their argument, they pointed to the recent policy of aggression of the Milosevic regime. To protect *human rights*, they considered it imperative to ignore *the prohibition of the use of force* even without a UN mandate if all other alternatives had been exhausted (cf. Panel 2015: The View from the West: 22). While some governments – for instance the German government –

regarded the Kosovo issue as a "special case" and pointed to the subsequent legitimation by the Security Council, others – for instance the U.S. administration and the British government – saw Kosovo as a precedent for extending the frontiers of international law to allow a fundamental breach of the prohibition of the use of force in the event of severe human rights violations. Dissent in the international community regarding this policy issue led to an attempt initiated by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to reach an agreement within the United Nations. While this effort to constitutionalise a *responsibility to protect* within the framework of the UN system temporarily helped to narrow differences, it remained controversial with regard to some key issues (cf. Staack/Krause 2015).

Rejection of Western intervention policy or fierce criticism of its *legitimacy under international law*, a legitimacy that did not even exist in Russia's view, remained a constant element of Russian foreign policy even after the Kosovo conflict. In the run-up to the *Iraq War* (2003), this issue caused a division within the West itself. In the UN Security Council, NATO members Germany and France, in conjunction with the veto powers Russia and China, spoke out against the U.S.-led invasion of the country. The *war of aggression in Iraq*, which violated international law, as well as the entirely unsuccessful occupation policy that followed, made the reasons cited by the United States and their allies for justifying this war seem totally implausible and, moreover, undermined the position of the United States as the leading world power. As a result, support for such unilateral interventions that had not been mandated by the Security Council temporarily faded in the Western community of states. Such support only returned when military action was taken in *Libya* (2011). A group of leading NATO members – primarily the United Kingdom, France, and the United States – ignored a United Nations mandate, on the basis of which a no-fly zone had been established to protect the people of Libya against attacks by the Gaddafi regime, and instead waged a war to change the regime until the regime collapsed. They disregarded not only the UN Security Council but also regional mediation efforts by the African Union. As in Iraq, this *short-term military success* was followed by a *disastrous politico-humanitarian defeat*. State disintegration, economic decline, refugee flows, and the proliferation of Islamic terrorism, in particular by *Islamic State*, were the direct consequences of this Western intervention policy. Russia regarded the intervention in Libya as a clear violation of humanitarian law. This was followed by a firm rejection of new intervention efforts, which since 2011/12 has led among other things to the vetoing of Security Council resolutions on a possible intervention in the escalating *Syrian civil war*. In September 2015, Russian armed forces intervened directly in this conflict even alongside the Assad regime, which most countries still recognise as Syria's legitimate government. Although Russia's support helped to stabilise

Assad's regime, no progress was made towards finding a political solution to the conflict.

Dissent between Russia and the West had, however, already further intensified prior to the Libya and Syria conflicts. While Russia had until then presented convincing *arguments based on international law* to dispute the *legitimacy* of the West's intervention policy in Kosovo and in Iraq, it too resorted in the military conflict with Georgia in 2008 to justification models of the type put forward by the West in the conflicts mentioned above, which included protection of minorities against state violence, assaults on Russian peacekeeping forces and citizens, and the exercise of the right of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter (cf. Schröder 2008). This approach was repeated during the 2014 Ukraine conflict (cf. Allison 2014; Luchterhandt 2014). Is the secession of *Crimea* comparable with the secession and eventual independence of *Kosovo*, as Russia claims it to be? There are three main arguments against an analogy with the Kosovo conflict:

(1) Prior to the secession efforts in Kosovo, Serbia had over a number of years increasingly *used violence to repress* the citizens of this autonomous region. It was not possible, however, to argue that the people of Crimea or its Russian-speaking majority had been *oppressed* by the new Ukrainian central government.
(2) Before NATO's decision to take military action in Kosovo, there had been *intensive diplomatic efforts* to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. There was no such international diplomacy aimed at guaranteeing the rights of the Crimean people. Russia and the Crimean government did not even set foot on the *diplomatic path*.
(3) For a long time in Kosovo, *free elections* had shown that *the majority was in favour of autonomy*. However, decision-making processes on the Crimean peninsula were overshadowed by the deployment of regular Russian forces there. This created a *fait accompli*. There are several reasons indicating that a majority of the Crimean people would have opted to join the Russian Federation in a referendum prepared over the longer term and internationally monitored, for example by the UN or the OSCE. International law, however, does not provide for *a right to unilateral separation from a state against the will of that state*. Recognition of such a *right of secession* would result in far-reaching and profound conflicts in many parts of the world, including in Russia (Caucasus/Chechnya). For this reason, NATO's intervention in Kosovo without prior approval by the *United Nations* remains a violation of international law, or in legal terms a *breach of rule* that did not form the basis for a new rule. Russia's reference to this breach of rule during the Georgia conflict in 2008 and the Ukraine conflict in 2014 underscores the undesirable consequences

such a breach can entail and it did not create a basis for legitimation (Staack 2015: 28).

The conflict concerning the intervention policy of the West is also a *conflict that concerns fundamental issues of the international order*. Russia is therefore claiming its right to be involved in *shaping the international order*. From Russia's point of view, the West used its military and economic supremacy after the end of the East-West conflict to disregard principles of international law. Russia saw this *violation of international law* as an expression of more profound dissent over the shaping of the world order:

"Western interventions in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, the rupture of Kosovo, poor performance in Afghanistan, and open support for the Arab Spring have damaged the most important principles of international security and stability – namely state sovereignty and non-interference into internal affairs. It is the West's actions which are threats to international peace and security. The West has irresponsibly destabilized the international system: stable political orders are upended and replaced with nothing but chaos. Russia has not only lost trust in the West's words, but respect for the West's competence" (Panel 2015, The View from Moscow: 26).

From Moscow's perspective, the main issues or subjects at stake are:

- the *multipolar or unipolar structure* of the international order: a system in which international politics is shaped by several major countries (including, of course, Russia) or the sole supremacy of the United States and its allies;
- rigorous application of the *United Nations Charter* as the central legal document of a rules-based international order founded on state sovereignty;
- recognition of the *Security Council* as the sole authority of this international order which can make decisions on exceptions to the prohibition of the use of force;
- compliance with the *prohibition of intervention in the internal affairs* of other countries, which rules out the support of opposition groups and the promotion of regime changes;
- further development of international law based on a consensus of the international community and not by means of its disruption.

Russia's understanding of international law and international relations as a whole reflects a *traditional state-centred approach*, with preferential status granted to great powers (permanent members of the Security Council), a status that it believes entitles them to certain spheres of influence (cf. Mälksoo 2015). This understanding can be best explained in theoretical terms with the *neorealist* and *geopolitical* concepts that predominate in the research community and among decision makers in Russia. In contrast, the increasing significance of the *economic and societal world* is neglected or perceived as a

disruptive factor under Western control. Based on its resources, its nuclear weapons, the country's size, and also its tradition as a world power, Russia sees itself as an important *pole in a multipolar world order* that must not be dominated by the West. Russia's active role in the United Nations and its cooperation with Brazil, China, India and South Africa as part of the *BRICS* association serve to achieve this goal of preventing Western hegemony. As a result of the decline in energy prices, the costs of its armaments, and the follow-on costs resulting from its intervention in Ukraine and in Syria, Russia finds itself confronted with the risk of an *imperial overstretch* or overuse of its limited resources. For this reason, the Russian leadership is not interested in a continued and costly confrontation with the West but at the same time refuses to make any concessions until the desired status has been achieved.

3.   The Integration and Security Dilemma in Europe

The end of the East-West conflict in 1989/91 also marked the end of the bipolar structure of European security. In the *Two Plus Four negotiations*, a settlement was agreed that enabled the unification of Germany to be shaped in a way that was compatible for all neighbouring countries from the perspective of European integration and security policy (cf. Staack 2000: 199-349). The basis for the unification process included the will of all those involved to integrate the former Soviet Union (until the end of 1991) and subsequently Russia into a new *pan-European security order*. The aim was to strengthen and institutionalise the CSCE, build a partnership between NATO and Russia, and increase Russian involvement in a pan-European economic area. While the security provisions on German unity were very precise, the declarations of intent on the integration of the Soviet Union and Russia into a new European security order remained vague. From the outset, the West had been unable to reach a substantial consensus with regard to this issue. While the German foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher repeatedly and firmly advocated a *cooperative institutionalisation of pan-European security* within the framework of the CSCE and with Moscow as an equal partner, such proposals were invariably rejected by the United States and the United Kingdom. Economically and politically weak, Russia's influence decreased considerably. In the early and mid-1990s, the Russian Federation effectively constituted a *regional power* rather than the *pole of world politics* that Moscow wanted it to be.

The *opening of NATO* to new members, which had been advocated by the United States and by Germany (after Genscher's resignation) since 1993/94, meant that the attempt to create a new *pan-European* security architecture was a thing of the past, with organisations that included many but not

all European nations starting to play a more prominent role (cf. Staack 2000: 513-520):

"The on-going political marginalisation of the OSCE [...] proved fatal. It above all stripped the West of its security function. It reduced the OSCE to an agency focusing on democratisation and election monitoring mainly in the former Warsaw Pact countries. […] The thematic imbalance to the disadvantage of the OSCE's security tasks contradicts its founding document, the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. In this act, the participating States undertook to observe *all* the principles of the Decalogue" (Commission 2015: 3).

Although the *opening of NATO* was not directed against Russia, it did represent a violation of Russia's self-defined security interests. With its new policy, the West was responding to the wish of several Central and Eastern European countries (in particular Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) to become part of the West and in this way resolve their *security dilemma*. To join the *European Union*, new members were required to undergo an extensive and prolonged process of adapting to the *acquis communautaire* of this economic and legal community of peace and values. As a result, these countries did not become EU Members until 2004. Meeting NATO's membership criteria, however, was a much easier undertaking, and the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary to the North Atlantic Alliance, which was decided in 1997, was completed as early as 1999. The key players in the West at the time, namely U.S. President Clinton, French President Chirac, and German Chancellor Kohl, all agreed that an eastward enlargement of NATO would have to be accompanied by a *strengthening of relations between NATO and Russia*. On this basis, they gained the support of Russian president Yeltsin for this privileged partnership, whose foundation was to be the *NATO-Russia Founding Act*. To symbolically demonstrate compliance between the opening of NATO to new member states and the NATO-Russia partnership, the first round of enlargement was formally decided during the NATO Summit of 8 and 9 July 1997, with the Founding Act being signed on 27 May 1997.

There was one *fundamental difference* that this symbolic act could not conceal. In future, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were to be part of the Alliance with all its rights and duties, and in particular enjoy its *guarantee of assistance*. While it was promised the right of consultation and participation, Russia, on the other hand, was not given the right of institutionalised co-determination it sought and, most notably, did not receive *the right of co-decision* in crisis situations. Moreover, the question of when and how far NATO would expand in future remained unanswered. Although President Yeltsin signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Russia regarded this agreement as unsatisfactory from the outset and felt *marginalised in terms of security policy* (cf. Zagorski 1997). Just two years later, during the Kosovo conflict, the NATO countries disregarded Russian opposition and began air strikes against Serbia and Montenegro. From Russia's point of view, this

meant that NATO-Russia cooperation had been rendered more or less worthless. With the decision to expand NATO, two sets of questions were placed on the political agenda, questions that could not be answered unanimously by all European countries before the escalation of the Ukraine conflict: (1) Is there a *geographical limit* to NATO enlargement? Should membership of the Alliance really be open to all European countries as declared in numerous NATO communiqués? With this in mind, does the Russian Federation belong to Europe? And: (2) What form should the *Alliance's relationship with Russia* take in order to ensure that the agreed partnership serves the interests of both sides?

These two sets of questions bring into focus the *integration dilemma*, which was beginning to play an increasingly important role in the shaping of pan-European security. For those countries participating in the integration process, this means greater security (NATO) and welfare (EU). Non-participating nations, however, are faced with negative effects. While being denied participation in the benefits of security and welfare, they may also regard widening integration as a threat. As NATO (and the EU) moved closer to Russia's borders in geographical terms, a form of *integration competition* developed as a direct result of this integration dilemma. While parts of the West – in particular the United States – wanted to integrate all post-Soviet European countries except Russia, Russia was working towards incorporating these countries into its own integration projects (initially the *Commonwealth of Independent States*, and later the *Collective Security Treaty Organisation* and the *Eurasian Economic Union*). Shared interest in cooperation dwindled and was replaced by competition and confrontation (cf. Charap/Troitskiy 2013).

The research community had drawn attention to the development of the integration dilemma as a special case of the security dilemma since the introduction of NATO's policy of expansion and politicians had warned that tensions could occur. "The mistake of 1994" (Czempiel 1999: 103) was "suboptimal in many respects". It was "dangerous because it (NATO enlargement – Staack) will – in the longer term – provoke a Russian response that may lead to the renewed division of Europe and therefore to a conflict" and it was "superfluous because other better strategies were available (EU expansion and activation of the OSCE – Staack) that could have alleviated the fears of Eastern Europe without triggering those of Russia" (ibid. 104). Such alternatives would have been of particular interest to Germany because "a strategy [...] that is limited to pushing forward the West's eastern borders would have been a questionable and possibly very short-term gain in security especially for Germany" (Staack 1997: 285). NATO's "positive function [...] as a community of security is characterised by an inward-looking approach and does not necessarily affect foreign relations. For a policy aimed at permanent secu-

rity, NATO enlargement is therefore only the second or third best solution" (Staack 1997: 284).

George F. Kennan, the architect of the containment policy adopted by the United States after World War II, warned in early 1997 that NATO enlargement could prove to be the West's "most fatal mistake [...] in the entire period that followed the Cold War". In his view, it was objectively superfluous and entailed serious disadvantages for the development of Russian democracy (Kennan 1997: 8). Just a few weeks before NATO's expansion policy was adopted, a letter to President Clinton from more than 40 former ministers, senators, and top diplomats, including Robert McNamara, Paul Nitze and Sam Nunn, was published in the United States. Politicians in the fields of foreign and security policy from both parties, whose fundamental views differed greatly, warned urgently and with similar arguments to those presented by George F. Kennan against NATO enlargement (Open Letter to President Clinton 1997). Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who in the five years since his resignation had refrained from voicing any criticism of Germany's foreign policy, pointed out in February 1997 that "an eastward expansion of NATO without a comprehensive pan-European stability concept" would only create unrest and insecurity within and outside the Alliance. In his view, NATO needed an "overall concept for a pan-European stability order" that would serve as a basis for discussion with all countries in the East. He emphasised that such a concept had to define Russia's place in a new security order, seek to intensify cooperation with all post-Soviet states, and provide for new disarmament initiatives. Genscher also pointed out that Europe's security is "determined less and less [...] by military factors and to an increasing extent by political, economic, social and ecological aspects". For this reason, he believed that the overall concept should also include reinforcement of the OSCE and, most importantly, contain a timetable for expanding the European Union eastwards. In his view, the admission of new members to the Alliance can only be "unproblematized" if this admission can be recognised as an element of such an overall concept (Genscher 1997: 8).

When George W. Bush assumed office in 2001 and NATO was expanded by seven additional members in 2004, the Alliance's policy with regard to its partnership with Russia changed. The intention, still seriously pursued in the 1990s, of combining the *opening* of NATO with an *intensification* of relations with Russia ceased to be a priority:

"Even more so when the West's compensation offers became increasingly limited as NATO expanded – before NATO's first eastward expansion in 1999 the NATO-Russia Founding Act was adopted, before the second expansion in 2004 the NATO-Russia Council was reformed, and the third expansion in 2009 took place without any cooperation offers for Russia" (Commission 2015: 4).

Although resistance from Germany, France and Spain led to the failure of the U.S. administration's attempt in 2008 to incorporate *Georgia* and *Ukraine*

into the Western alliance before the end of the Bush presidency, both countries were in principle accepted. From Russia's perspective, this step took away the basis from what had been a substantial relationship of cooperation with NATO. A brief military conflict with Russia, provoked by both sides and then initiated by Georgia, led to a *suspension of the partnership*. Although the partnership was reactivated in 2009 – primarily on the initiative of Germany but also due to the changed position of the new Obama administration –, the relationship remained tense. There was no basis of trust any more. Rather than serving as a starting point for a reconsideration of pan-European security, the proposal presented by President Medvedev for a *European Security Agreement* was completely ignored (cf. Kühn 2010). The 2014 Ukraine conflict formally marked the end of the "partnership". The *view* that prevails in *Russia* is that the relationship failed as a result of continuing neglect and an increasing lack of respect for Russian security interests:

"Starting with the negotiations on German unification, the West systematically took advantage of Russia's weakness. The West never acted in the spirit of the Charter of Paris, in which the indivisibility of security was a key concept. The West never tried to address security with Russia, only without it, or against it. The United States instead seized the opportunity to dominate international affairs especially in Europe. The 'common European home' failed because the West was unwilling to build new, open security architecture – and to fulfil its promises. The West talked of cooperation and expected cooperation from Moscow, but believed in Russia's perennial aggressiveness or/and weakness" (Panel 2015, The View from Moscow: 24).

The Russian side also repeatedly argued (most recently after 2014) that the West had promised in the course of the German unification process not to seek an eastward expansion of NATO (for details see Sarotte 2010a, 2010b). This view is false in terms of international law but true to some extent politically. There is no legally binding document that contains such a promise. Unified Germany received the right to a free choice of alliance and opted for NATO. Special security provisions were enforced to try and take account of the Soviet Union's concerns about an eastward expansion of the Western alliance. Accordingly, the *Two Plus Four Agreement* ruled out the deployment of nuclear weapons and the permanent presence of foreign troops on the territory of the former East Germany. In the preceding negotiations, the USSR had proposed steps such as dual membership for a unified Germany in NATO and the Warsaw Pact and the demilitarisation of East German territory (cf. Staack 2000: 286ff.). Although Moscow did not rule out the possibility of Germany leaving NATO, it never insisted on this or on the prohibition of NATO enlargement. Demands of this nature would have encountered strong opposition from the United States and the United Kingdom and thus seriously hindered German reunification. Having to choose between unity or NATO membership could have proved an ordeal for Germany. In contrast to Chancellor Kohl, Foreign Minister Genscher was willing to consider "overcom-

ing" the alliances.[1] During the first weeks of 1990, prior to its approval of German unity and agreement to the *Two Plus Four* negotiations, the Soviet Union possibly had the only window of opportunity in which such a demand would have had any chance of success (Sarotte 2010a). Since the USSR did not insist on such an arrangement, any further assumptions remain mere speculation. A further point to bear in mind is that the large majority of East German citizens, who were striving for unification, had a major impact on the dynamics of political development and could hardly be halted in a peaceful manner, the Soviet leadership having already decided in favour of a peaceful approach. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze believed that a good relationship with the unified Germany and economic support from the West were considerably more important than the NATO issue.

However, the parties involved in the negotiation process also declared that there had been no plans for an eastward expansion of NATO beyond a unified Germany. As the then NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner stated in May 1990: "The very fact that we are ready not to deploy NATO troops beyond the territory of the Federal Republic gives the Soviet Union firm security guarantees" (quoted from Panel 2015: 25). Despite the Soviet Union's weakness, some of the Western actors did not predict that the Soviet sphere of influence and the USSR would collapse so quickly. Precisely because of this diagnosed weakness, another group, mainly in the U.S. administration, was not willing to make any binding concessions regarding this central issue (cf. Sarotte 2010a: 137-140; Sarotte 2010b: 115ff.). For these various reasons, NATO expansion was not an issue. Nonetheless, the *political* promise not to expand NATO was undoubtedly just as much a part of the basis of the reunification process as the promise to involve the Soviet Union in new European structures of political and economic cooperation. Following this logic, Hans-Dietrich Genscher argued, shortly before his resignation as Germany's foreign minister, against NATO enlargement and warned of "a new division of the continent along the former western Soviet border"

---

1   On 6 January 1990, Germany's foreign minister advocated converting what was in future going to be more "cooperatively structured alliances into one alliance of joint collective security [...] that is to say, structures need to be created between the alliances that gradually overcome the antagonism of the alliances" (quoted from Genscher 1995: 712). While addressing the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU) on 23 March 1990, he went a step further: "They (the cooperatively structured alliances) are creating new security structures in Europe. They are becoming increasingly overarched by these structures and will eventually be able to flourish within them". In his view, a "system of mutual collective security" was the "definitive perspective" for a European order of peace that had been laid down as a fundamental objective both in the German Constitution and in NATO's Harmel Report (Genscher 1991). Although it was clear what Genscher was saying, his words still left room for interpretation. According to his biographer, the top German diplomat Hans-Dieter Heumann, he later regarded it as "the most serious mistake [...] to have been made since the end of the Cold War" and felt that "the opportunity to include Russia in the pan-European peace order" had been missed (Heumann 2012: 315).

(Süddeutsche Zeitung 1992: 2). As the USSR disintegrated, the basis for negotiations changed. The weakened Russia was not given the same amount of consideration as the failed Soviet Union, and a political promise could not be enforced. Four years after German reunification, the Western powers revised their policy and sought to open NATO to new members.

The *conceptual functionality* and *appropriateness* of this policy has already been discussed in this essay. From the perspective of contemporary history, it is still remarkable that since the 1960s the Federal Republic of Germany's foreign policy had always been based on the assumption that the division of *Germany* could be overcome as a result of overcoming the division of *Europe* as part of a *pan-European peace order* (cf. Link 1986: 169-179). The unification of Germany as a NATO member was simply not imaginable at the time. As Henry Kissinger said in this context in 1966: "However German unification is achieved […], one thing is clear: it will not be a result of NATO's borders being shifted eastwards" (Kissinger 1966: 832-833). Konrad Adenauer shared this opinion. As he stated in a Bundestag debate in 1960: "If one day we also reach an understanding with Soviet Russia – and I hope that with much perseverance we do – the Warsaw Pact and NATO will be a thing of the past. You must understand this. These are not eternal institutions" (Adenauer 1960: 5939). Then, in 1989/90, everything took a very different course. A European peace order based on a new security system for the entire continent remained an unfulfilled wish that was soon laid to rest and no longer formed part of the *mindset* of the vast majority of foreign policy actors.

While Russia had always rejected NATO expansion, Moscow initially regarded the *European Union* not as an adversary but, on the contrary, as a platform for economic advantages through cooperation. Nevertheless, Russia preferred *bilateralism* with major EU member states, such as Germany, France or Italy, in order to promote its interests in the Union. Nor did it object to the first rounds of expansion between 1995 and 2004. This changed when in 2009 the EU established its *Eastern Partnership*, which was designed to facilitate association agreements between the former Soviet republics and the European Union and thus create new markets as well as political ties. Although the *Eastern Partnership* was designed as an *alternative* to accession, some EU members in Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe treated it as a *preliminary stage* to subsequent membership of the EU. At the same time, the EU's *strategic partnership* with Russia stagnated. Russia's official perception was that "the EU's idea of partnership is that Russia should adopt its rules" (Panel 2015, The View from Moscow). From Russia's point of view, by offering a partnership geared to adapting to EU standards, the European Union had opened the second *integration competition* on post-Soviet territory after NATO. During the disputes over Ukraine's political orientation, which escalated in the *Maidan* protests in the winter of 2013/14,

the EU developed, from Moscow's perspective, into a *strategic rival*. Compromises that were essentially of interest to both sides, such as a free-trade zone from Lisbon to Vladivostok, which had been a subject of repeated discussion since the early 1990s, or membership of both the EU Association and the *Eurasian Economic Union* under Russian leadership, were not explored seriously. In the 1990s, a rapid expansion of the EU (which did not take place at the time) would, in terms of peace policy, have been a rational alternative to opening up NATO. However, by the time the Ukraine conflict began, this potential had been exhausted. Russia felt cut off from European integration and association. This constituted a second avoidable *integration dilemma* which, with some strategic foresight, could have been avoided much more easily than the conflict over NATO's eastward expansion.

Regardless of the precise significance of the various reasons, in retrospect it was undoubtedly a considerable mistake not to have invested more political energy in a truly pan-European peace and security order. Overcoming the points of dissent that have grown and intensified over a period of more than twenty years is now conceivable only as part of a *longer-term process* that will lead to *new structures*. To this end, it is necessary to establish "essential prerequisites for a long, arduous, and sometimes painful process of de-escalation", primarily by means of "empathy and trust" (Commission 2015: 2). To settle or contain the existing dissent, a dialogue is necessary on the following subjects:

- interpretation from the perspective of international law of key terms such as prohibition of violence, sovereignty, and self-determination;
- the relationship between the state and civil societies;
- the institutional organisation of peace and security in Europe, economic cooperation and integration (ibid. 6).

4. Germany's Key Role and the Redefinition of its Policy Towards Russia in the 2016 White Paper

Germany has a key role to play in the Ukraine conflict and in shaping future relations with Russia. Until the start of the Ukraine conflict, Germany had not only maintained closer political and economic relations with Russia than any other Western country but had essentially also assumed the role of an *advocate of (justified) Russian interests* within the EU and NATO. This role, which it had played since the East-West conflict had been resolved, came to an end after the annexation of Crimea. Subsequently, the German government played a key part in establishing a uniform Western position. This process involved not only maintaining a *dialogue* but also gradually imposing

political and economic *sanctions*. Germany's support of a *rules-based international order* on the basis of international law made it impossible to accept Russia's breaches of such rules. At the same time – unlike political forces in the United States, for example – use of *military force*, including arms shipments, was categorically ruled out. Instead, Germany – together with France – developed the *Normandy Format* in order to contain and finally settle the conflict by way of negotiations with Russia and Ukraine. Between 2014 and 2016, Germany's policy towards Russia was fundamentally redefined. This new policy was specified most precisely in the *2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* and was the result of close cooperation between Germany's Federal Chancellery, Federal Foreign Office, and Federal Ministry of Defence. For now, the current *strategic partnership* is a thing of the past because "Russia is openly calling the European peace order into question" (2016 White Paper: 31):

"The crisis in and surrounding Ukraine is the concrete manifestation of long-term internal and external developments. Russia is rejecting a close partnership with the West and is placing emphasis on strategic rivalry. Internationally, Russia is presenting itself as an independent power centre with global ambitions" (2016 White Paper: 32).

Russia is now regarded as a *strategic challenge* – not as an opponent but as a political and military actor whose behaviour is difficult to predict and who sometimes acts as an adversary:

"This is reflected, for example, by an increase in Russia's military activities along its borders with the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO). In the course of extensively modernising its armed forces, Russia appears to be prepared to test the limits of existing international agreements. By increasingly using hybrid instruments to purposefully blur the borders between war and peace, Russia is creating uncertainty about the nature of its intentions. This calls for responses from the affected states, but also from the EU and NATO" (ibid.).

This Russian policy needs to be countered with a *dual strategy*: "credible deterrence and defence capability as well as a willingness to engage in dialogue" (2016 White Paper: 66) and "the right balance between collective defence and increased resilience on the one hand, and approaches to cooperative security and sectoral cooperation on the other" (2016 White Paper: 32). The strategic goal is to reinforce the commonalities with Russia and to *regain the country as a partner*: "Germany continues to support the long-term goal of a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia" (2016 White Paper: 66).

Since it is not possible to achieve this goal while the Ukraine conflict is still under way, priority must be given to the dual approach:

"Without a fundamental change in policy, Russia will constitute a challenge to the security of our continent in the foreseeable future. At the same time, however, Europe and Russia remain linked by a broad range of common interests and relations. As the EU's largest neighbour and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia has a special

regional and global responsibility when it comes to meeting common challenges and managing international crises. Sustainable security and prosperity in and for Europe cannot therefore be ensured without strong cooperation with Russia" (ibid.).

On the basis of this analysis and these objectives, the German government also played a part in shaping strategic development in the European Union and NATO. Within the Alliance, it adhered to the *NATO-Russia Founding Act* of 1997 and offered a "substantial and meaningful dialogue" (NATO 2016), which also led to a resumption – albeit rather unproductive so far – of the deliberations of the *NATO-Russia Council*. Germany not only advocated *dialogue* with Russia but also played an active role in the *military reassurance* of the Eastern European Alliance members. The intention was to demonstrate to Russia NATO's determination to protect Alliance territory and the countries most at risk of a possible Russian attack, i.e. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In early 2017, a German-led multinational battalion-size battlegroup including approximately 450 German military personnel was deployed to Lithuania, with the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States leading similar battlegroups in the three other countries. This deployment took place in compliance with the NATO-Russia Act. With approximately 1000 military personnel per country, this has *symbolic* rather than *military relevance* but should be taken seriously as a pledge of solidarity. It is also an appropriate means of reinforcing the subjective security perception. Germany also made clear its willingness to gradually lift the sanctions imposed on Russia, but this was conditional on the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. In particular, Germany's then foreign minister Steinmeier often mentioned the idea of gradually lifting these sanctions and, with reference to major NATO manoeuvres at the Russian border, expressed his opposition to "sabre-rattling" and "war cries" (Spiegel Online 2016). Germany played a leading role in the economic and political *stabilisation of Ukraine* but still voted against the country's *membership of the EU or NATO* as it had done before the conflict began. The Ukrainian government was requested to abide by its commitments laid down in the Minsk II agreement, above all to establish autonomy for the Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

Although the German government repeatedly used its bilateral relations with the Russian leadership for diplomatic purposes, it at no point considered a *bilateral special relationship* or a bilateral policy at the exclusion of its Central and Eastern European partners. Precisely because Germany advocated a *dual strategy* of dialogue and deterrence, its actions remained firmly anchored within the framework of EU and NATO. In the Ukraine conflict, Germany "as a key player in Europe" (2016 White Paper: 22) came to assume a *leading role in foreign and security policy*, which – in pursuing its own interests – it will not give up. The aim of German policy remains unchanged:

- to fully restore Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty;
- to defend the rules-based international and European order;
- to guarantee unified action by the EU and NATO;
- to thus strengthen the credibility of the promise of alliance or solidarity;
- to maintain dialogue with Russia and, in the longer term, to regain Russia as a partner after the conflict has been resolved.

5. Managing Antagonism, Containing Escalation, Gradually Building Confidence

The following five proposals are aimed at preventing destructive developments and facilitating new cooperation. They can help to peacefully contain the conflict between Russia and the West. Even under the current political circumstances, *small steps* are better than *big promises*.

5.1 Confidence Building Measures and Arms Control

The confrontation between Russia and the West is among other things reflected in renewed *military tension and risks*, for instance in dangerous flight movements and airspace violations, in near misses between warships, in the return to major manoeuvres and manoeuvres near borders, and in the deployment of additional troops and weapons. These developments must be taken extremely seriously because a minor military *collision* can, in the present circumstances, lead to an unintended and dangerous *escalation*. It is therefore imperative to activate the available *crisis management* and *crisis communication* instruments and to re-establish such instruments if they are no longer available. In the case of *military incidents*, it is essential to guarantee rapid and reliable military and political-diplomatic communication. In general terms, regular contact should be developed between military personnel on the basis of specific issues (e.g. cyber security) and institutionalised. It is also essential to take the *Confidence and Security Building Measures* agreed on within the OSCE before, and most importantly after, the end of the East-West conflict seriously and to widely implement these measures. This applies in particular to the *Vienna Document*. Full use of the Confidence and Security Building Measures agreed on in this document would not only help to achieve *predictability* and *transparency* on all sides but would also counter the mistrust that is growing with regard to each side's specific military or security intentions and would promote *renewed confidence*. Confidence and Security Building Measures are essential, particularly in a situation of tension, to minimise risks and prevent escalation, or to prevent these in the event

of potential incidents. It is therefore not practical to make their use or further development dependent on political development as a whole.

The existing *Arms Control regimes* in and for Europe were damaged as a result of the Ukraine conflict and their existence was to a certain extent called into question (cf. Kühn 2017). As a result, the *disregard for the political instrument of Arms Control* that has existed for some time has become more intense. The main cause was – and still is – the quantitative and qualitative superiority of the West – particularly the United States – in the defence sector, which has made arms limitation seem superfluous.[2] One of the reasons for this negative development, however, is the *loss of knowledge about the functions of this political instrument*. Arms Control creates predictability by limiting weapons or weapon systems by treaty and in a way that is verifiable. Similarly to Confidence and Security Building Measures, it helps to *reduce security risks* and to increase *confidence levels*. It can also help to make limited resources available for other national tasks (cf. Neuneck 2012). Due to the development of modern defence technologies and the fact that cyberspace is (still) difficult to regulate, Arms Control is currently more difficult to achieve in qualitative terms than it was in the 1970s or the 1980s. There is a lack of political will on both sides. European countries in particular are not objectively interested in new *arms races*. Increased armaments do not necessarily lead to greater security. A NATO-wide increase in defence budgets to two percent of gross national product would not only close certain capability gaps but also lead to new instabilities and countermeasures. Arms Control therefore remains the most appropriate and *most peaceful strategy*, despite the new antagonism that currently prevails. The German OSCE Chairmanship in 2016 presented constructive proposals for the field of conventional Arms Control (cf. Richter 2016b). It is also essential for a dialogue to take place between the United States and Russia on upholding the agreement to completely abolish nuclear intermediate-range weapons (INF Treaty). Publicly discussed treaty violations must also be clarified as part of this dialogue (cf. Kühn/Péczeli 2017).

---

2   August Pradetto (2017a: 98) appropriately points out that NATO finances more than half of the world's defence spending and the political West as much as three quarters. This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the military build-up pursued by President Trump.

5.2 Political dialogue with full use of the options provided by the OSCE

The Ukraine conflict immediately led to the reactivation of the OSCE:

"Following a decade of marginalisation, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe has proven since the spring of 2014 to be the only regional organisation that [...] can help to deescalate the Ukraine crisis" (Richter 2016a: 1).

With its *Special Monitoring Mission* (SMM) to oversee the Minsk agreements in East Ukraine, the OSCE set up its largest long-term mission to date and again became a key forum for dialogue on European security. After the EU and NATO, as organisations whose members did not include all EU nations, had almost completely dominated European security policy for more than two decades, more focus was given to the *pan-European perspective* as a result of this reactivation of the OSCE (cf. Hauser 2016). The OSCE is *essential from a functional point of view* because only in this organisation do all participants in a conflict enjoy equal rights (*inclusiveness*), and decisions can only be made on a consensual basis (*principle of consensus*). It proved exceptionally fortunate that in 2014 Switzerland's foreign minister held the presidency of the OSCE and that from March 2014 Swiss diplomacy worked with great dedication to prevent further escalation and to re-establish dialogue (cf. Nünlist 2014). With Serbia (2015), Germany (2016) and Austria (2017), Switzerland was followed by other *like-minded states*, which continued this dedication in close cooperation with one another. Italy will take up the baton in 2018. After Hans-Dietrich Genscher (1991), Frank-Walter Steinmeier was the second German foreign minister to assume the presidency of the organisation. The work programme of the 2016 German presidency under the motto *Renewing Dialogue*, *Re-building Confidence*, *Re-establishing Security* aimed at consolidating dialogue and cooperation in all political areas, ensuring full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and reactivating Confidence Building and Arms Control for the OSCE area by means of specific projects. The German presidency was able to draw on suggestions of the *Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project*, which was appointed in 2014 also on Germany's initiative. Under the leadership of German diplomat Wolfgang Ischinger, this body had suggested measures such as the following in its final report: renewed confidence building through a process of active diplomacy, reaffirmation of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, reactivation of conventional arms control, a review of the possibilities of economic connectivity as a cooperation element, and resumption of efforts to resolve *frozen conflicts* such as those in Georgia (Abkhazia/South Ossetia) and Moldova (Transnistria) (Panel 2015).

The great achievement of the OSCE since 2014 is the decisive role it has played in *containing* the Ukraine conflict and its initiation and ensuing con-

solidation of the *dialogue* on pan-European security. Under the given framework conditions, maintaining an inclusive dialogue represents a *value in its own right*. In addition, the presidencies of Germany and Austria in particular worked to achieve progress in specific projects (e.g. Confidence and Security Building Measures and Arms Control), albeit without any immediate success. Resistance to these initiatives does not by any means come from Russia alone but – depending on the issue in question – also from Western nations. Some countries are generally against allowing the OSCE to assume a greater role, while others make resolving the Ukraine conflict a precondition for negotiations or for results on issues that have nothing to do with Ukraine. These diverging strategies are strongly reminiscent of similar factions within the CSCE during the East-West conflict. Lack of trust has also returned. This is precisely why the OSCE as the only pan-European forum has a vital role to play. As part of the process of bringing about a change in the political landscape,

- full use should be made of its potential and its instruments, in particular with regard to conflict prevention and crisis management, Confidence and Security Building and pan-European security cooperation;
- activation of the OSCE should not be limited to security policy but should to a similar degree also include other areas of the Helsinki Final Act, which is to be understood holistically, and *economic cooperation* as well as the *human dimension*;
- following the CSCE example, there is a need to seek subject-related cooperation beyond alliance or organisation affiliation.

The dialogue between NATO and Russia also needs to be revived. The *NATO-Russia Founding Act* of 1997 provides an institutional framework for this. It is therefore in the interest of all those concerned to preserve and respect this act. It is wrong to interrupt the work of the NATO-Russia Council in times of crisis, as happened in 2008 during the Georgia conflict. The handling of crises in particular calls for open and frequent exchange. In functional terms, it is therefore necessary to reactivate the NATO-Russia Council and for regular conferences to take place again. These should also be held regularly at the foreign or defence minister level.

5.3   Track II dialogues

As already argued, there is a need to rebuild trust between Russia and the West. To this end, bilateral or multilateral dialogue formats are essential but – as we have seen in recent years – they are not enough. They need to be supplemented and prepared with *dialogue formats between experts* in cooperation with specialists from the research community, diplomacy and indus-

try. These formats should be designed to cover a specific period and topic. Such Track II formats, which are generally not open to the public, have proven effective in a wide range of situations of tension and crisis as a way of successfully preparing official talks by means of discussions that are held behind closed doors and are therefore open to all manner of subjects. They can be particularly useful for precisely defining (and where appropriate emphasising) pre-existing *commonalities*, for identifying and possibly containing *irreconcilable positions* (*agree to disagree*), and for exploring or preparing *options for reaching an agreement* on content- or process-related issues below the threshold of formal contact.[3] These Track II formats can also help to develop *relations of trust* between participating actors and to thus facilitate *crisis communication*. Due to the close cooperation that has existed in the past and that still largely exists particularly between Russia and many EU and NATO members, Track II formats can be useful in various areas, in particular with regard to political relations and security policy.

5.4   Strengthening the connection between societies: science, tourism, culture, local partnerships

The Ukraine conflict has had a negative impact not only on the relationship between Western countries and Russia but also on relations between Western and Russian society. This alienation began even before the conflict. From the Western perspective, it was fuelled by President Putin's increasingly *authoritarian leadership*, above all by his efforts to obstruct civil society and the political opposition. A further line of conflict was the *politics of memory* and *politics dealing with the past*, in particular in the countries that until 1989/91 had been part of the Soviet sphere of power. In this context, justified demands for Russia to address the Soviet policy of repression and occupation mingled with nationalist attitudes generally directed at Russia. At the same time, parts of Russian society criticised the West for a lack of empathy for Russian interests and for turning away from traditional concepts of marriage and family. Bias in media coverage must also be regarded as an influence. Both sides increasingly distanced themselves from the concept of a *Common European Home*, which had characterised European-Russian relations immediately following the East-West conflict. The Ukraine conflict further fuelled and intensified these mutual perceptions. *Enemy stereotypes* assumed to have

---

3   A very good example of such a Track II dialogue is the joint expert group of the American *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (CSIS), Russia and Eurasia Program, and the *Russian International Affairs Council*. In March 2017, this panel presented a report containing numerous recommendations (relating to cyber security, cooperation on energy and Arctic matters, the Middle East, Ukraine, arms control/strategic stability, the war against terrorism, economic cooperation) for future cooperation between the United States and Russia. See CSIS/Russian International Affairs Council 2017.

been overcome have returned. The Russian leadership's support for right-wing populist or extreme right-wing parties and movements in the EU, such as the *Front National* and *Alternative für Deutschland*, and the offensive and even aggressive disinformation policy of Russian foreign media have caused Russia and the West to drift even further apart.

On the path towards rebuilding trust, strong connections between the societies of the European continent are essential in order to prevent them from becoming intellectually and politically isolated from one other. Extensive social contacts can help to improve understanding of other points of view and intensify or re-establish cooperation in areas outside the political arena. The range of such contacts includes tourism, cultural and academic cooperation, and youth and student exchanges. The vast majority of these contacts continue to exist despite the conflict. Useful measures include intensification of academic cooperation, establishment of new partnerships, increased exchange between researchers and students, expansion of town and regional partnerships that can deal with all issues within their area of responsibility, and dispensing with *visa requirements* when travelling between Russia and the Schengen Area, which had been one of the aims of the 1990 *German-Russian partnership treaty*.

5.5 *Eurasian connectivity in the One Belt, One Road Initiative as an area of cooperation*

Economic relations between Russia (before it the Soviet Union) and important European states have always had a stabilising effect on political relations and relations as a whole. More use needs to be made of this function. Although the economic sanctions imposed since 2014 obstruct the Russian national economy in certain sectors, they do not have a detrimental effect on the substance of the existing economic exchange. These sanctions do however tend to deter new projects or investments and cause Russia to turn away from the European Economic Area. Such a development is counterproductive. For this reason, new possibilities should be used to promote economic cooperation. One such area of cooperation could be participation in the Chinese *One Belt, One Road Initiative* (cf. Godehardt 2014). This strategically designed initiative is intended to help China strengthen its economic ties with Europe (including Russia), with Central Asia, and with South Asia, such as through infrastructure development. The European Union generally rates this project positively and, as a first response, has formulated its own *connectivity initiative*, which was also introduced into the OSCE under the German presidency. Cooperation in this format would strengthen ties between participants in a subject area that is politically less sensitive than security policy. Follow-

ing the *spill-over* model, success in this cooperation format could have a positive effect on relations as a whole and establish new commonalities.

5.6   *Conclusions*

A peaceful transformation based on mutual understanding for the other side's interests and respect for the other is still possible. Such a transformation will only take place if neither side attempts to force its will on the other. The ability to show empathy forms the essential basis for rational foreign and security policy. Russia, the European Union, and NATO still share some important common interests that need to be given greater attention. A return to *strategic partnerships* is not conceivable without resolving the Ukraine conflict, but *prudent management of the antagonism* in order to keep open the prospect of a peaceful *new normality* is.

Bibliography

Adenauer, Konrad (1960): Speech at the German Bundestag. Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, Stenographische Berichte, volume 45, Bonn, p. 5939.

Allison, Roy (2014): Russian "deniable" intervention in Ukraine. How and why Russia broke the rules. In: International Affairs 90, no. 6, pp. 1255-1297.

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Russia and Eurasia Program/Russian International Affairs Council (2017): A Roadmap for U.S.-Russia Relations. Washington D.C./Moscow.

Charap, Samuel/Troitskiy, Mikhail (2013): Russia, the West and the Integration Dilemma. In: Survival 55, no. 6, pp. 49-62.

Commission "Europäische Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr" at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy Hamburg (IFSH) (2015): Ost-West-Beziehungen: Vertrauensbildung ist notwendig, Hamburg.

Czempiel, Ernst-Otto (1991): Weltpolitik im Umbruch. Das internationale System nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts, Munich.

Czempiel, Ernst-Otto (1999): Kluge Macht. Außenpolitik für das 21. Jahrhundert, Munich.

Fukuyama, Francis (1992): The End of History and the Last Man, New York.

Genscher, Hans-Dietrich (1991): Speech at the Assembly of the Western European Union on 23 March 1990. In: Genscher, Hans-Dietrich (1991): Unterwegs zur Einheit. Reden und Dokumente aus bewegter Zeit, Berlin, pp. 257-268.

Genscher, Hans-Dietrich (1995): Erinnerungen. Berlin.

Genscher, Hans-Dietrich (1997): Ein Gesamtkonzept statt Hektik. In: Der Tagesspiegel, 13 February 1997, p. 8.

German Government (2016). The 2016 White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr.

Godehardt, Nadine (2014): Chinas „neue" Seidenstraßeninitiative. Regionale Nachbarschaft als Kern der chinesischen Außenpolitik unter Xi Jinping, SWP study, June 2014, Berlin.

Hauser, Gunther (2016): Die OSZE. Konfliktmanagement im Spannungsfeld regionaler Interessen, Opladen/Berlin/Toronto.

Heumann, Hans-Dieter (2012): Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Die Biographie, Paderborn.

Kennan, George F. (1997): Ein Fehler mit schlimmen Folgen. In: Die Zeit, 14 February 1997, p. 8.

Kissinger, Henry (1966): Die deutsche Frage als Problem der europäischen und der internationalen Sicherheitspolitik. In: Europa-Archiv 21, no. 23, pp. 831-838.

Kühn, Ulrich (2010): Russlands Vorschläge für eine neue europäische Sicherheitsordnung: Déjà-vu oder Chance zum Dialog? In: Staack, Michael (ed.) (2010): Gesamteuropäische Friedensordnung 1989-2009, Bremen, pp. 138-159.

Kühn, Ulrich (2017): Staatlicher und institutioneller Verfall. Der Krieg in der Ukraine und die europäische Rüstungskontrolle. In: Staack, Michael (ed.): Der Ukraine-
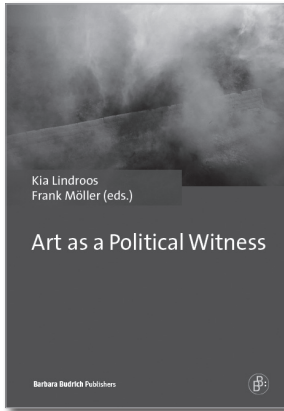
Konflikt, Russland und die europäische Sicherheitsordnung, Opladen/Berlin/ Toronto, pp. 137-156.

Kühn, Ulrich/Péczeli, Anna (2017): Russia, NATO, and INF Treaty. In: Strategic Studies Quarterly 11, no. 1, pp. 66-99.

Link, Werner (1986): Außen- und Deutschlandpolitik in der Ära Brandt 1969-1974. In: Bracher, Karl D./Jäger, Wolfgang/Link, Werner (eds.) (1986): Republik im Wandel 1969-1974. Die Ära Brandt, Stuttgart/Mannheim 1986, pp. 169-179.

Luchterhandt, Otto (2014): Die Krim-Krise von 2014. Staats- und völkerrechtliche Aspekte. In: Osteuropa 5. Zerreißprobe. Ukraine: Konflikt, Krise, Krieg, pp. 61-86.

Mälksoo, Lauri (2015): Russian Approaches to International Law, Oxford.

Mommsen, Margareta (1996): Wohin treibt Russland? Eine Großmacht zwischen Anarchie und Demokratie, Munich.

NATO (2016): NATO after the summit in Warsaw: adapting to new security challenges – a German perspective. Keynote address by Ambassador Hans-Dieter Lucas at the Adenauer Forum in Brussels on 28 September 2016, http://www. nato.diplo.de/Vertretung/nato/de/01/2016-09-28__Key-note__address__Adenau-er__Forum.html (accessed 8 March 2017).

Neuneck, Götz (2012): Nichtweiterverbreitung, Abrüstung und Rüstungskontrolle. In: Staack, Michael (ed.) (2012): Einführung in die Internationale Politik. Studien-buch, 5th edition, Munich, pp. 737-785.

Nünlist, Christian (2014): Testfall Ukraine-Krise. Das Konfliktmanagement der O-SZE unter Schweizer Vorsitz. In: Bulletin 2014 zur schweizerischen Sicherheits-politik, pp. 35-61.

Open Letter to President Clinton (1997): Global Beat. Former Policy-Makers Voice Concern Over NATO Expansion, June 26, 1997, http://www.bu.edu/global beat/ nato/postpone062697.html (accessed 8 March 2016).

Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project (2015): Back to Diplomacy. Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project, Vienna.

Pradetto, August (2017a): Der Krieg finanziert den Krieg. Die Transatlantischen Beziehungen vor und mit Trump, In: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Poli-tik 62, no. 4, pp. 97-106.

Pradetto, August (2017b): Die Ukraine, Russland und der Westen: Die Inszenierung einer Krise als geopolitischen Konflikt. In: Staack, Michael (ed.): Der Ukraine-Konflikt, Russland und die europäische Sicherheitsordnung, Opladen/Berlin/ Toronto, pp. 21-70.

Putin, Vladimir (2007): Speech and following discussion at the Munich Security Conference. February 10, 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/ 24034 (accessed 21 March 2017).

Richter, Wolfgang (2016a): Neubelebung der konventionellen Rüstungskontrolle in Europa. Ein Beitrag zur militärischen Stabilität in Zeiten der Krise, SWP Aktuell, Berlin.

Richter, Wolfgang (2016b): German OSCE Presidency 2016. Strategische Herausfor-
derungen, SWP Aktuell, Berlin.

Sarotte, Mary Elise (2010a): Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher,
Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in
February 1990. In: Diplomatic History 34, no. 1, pp. 119-139.

Sarotte, Mary Elise (2010b): Perpetuating U.S. Preeminence. The 1990 Deals to
"Bribe the Soviets Out" and Move NATO In. In: International Affairs 35, no. 1,
pp. 110-137.

Schröder, Hans-Henning (2008): Ein kurzer siegreicher Krieg. Russische Sichtweisen
der Kaukasus-Krise. In: Schröder, Hans-Henning (ed.): Die Kaukasus-Krise. In-
ternationale Perzeptionen und Konsequenzen für deutsche und europäische Poli-
tik, SWP study, Berlin, pp. 7-11.

Spiegel Online (2016): Steinmeier kritisiert Nato-Manöver: Säbelrasseln und Kriegs-
geheul. In: Spiegel Online, 18 June 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/
frank-walter-steinmeier-kritisiert-nato-manoever-in-osteuropa-a-1098360.html
(accessed 1 July 2016).

Staack, Michael (1997): NATO-Erweiterung und gesamteuropäische Sicherheit – Ein
Zielkonflikt für Deutschlands Außenpolitik? In: Die Friedens-Warte 72, no. 3,
1997, pp. 273-286.

Staack, Michael (2000): Handelsstaat Deutschland. Deutsche Außenpolitik in einem
neuen internationalen System, Paderborn.

Staack, Michael (2015): Der Ukraine-Konflikt und die gesamteuropäische Sicherheit,
Opladen/Berlin/Toronto.

Staack, Michael/Krause, Dan (eds.) (2015): Schutzverantwortung in der Debatte. Die
"Responsibility to Protect" nach dem Libyen-Dissens, Opladen/Berlin/Toronto.

Süddeutsche Zeitung (1992): Quotation from Hans-Dietrich Genscher, 15 February
1992, p. 2.

Zagorski, Andrej (1997): Die Entwicklung der russischen Position zur NATO-
Erweiterung. In: Die Friedens-Warte 72, no. 3, pp. 259-272.

The Author

Prof. Dr. Michael Staack is Professor of Political Science/International Relations at the *Helmut-Schmidt-University/University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg.* Prior to that, he hold a chair in International Relations at the University of Armed Forces in Munich (2001-2006) and was Founding Director of the Institute of German Studies at the *European Humanities University*, Minsk/Belarus (1998-2001). Michael Staack hold appointments as guest professor and research fellow e.g. in the U.S. (*Brookings Institution*, *Georgetown University*) and in China (*Peking-University Beida*, *Beijing Foreign Studies University*, *China Foreign Affairs University*). He is a member of the Advisory Board of the *Institute for Peace and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg*, the *Institute for Theology and Peace* and the *Clausewitz Gesellschaft.* Since 2006 Prof. Dr. Michael Staack is chair of the *Wissenschaftliches Forum Internationale Sicherheit* (*WIFIS*) at the Military Academy of the German Armed Forces. In addition, he was a member of the High-ranking Advisory Group to the Foreign Ministers of Germany and South Korea regarding Korean unification (2014-2017). His current research focuses on German Foreign Policy, Chinas role in world politics and cooperative security in East Asia, the *Responsibility to Protect* as well as the pan-European security order.

Political Science

Helena Rytövuori-Apunen
(ed.)

**The Regional Security
Puzzle Around
Afghanistan**
Bordering Practices in Central
Asia and Beyond

2016. 340 pp. Hc. 59,90 € (D),
GBP 49.95, US$89.95
ISBN 978-3-8474-0789-8
eISBN 978-3-8474-0912-0

Rainer Eisfeld

**Political Science:
Reflecting on Concepts,
Demystifying Legends**
With an Introduction by
John Trent

2016. 133 pp. Pb. 24,90 € (D),
US$36.95, GBP 21.95
ISBN 978-3-8474-0506-1
eISBN 978-3-8474-0928-1

Order now: www.shop.budrich-academic.de •
info@budrich.de