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DEVELOPING THE 'MORAL' ARGUMENTS: RUSSIAN RHETORICAL STRATEGIES ON SECURITY POST-KOSOVO?

Charlotte Wagnsson

INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES - WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION
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**DEVELOPING THE ‘MORAL’ ARGUMENTS:
RUSSIAN RHETORICAL STRATEGIES
ON SECURITY POST-KOSOVO**

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SUMMARY

This paper analyses how the Russian top leadership's rhetoric on security and the West evolved during and after NATO's Operation *Allied Force* against Serbia in 1999. By grasping the logic inherent in political rhetoric, one can arrive at a better understanding of the messages that a political actor is trying to convey, which may also enhance one's ability to predict how that actor will reason in the future. Political implications for relations between Russia and the European Union are discussed in the final section.

Previous research has indicated that the Russian leaders' rhetoric was relatively pro-Western during the period 1992-97. The political language continued to be relatively pro-Western, or at least 'balanced', in 1998. The leaders, however, remained hostile to the prospect of NATO enlargement and events in the Balkans began to strain relations with the West.

Russia sharply condemned NATO's campaign against Serbia and its president in 1999. The country's leaders officially interpreted the bombings as an attempt to impose the United States's will in world politics, thus reinforcing a unipolar world order. They condemned what they termed 'theories of humanitarian intervention' and pleaded for a stronger role for the UN and its Security Council in international relations. Further elaborating on their argument, they called for a joint struggle against separatism and terrorism in areas such as Kosovo and Chechnya.

Although Vladimir Putin's coming to power in 2000 did not alter the political language, it has been gradually evolving since the Kosovo war. Russia's leaders elaborated increasingly on what could be termed moral – or 'ethical' – aspects of international relations. They maintained that their version of international ethics was morally superior and ought to apply. According to its leadership, Russia carried out a worthy mission, standing up for democratic values against unipolarity and terrorism, for the common good of the civilised world. Its leaders suggested diplomacy rather than force, condemning NATO's actions as a 'barbarian aggression against a sovereign state'. The Alliance's conduct in their view threatened sovereignty and the entire international order, risking chaos and anarchy.

The presidential team also protested at the US National Missile Defence (NMD) initiative, and proposed 'constructive alternatives'. They stated that their aim was 'a just and democratic security order', while the 'militarisation of space', in the shape of NMD, would lead back to an uncontrolled arms race.

While developing its moral arguments, Russia's use of threats diminished, and at the same time it kept a working relationship with the West. Although they remained quite consistent and persistent in their condemnation of the behaviour of NATO and the United States, Russia's leaders nevertheless manifested a clear desire to improve mutual relations.

A strategy of cooperation with the West was thus maintained during the period in question. Notably, Moscow promoted cooperation with the EU, reacting positively to the EU's initiatives of taking on a larger share of responsibility in the sphere of security.

Russia's stance towards the EU depends on a range of factors such as, for example, how closely the Union is willing to cooperate, its policy on the situation in Chechnya and, finally, a few structural issues, such as the enlargement of the EU and NATO and US plans for an

NMD. The paper concludes that Europe may become increasingly important as a strategic partner of Russia.

Finally, the paper emphasises that the Russian leadership has employed a seemingly ambiguous rhetoric vis-à-vis the West. It has been pursuing a reactive, ad hoc policy in order to counter specific short-term developments that could run contrary to Russia's interests. On longer-term issues, however, it has followed a very consistent line aimed at cooperation. Moscow has pleaded for the common pursuit of a multipolar world order that is based on respect for sovereignty, an international effort to fight 'new threats', and multilateral decisions taken in the UN Security Council.

However, Russia's leaders may in time find it difficult to continue promoting their version of morality while simultaneously pleading for closer relations with the West. It is not at all clear that Russia will be able to build a functional strategic partnership with a Western community that sanctions military intervention in defence of human rights, because to do so would be to condone precisely the kind of morality and code of conduct in international relations that it rejects.

INTRODUCTION

NATO's use of force in Serbia and Kosovo during the spring of 1999 was intended not to breed, but to put an end to violence. It did, however, supply Russia with an additional argument for legitimising its bombing of Chechnya the following autumn. Proponents of Russia's military intervention reasoned that 'if NATO did not ask for permission to shell a sovereign country for the sake of political aims, Russia should not have to do so when acting within its own borders'.¹ Moreover, Russia decided to freeze cooperation with the Alliance because of its campaign against the Serb president. Western criticism of Russia's handling of the situation in Chechnya resulted in even more resentment.

Taking my previous findings, covering the period up to 1997, as a point of departure, I aim to establish how the Russian leaders' rhetoric on security and the West evolved during and after Operation *Allied Force*. Political consequences for relations between Russia and Europe are discussed in the concluding section.

The study focuses on the top leadership: the president, the prime minister and foreign and defence ministers. By making an inductive, qualitative analysis of their statements, I seek to establish what positions these crucial actors took on the West, and how they justified their comments.² The empirical investigation centres on the presidential team's official definitions and explanations of foreign policy in the period 1998-2000, as reported in the Russian Foreign Ministry's monthly *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*.³ Based on one single publication, the reading is limited, but still provides a representative account of official statements on the West; *Vestnik* is a comprehensive source on Russia's official foreign policy, regularly publishing major speeches by political leaders and other statements.⁴ Reference to 'statements' covers not only verbal statements but also written messages such as the published articles of political leaders and principal foreign policy documents issued by the president and/or government, (for example, the *Concept of National Security*).⁵

'Political language' and 'rhetoric' refer to official – verbal or written – political statements, thus subscribing to Perelman's broad view of 'rhetoric' as 'persuasive communication', aimed at influencing one or more persons.⁶ I assume that Russian rhetoric on international issues is normally intended to influence both an external and a domestic audience. In this study, I do

¹ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newline* 991025; Pain 2000; Arbatova 2000:50.

² According to Graber, qualitative content analysis involves 'the systematic, directed search of selected documents for presence or absence of a limited amount of presumably significant information.' It differs from quantitative research by de-emphasising the potentially equal importance of all content elements, focusing instead on pre-selected key elements (Graber 1976:129).

³ The account of rhetoric during the period 1992-97 is based on a previous study, which mapped the language on the West as reported in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, *Rossiiskie Vesti* and *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik* (Wagnsson 2000).

⁴ All copies were scrutinised, excepted for those issued in January and October 1999.

⁵ The statements are selected according to the following criteria. If the source was a text, it should have been written or signed by the relevant actors. Alternatively, if it was a verbal act, the relevant actors should have uttered it. Statements by the relevant actors are examined whether uttered in the context of a speech, at a press conference, or during a state visit. Foreign policy concepts and similar major texts that seek to explain foreign policy have been analysed as well. In order to grasp the leaders' own words; only direct quotes are included, not second-hand accounts.

⁶ Perelman 1982:162. In Perelman's view, the aim of a persuasive discourse is to 'strengthen a consensus around certain values which one wants to see prevail and which should orient action in the future' (Perelman 1982:20).

not try to establish what specific audience the leaders primarily had in mind on every occasion analysed. The main goal is to present and analyse the political messages – the rhetorical strategies – as such. By grasping the logic inherent in political rhetoric and monitoring how it evolves over time, we reach a better understanding of what messages a political actor is trying to convey. This, in turn, improves the ability to predict how that actor will reason in the future. If an actor employs a consistent and purposeful rhetoric, he is less likely to change this tendency. Even when a rhetorical strategy does not prove to be immediately successful, politicians may not be able to change their language drastically in a short period of time, since the language of foreign policy has a constraining effect on future behaviour and discourse.⁷

Statements are only considered for analysis if they relate to security and the West. ‘The West’ is indeed a rather ambiguous concept. In Russia, it has been used to denote not only Europe and North America, but also Japan and the industrialised world at large. In this paper, ‘the West’ refers, then, not only to Western Europe but to North America as well. The investigation is designed to examine statements on an abstract, general level by, for example, focusing on the consensus or discord between Russia and the West. This involves examining the overall security situation. Statements on individual states such as, for example, Belgium, France, or the United States, are taken into account only if closely connected with the overall language on the emerging relationship with the West, or the European and/or global security structure. Statements on issues that only indirectly influence the relationship between Russia and the West such as, for example, the conflict between Russia and Estonia regarding citizenship laws, have been excluded.

⁷ See Matz 2001:67-93.

CHAPTER ONE: RUSSIA AND THE WEST 1992-97

In 1996, Russian President Boris Yeltsin gave his campaign workers a year in which to define a new 'national idea'. Yeltsin argued that in every phase of Russian history there had been a state ideology – monarchy, totalitarianism or perestroika – while the current democratic period still lacked such an idea.⁸ To remedy this lacuna, the president formed a committee to establish on what identity the Russian state should base its policy. The committee travelled the country, conducting interviews and discussions, but returned with its mission incomplete. The authors of the new Russian concept on security of 1997 noted with regret that the new national, unifying, idea had not been found.⁹

Three years later, in November 1999, acting President Vladimir Putin again argued that Russia needed a new national ideology, stressing that 'one ideology was lost and nothing new was suggested to replace it.' According to Putin, patriotism 'in the most positive sense of this word', ought to be the backbone of the new ideology.¹⁰

The incessant pursuit of a new ideology and self-image is closely intertwined with Russia's ambiguous relationship with Europe. Russians have traditionally looked to Europe with mixed feelings, perceiving it as both a model and an antipathetic example.¹¹ To put it differently, Europe has functioned as Russia's significant 'other', in relation to which Russians have defined their country, or 'talked themselves into existence.' While many, such as Peter the Great, emphasised their country's adherence to the occident, others have distanced themselves, stressing Russia's Byzantine character, or the uniqueness of the Russian experience.¹² During the Soviet period, the United States also emerged as a significant 'other', a mirror to define identity.¹³

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the debate on Russia and the West took yet a new turn. Alongside realist and geopolitical considerations, old philosophical issues linked to identity re-emerged, as mentioned above. The lack of spiritual orientation was, however, not solely confined to issues such as ideology and historical heritage and culture. It has also to be seen against the background of Russia's immense loss of territory due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moscow was bereft of vast areas to the west, south and east, and of important Black Sea and Baltic Sea ports. The leaders also felt that other states were attempting to exert influence in what were regarded as traditional Russian spheres of influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Loss of territory is still but one among the many factors contributing to the seemingly feverish need to seek a new identity and strengthen national pride. During the new state's first years of existence, its leaders displayed signs of humiliation due to the feeble economy and the comparatively low military capability. Material problems were matched by a political rhetoric demanding 'equal treatment' in the international arena.¹⁴ Russia's status as a great power was based on factors relating to its geopolitical location and assets, realism and identity, according

⁸ *Omri Daily Digest* 960715.

⁹ *Rossiiskie Vesti* 971225, no. 239/1406.

¹⁰ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines* 991104

¹¹ Gerner 1996:307.

¹² Neumann 1996, Greenfeld 1992, Paramonov 1996:11-37. This does not exclude 'mirroring' in relation to other actors as well, most notably the neighbouring peoples of Eurasia (see Zevelev 1999:120).

¹³ Neumann 1996:95-157, Ringmar 1996.

¹⁴ Wagnsson 2000:108-113.

to the leadership.¹⁵ President Boris Yeltsin argued that material assets constituted only one of several attributes of great power status.

‘But even without nuclear weapons Russia remains a great power. Our greatness lies in our traditions, our history, in our culture. I do not want to offend the Americans, but their history stretches only 200 years back in time, while ours counts thousands of years.’¹⁶

Despite the leaders’ frequent expressions of unease concerning Russia’s status on the international stage, they applied a fairly benevolent rhetoric towards the West. Initially, the presidential team praised the new era of peace and cooperation, as witnessed by Yeltsin’s address to the Mayor of Paris in February 1992 when he stressed that ‘[t]he period of confrontation between the West and the East has ended, we are now friends, partners, allies.’¹⁷

When the brief honeymoon with the West ended, Russia’s leaders applied a harsher language, but remained quite pro-Western during the period 1992-97. This attitude was reflected in domestic public opinion, which exhibited relatively pro-Western attitudes.¹⁸ The only major exception was the leadership’s intense campaign against NATO’s expansion to the east. The Russian leaders argued that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should direct European security. Indeed, they tried to promote any organisation that was not NATO. For example, Yeltsin launched the idea of a European Security Council, inspired by the UN security Council, which would be given the task of coordinating all efforts to promote security on the European continent.¹⁹ In addition, the North Atlantic Consultative Council (NACC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) were put forward as alternatives to NATO. When the Russian campaign seemed to fail, Yeltsin reacted by issuing a warning at the CSCE summit in Budapest in December 1994, arguing that NATO expansion could result in a division of Europe, and that Europe risked being plunged into a ‘Cold Peace’.²⁰ Likewise, in 1997, he warned, ‘the times are getting critical for Europe’.²¹

Still, eventually Boris Yeltsin signed the NATO Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security in Paris on 27 May 1997. Domestically, he argued that the agreement served Russian interests well, describing it as ‘a victory of wisdom’ which ‘saved Europe and the whole world from a new confrontation between East and West.’²² The deal did enhance cooperation between Russia and NATO in some ways. Russia set up a mission to NATO, led by an ambassador and a senior military representative who would direct military cooperation with the Alliance. NATO undertook to revise its strategy to make it correspond to the new security situation in Europe. It also declared an intention not to place nuclear weapons on the territories of the new members. A new forum for consultation between Russia and NATO was established, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). It was intended as a venue for consultation, cooperation and, wherever possible, consensus building and joint decisions. Internal issues regarding NATO, its member countries and Russia were

¹⁵ Wagnsson 2000:108-113, 114-116.

¹⁶ *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* 940426, no. 78/754.

¹⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4-5 1992, p. 20 (Yeltsin).

¹⁸ Wagnsson 2000: chapter 4.

¹⁹ *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* 951020, no. 103/1030 (Yeltsin), *Rossiiskie Vesti* 951021, no. 201/874 (Yeltsin).

²⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1995, pp. 4-6 (Yeltsin).

²¹ *Rossiiskie Vesti* 970514, no. 86/1253 (Yeltsin).

²² *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1997, p. 3 (Yeltsin).

excluded from the agenda. However, while the Russian side regarded the PJC as a forum for joint decision-making, NATO perceived it simply as a venue for consultation.²³

These events indicate that the Russian leaders remained relatively pro-Western during the period 1992-97. They did protest against NATO enlargement, but finally accepted it. In retrospect, it is relevant to ask whether the campaign against NATO was mounted not so much in order to prevent enlargement as to play on the question in order to gain as many concessions as possible in exchange for Russia's eventual consent.

The understanding of the language of politicians as primarily intended to influence international actors is strengthened by the fact that protests against NATO never even came close to military action. On the contrary, as Marantz notes, there was a significant difference between Russian words and deeds regarding the West's foreign policy orientation. Despite rather strident anti-enlargement rhetoric, Moscow's actions were far more deliberate and restrained, and relations between Russia and the West did develop fairly smoothly even during the anti-NATO campaign, with agreement reached on such difficult issues as peacekeeping in Bosnia, the CFE Treaty and Russian arms sales.²⁴ Thus, the anti-NATO campaign was not intended to severely damage relations with the Alliance or its member states, but more strictly aimed at gaining as many concessions from NATO as possible. In addition, the campaign provided the Russian leaders with an opportunity to make the point that Russia had to be treated with respect. By depicting NATO enlargement as aggressive, immoral and directed against the Russian public and jeopardising European security at large, Russia's leaders may have hoped to gain some moral victories.

²³ Croft, Redmond, Rees & Webber 1999:41-42.

²⁴ Marantz 1997:348.

CHAPTER TWO: 1998 – TOWARDS MORE STRAINED RELATIONS

A review of the political language in 1998, as reported in *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, indicates that during the period following the first deal on NATO enlargement, the leadership's rhetoric remained quite pro-Western. Russia's relations with the United States were depicted in a positive manner in a number of key speeches.²⁵ Addressing Russian diplomats, Yeltsin recognised that, after a period of 'illusions and exaggerated expectations', Russia had established interactions with the United States on equal terms.²⁶ The leaders expected that achievements within the framework of the PJC would contribute to NATO's transformation into more of a peacekeeping/peace enforcement organisation.²⁷ They also described relations with the EU in positive terms.²⁸

Yeltsin adhered to Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's slogan that the most significant trait of Russia's foreign policy is 'activity in all directions'.²⁹ Primakov, in turn, identified his political ideals in Russian history, referring to one of his predecessors, Aleksandr Gorchakov, who assumed office after Russia's defeat in the Crimean War in 1856.³⁰ According to Primakov, Gorchakov remained convinced of his state's potential, despite the fact that many had become sceptical of Russia's ability to be a great power when he took office. Through skilful diplomacy, he nevertheless managed to rebuild the state and regain for it a strong position in the international arena.³¹

'I will only dwell on what I believe are the most important contributions made by this master diplomat to Russian foreign policy. The most important things that helped Russia, despite its external and internal difficulties, defeats, pressures from hostile coalitions, not only to survive but also remain a great power. The most important things for today's Russian state, as well.'³²

Primakov argued that contemporary Russia should also continue to pursue an active foreign policy on all fronts, playing a leading role in the world at large, despite its temporary weakness. By continuing to perform like a great power, Russia should be able to maintain its international status.³³ Once its material basis for power had been rebuilt, words would again match facts, and Russia would again be a great power in practice.

The leadership's favoured vehicle for security in Europe remained the OSCE.³⁴ Primakov also stressed the importance of subregional initiatives and cooperation in the sphere of security,

²⁵ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 3-4 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 3-5 (Ivanov).

²⁶ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1998, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin).

²⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1998, pp. 25-27 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 3-4 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1998, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin).

²⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 34 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1998, pp. 37-38 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 3-5 (Ivanov).

²⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 3-4 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1998, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin).

³⁰ Primakov 1998:7.

³¹ Primakov 1998.

³² Primakov 1998:7.

³³ Primakov 1998:9-10.

³⁴ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1998, pp. 25-27 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 3-4 (Yeltsin).

mentioning in particular the Baltic Sea area.³⁵ He lamented that Russia's initiative to provide the Baltic states with 'security guarantees' had not been greeted with enthusiasm, but still recognised positive achievements that improved mutual relations.³⁶ Attending a meeting of heads of state of the Baltic Sea countries, prime minister Chernomyrdin stressed that regional cooperation in the area was vital when forming a new democratic, united Europe without dividing lines.³⁷

Despite the fairly positive and cooperation-minded political language, Russia did not change its position on NATO enlargement. While remaining positive to the prospect of an enlargement of the European Union, Russia wished to hinder any further expansion of the Alliance.³⁸ In his traditional address to the National Assembly in February 1998, Yeltsin stated that an enlargement to the Baltic countries would signify a threat to Russia's national security.³⁹ The leadership also protested against a European security structure based on 'NATO-centrism' and a unipolar world.⁴⁰

Finally, when Yugoslavia put down an Albanian uprising for independence in Kosovo using large-scale military force in 1998, NATO acted resolutely. Beginning in May 1998, the Alliance pressed Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to speed up the process of self-determination for repressed ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Moscow defended Yugoslavia's right to look after its territorial integrity. Russia agreed that something should be done to urge Milosevic to change his methods, but not by using military means.⁴¹ When summing up the foreign political events of 1998, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov specified that Russia's goal was to secure broad autonomy for Kosovo while ensuring Yugoslavia's territorial integrity. He implicitly criticised NATO's interference in Yugoslavia, arguing that the UN's 'right of law' should apply in world politics, instead of (NATO's) 'right of force'. Ivanov declared that Russia was ready to cooperate with NATO, but warned that much depended on what track the Alliance took – abiding by UN standards or using force without the Security Council's approval.⁴²

In short, Russian political language was still relatively pro-Western, or at least 'balanced', in 1998. Russia's leaders, however, remained hostile to the prospect of NATO enlargement while events in the Balkans had begun to change attitudes.

³⁵ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1998, pp. 25-27 (Primakov).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

³⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1998, pp. 22-23 (Chernomyrdin). See also *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1998, pp. 28-29 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1998, pp. 37-38 (Primakov).

³⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1998, pp. 35 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 34 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1998, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1998, pp. 37-38 (Primakov).

³⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 3-4 (Yeltsin).

⁴⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 1998, pp. 35 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 3 1998, pp. 34 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1998, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 3-5 (Ivanov).

⁴¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 1998, pp. 35-38.

⁴² *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 3-5 (Ivanov).

CHAPTER THREE: KOSOVO AND AFTER

Russian rhetoric on the West in 1999 focused on the undesirable plans for an American National Missile Defence (NMD) and a further expansion of NATO.⁴³ The leaders in addition dealt with the necessity to wage an active Russian foreign policy in all directions, form a multipolar world, and promote cooperation with the European Union.⁴⁴ The most urgent issue was, however, events in Yugoslavia. NATO's campaign against the Serbian president began by warnings and symbolic actions and escalated to air raids, carried out from 24 March to 10 June 1999. Russia refused to accept the use of military pressure and sharply condemned Operation *Allied Force*.

Diverging views on the situation in former Yugoslavia were certainly nothing new. Moscow had disapproved of NATO's air raids in Bosnia in 1995 and opted for the abolishment of economic sanctions against Yugoslavia in early 1996.⁴⁵ This time, however, the leaders reacted more resolutely, immediately freezing Russia's formal cooperation with the Alliance.⁴⁶

The leadership applied a whole arsenal of symbolic actions and dramatic pronouncements. Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov cancelled his scheduled trip to the United States in mid-air on 23 March. He was heading for the United States when, following a telephone conversation with the American Vice-President, he ordered the plane back to Moscow.⁴⁷ In a televised appeal the following day, Yeltsin addressed 'the whole world', urging the American president to refrain from bombing, since this would signify 'a tragic step' putting European security at risk.⁴⁸ The same day, Russia pulled out of the Partnership for Peace and military cooperation programmes, recalled Russia's chief military envoy to NATO, and ordered the closure of Russia's offices at NATO headquarters.⁴⁹

The air strikes being a *fait accompli*, on 25 March the foreign minister discussed the global consequences of *Allied Force*. In Ivanov's view, Europe had not been as close to such a serious rift since 1945. For him, the rationale behind NATO's behaviour was obvious – to enforce the United States's political, military and economic dictates and strengthen a unipolar world, where Washington would control 'everybody's fates'. No one, he argued, had given the Alliance the right to act as a 'global gendarme'.⁵⁰

'Yesterday, it was Iraq. Today – Yugoslavia, what is next?'⁵¹

⁴³ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 15-18 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1999, pp. 74-78 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 41-47 (Sergeev), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 74-78 (Ivanov).

⁴⁴ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 37 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 11 1999, pp. 32-35 (Yeltsin), 69-71, 73-76 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 74-78 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 9 1999, p. 62 (Yeltsin).

⁴⁵ See, for example, *Omri Daily Digest* 960213.

⁴⁶ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 10-11 (Yeltsin).

⁴⁷ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newline* 990324.

⁴⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, p. 10 (Yeltsin).

⁴⁹ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newline* 990325.

⁵⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 11-18 (Ivanov).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-18.

Asked why Russia did not criticise the ‘genocide against the Albanian population in Kosovo’, Ivanov replied that such acts had not been committed; it was nothing but a rumour, spread in order to justify NATO’s aggression.⁵² Instead, he accused the Alliance of genocide.⁵³

‘In Yugoslavia, two crimes are currently [being] committed. It is NATO’s aggression against a sovereign state, and it is the undisguised genocide against the peoples of Yugoslavia.’⁵⁴

The foreign minister blamed the United States as the ‘main initiator of aggression’.⁵⁵ Addressing the Federal Duma, he argued that the United States was using Kosovo as a testbed for NATO’s new Strategic Concept.⁵⁶ He repeatedly accused the Alliance of ‘neo-colonialism/NATO-colonialism’ which ‘aimed to return to the era of colonialism, dividing European states into some kind of protectorates.’⁵⁷

Defence Minister Igor Sergeyev pleaded that Russia would not get involved militarily in the Kosovo conflict, but performed a symbolic action by announcing that Russia would send a warship from its Black Sea Fleet to the Mediterranean, to monitor events.⁵⁸ Sergeyev condemned NATO’s actions as a ‘barbarian aggression against a sovereign state’.⁵⁹

‘In Yugoslavia today are decided not only the fates of Serbs and Albanians. They are small change in the realisation of the US global strategy directed at creating a unipolar world . . . in which the dictates of military force will dominate, where there will be one single superpower.’⁶⁰

The leadership’s language bore a strong resemblance to the rhetoric applied during the war in Chechnya in 1994-96. In both instances, the leaders referred to ‘terrorists’, ‘separatists’ and ‘Islamic extremists’. Ivanov repeatedly accused the Alliance of supporting Islamic terrorism. He asked rhetorically whether Europe needed the creation of centres of Islamic extremism and channels for smuggling drugs and weapons.⁶¹ As during the Chechen war, the leadership distinguished the ‘peaceful population’ from the ‘terrorists and separatists’.⁶²

The rhetoric gradually evolved from plain condemnation. For example, the leadership argued that the bombings were causing an ecological disaster.⁶³ Ivanov repeatedly referred to public opinion in various NATO countries in order to demonstrate its weak support of the Alliance’s actions in Kosovo, arguing that ‘people cannot understand how such barbarian acts can be allowed at the end of the 21st century’.⁶⁴

⁵² *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 31-37 (Ivanov).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-24; the leaders used the term ‘genocide’ repeatedly; see for example, pp. 41-47.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-24.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-37.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-37.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-28, 31-37.

⁵⁸ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newswire* 990401.

⁵⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 41-47 (Sergeev).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-47.

⁶¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 31-37 (Ivanov).

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-28.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-28, 31-37, 41-47.

The leaders also linked the conflict to wider European security, calling the campaign ‘a blow against the OSCE’.⁶⁵ Ivanov warned that, if NATO’s aggression continued, a larger war in the Balkans might occur, the consequences of which ‘are well known from history’.⁶⁶ He stressed that Russia was concerned, since it was a part of Europe.⁶⁷

Although the leadership seized every opportunity to condemn NATO’s actions – even discussing ‘NATO’s aggression’ at an official celebration of the Russian national poet Aleksandr Pushkin⁶⁸ – they soon became involved in the negotiations.⁶⁹ Former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, appointed as Russia’s presidential envoy to Yugoslavia on 14 April, was to play a decisive role in the peace talks. He faced the difficult task of attempting to persuade Milosevic to settle while risking being accused of doing NATO’s errands. The peace plan – proposed by negotiators Chernomyrdin, Ahtisaari and Talbot and accepted by the Yugoslav parliament on 3 June – contained some elements of success for Russia. Most importantly, it provided the UN with a role in the conflict, as a source of mandate authority for NATO’s operation, and it stated that Kosovo would remain within Yugoslavia.⁷⁰ On 18 June, the Russian and US defence ministers also reached agreement on the structure of the Kosovo peacekeeping force (KFOR). Russia was to participate in a unified KFOR command, but its government would retain full control over its contingent.⁷¹

The most common – and highly plausible – explanation for Russia’s strong reaction to Operation *Allied Force* is that the leadership interpreted it as an attempt to set up a new international order that allowed for the violation of sovereignty in defence of human rights. Such a scenario can be interpreted as a threat to one of Russia’s most significant great power attributes, its veto in the UN Security Council.⁷² This logic is clearly reflected in the political language.

The leaders continuously referred to the primacy of the UN and its Security Council in solving the conflict, while defending the principle of territorial integrity.⁷³ This line of reasoning persisted even after NATO’s campaign had ended. The leadership expressed concern that *Allied Force* would be taken as a precedent, being followed by other out-of-area campaigns. Yeltsin argued that it would be intolerable if NATO’s ‘open aggression against a sovereign country’ were to be taken and consolidated as a precedent. According to the president, attempts to organise European security according to a so-called ‘NATO-centric’ model ignored Russia’s national and political interests, and threatened stability in the whole

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 11-18.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, p. 73 (Ivanov).

⁶⁹ When asked how he could speak of ‘partners’ in the West seeking a solution to the conflict, while simultaneously calling NATO an ‘aggressor’, Ivanov replied that by ‘partners’ he did not imply the ‘aggressors’, but Western diplomats seeking a peaceful solution (*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 4-10 (Ivanov)).

⁷⁰ For a detailed analysis of Russia’s role in the mediation, see Lynch 1999:71-76.

⁷¹ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines* 990621.

⁷² Fedorov 2000:119-120, Godzimirski 2000.

⁷³ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1999, pp. 15-18 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 9 1999, pp. 62 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 1999, p. 39 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 11 1999, pp. 73-76 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin), 74-79 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 3-7 (Yeltsin), 12-17, 31-37 (Ivanov).

world.⁷⁴ Ivanov argued that only the UN was entitled to act in the name of international society. In order to prevent anarchy and chaos in international relations, the UN's central role had to be ensured.⁷⁵

Further elaborating on their argument, the leadership called for a joint struggle against separatism and terrorism in areas such as Kosovo and Chechnya, while pleading the need to ensure territorial integrity and strengthen the role of the UN. For example, addressing an audience in Paris in October, Ivanov urged France to join Russia in strengthening the role of the UN Security Council, after which he criticised 'theories of humanitarian intervention' violating territorial integrity. He continued to condemn aggressive separatism and terrorism, discussed Kosovo and Chechnya, underscored the need to ensure territorial integrity and finally condemned NATO's actions in the Balkans.⁷⁶

The Yeltsin era was, however, ending, with the resignation of the president in late 1999. Vladimir Putin was named acting president and was officially elected in the first round on 26 March 2000. The new presidential team continued to elaborate on the same themes. Putin and Ivanov called for a strengthening of the role of the UN and its Security Council.⁷⁷ Ivanov warned that violation of the UN's principles was 'an invitation to a new arms race on the planet.'⁷⁸ The leaders protested against unipolarity and pleaded for respect for 'universal principles' such as territorial integrity.⁷⁹ In March, Ivanov expressed worries that Kosovo would break away from Yugoslavia.⁸⁰ After the Serbian elections in September 2000, he repeated that Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected.⁸¹ The leaders also protested against the United States and Britain for carrying out bombing sorties over Iraq's territory.⁸²

The leadership frequently called for an international struggle against 'new threats'; above all international terrorism, organised crime, smuggling of drugs and aggressive separatism.⁸³ They stated that all democratic states were concerned by these 'new' threats and must unite to

⁷⁴ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1999, pp. 3-5 (Yeltsin), see *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 74-78 (Ivanov).

⁷⁵ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 74-78 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 1999, pp. 39 (Ivanov).

⁷⁶ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 11 1999, pp. 69-71 (Ivanov), c.f. *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.12 1999, pp. 11 (Yeltsin).

⁷⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 45 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 94-97 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 12-13 (Putin), 44-46, 104-107 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 7-9 (Putin), 54-58, 113-115 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 5 2000, pp. 60-61 (Ivanov). Putin and Ivanov also complained of attempts (by NATO) to weaken the role of the OSCE (*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 5-9, *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 61-62).

⁷⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 113-115 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 5 2000, pp. 13-16 (Ivanov).

⁷⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 94-100 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 113-115 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 2001, pp. 17 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 44-46 (Ivanov).

⁸⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 1 (Ivanov).

⁸¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 11 2000, pp. 46-48 (Ivanov).

⁸² See, for example, *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 22-25, 57-59 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.12 2000, pp. 42-43 (Ivanov).

⁸³ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 101-105 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 12-13 (Putin), 22-25, 44-46, 57-59 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 54-58 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.1 200, pp. 22-34 (Putin).

fight them.⁸⁴ Commenting upon Chechnya, they urged other states to support Russia in its struggle against international terrorism, a problem ‘stretching from the Philippines to Kosovo’ and threatening the entire civilised world.⁸⁵

The Russian State Duma ratified the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty on 14 April 2000, in line with the president’s wishes.⁸⁶ Ivanov argued that Russia had thus clearly signalled its support for global strategic stability, which would be destroyed if the United States developed an NMD.⁸⁷ The leaders urged the United States to abide by the ABM Treaty and to refrain from plans for a ‘militarisation of space’ in the shape of an NMD.⁸⁸ On a visit to Washington on 26 April, Ivanov argued that either the world would move forward towards a just and democratic security order, or, if the United States created an NMD, return to the Cold War and an uncontrolled arms race.⁸⁹

The leadership repeatedly proposed ‘constructive alternatives’ to an American NMD.⁹⁰ Ivanov suggested a range of common measures to improve security, among them a serious discussion of a global system of control against the spread of missiles and missile technology.⁹¹ The leadership also suggested an international conference on the subject.⁹² The Russian side had in fact proposed a common initiative in this area in January 1992, when Yeltsin launched the idea of a ‘global cosmic defence system’ at his first meeting with the UN Security Council.⁹³ The defence system was intended to defend the entire world and to be created through a re-direction of the United States’s SDI programme, with the assistance of advanced Russian technology. The new defence system would control and counter terrorists and ‘irresponsible politicians’, who would immediately be attacked from space if they used nuclear weapons. The Russians returned to this idea on several occasions.⁹⁴ A working group was created⁹⁵ and a joint statement issued,⁹⁶ but the project did not produce any significant results.

⁸⁴ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 12-13 (Putin).

⁸⁵ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 94-97 (Ivanov), 101-105 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 2001, pp. 22-34 (Putin).

⁸⁶ The START-II treaty cuts U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads from 6,000 to 3,500 in each country by 2007. Included in the ratification is the adoption of three protocols submitting Russia’s implementation of the treaty to three conditions. Two conditions are based on 1997 agreements between Russia and the U.S. to postpone the reduction until 2007 and committing themselves to upholding the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newslines* 000414).

⁸⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 5 2000, pp. 62-63 (Ivanov).

⁸⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 27-29, 94-100 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 90-94 (Ivanov), 101-105 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 12-13, 22 (Putin), 22-25, 44-46, 57-59 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.1 2001, pp. 7, 12-15 (Putin), 20-21 (Ivanov).

⁸⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik* no. 5 2000 p. 19-21 (Ivanov).

⁹⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 94-100 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 101-105 (Putin).

⁹¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 5 2000, pp. 19-21 (Ivanov).

⁹² e.g. *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, p. 13 (Putin).

⁹³ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4-5 1992, pp. 48-50, 53 (Yeltsin).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 53 (Yeltsin), 56-58 (Kozyrev); *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 19-20 1992, pp. 20-23 (Kozyrev).

⁹⁵ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 15-16 1992, pp. 69-71.

⁹⁶ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 13-14 1992, pp. 12-13.

Negative attitudes prevailed with regards to plans for NATO enlargement.⁹⁷ In December 2000, Putin argued that enlargement was a worrying prospect, since the Alliance did not let Russia in. Asked to clarify his position on NATO membership, the President replied that Russia had declared that it would be ready but, judging from the reply, the Western community was not.⁹⁸

Finally, cooperation with the EU was further promoted in 2000. Putin described Europe as the cradle of democracy and civilisation and one of the most important poles in the emerging multipolar world. He argued that Russia was a part of Europe.⁹⁹ Both the president and the foreign minister stated that Russia regarded the EU as a strategic partner, which in Ivanov's interpretation signified 'cooperation on a new level'.¹⁰⁰ Asked whether Russia felt threatened by plans to form a European rapid reaction force, the foreign minister replied that it did not feel threatened at all.¹⁰¹ Further elaborating on the subject in December 2000, he declared that Russia was positive and ready to cooperate on the issue.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 5-9 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 48-50 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 3-11 (The Foreign Policy Concept).

⁹⁸ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.1 2001, pp. 22-34 (Putin).

⁹⁹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 5-9 (Putin).

¹⁰⁰ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 5 2000, pp. 12 (Putin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 54-58 (Ivanov).

¹⁰¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 51-53 (Ivanov).

¹⁰² *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.1 2001, pp. 21-22 (Ivanov).

CHAPTER FOUR: 'MORALISING' INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Prior to the Kosovo conflict, the Russian leaders disagreed with the West on a few crucial issues linked to European – and global – security; they promoted the OSCE as the main organiser of security in Europe, protested against unipolarity while promoting multipolarity, condemned enlargement of NATO to the East and demanded better – ‘equal’ – treatment in the international arena. The language consisted of a mixture of arguments, some of which were to do with psychology and morality while others were linked to geopolitics and realism and sometimes supplemented with threats of countermeasures.¹⁰³

The indication so far is that Vladimir Putin’s coming to power did not qualitatively alter the political language. There had, however, been a gradual development since the Kosovo war which continued under Putin. While previously countering undesirable developments, such as NATO enlargement, with a mix of moral arguments and threats of countermeasures, the moral or ethical aspects of international relations came to dominate the political language. Russia’s leaders applied such ‘moral’ arguments to convey that their state and its version of ethics was morally superior and righteous, and/or that this kind of morality ought to apply in international relations.¹⁰⁴

When protesting against developments in Kosovo, the leadership elaborated eloquently on their ethical dimension. While the main Russian initiator of the idea of multipolarity, Yevgeny Primakov, had persistently proclaimed that this order ought to materialise, the new leaders took it one step further, making an effort to explain *why* multipolarity was desirable, not only to Russia, but to all ‘civilised’ states. They promoted an image of their state as carrying out a worthy mission, standing up for democratic values and the common good of the civilised world. For example, by fighting terrorists and separatists, Russia pleaded that it was acting in defence of *all* democratic states. The leadership urged other states to join them in their just cause of strengthening the role of the UN and its Security Council; thus enhancing the ‘right of law’ as opposed to NATO’s ‘right of force’.

The leaders depicted the United States’s ‘self-seeking dictatorship’, embodied by NATO, as the antipode of Russia’s just and worthy struggle. They protested against a unipolar, non-democratic world, promoting a world order that encouraged integration and cooperation among democratic states. Russia stood up for ‘a just and democratic security order’, while a ‘militarisation of space’ would lead back to an uncontrolled arms race. Russia persistently advocated diplomacy rather than force, condemning NATO’s actions as a ‘barbarian aggression against a sovereign state’. Moreover, the leaders implied that the Alliance could interfere in any state, threatening sovereignty and the entire international order and substituting chaos and anarchy.

While developing the moral arguments, the tactic of using threats did not cease altogether, but diminished. The leaders predicted a sombre scenario in the event of unipolarity, but more rarely argued that Russia would seek confrontation.

¹⁰³Wagnsson 2000:chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴Needless to say, the aim here is to present the arguments, not to judge whether they were right or wrong, or how the rhetoric corresponded to Russia’s political acts.

The leadership thus applied a more consistent and well-developed rhetorical strategy, which also left its imprint on two important foreign policy documents, the Concept of National Security and the Foreign Policy Concept.

Putin signed the Concept on National Security on 10 January 2000. While the previous one, issued in December 1997, states confidently that the world is becoming multipolar, the new one is less optimistic. It presents two mutually exclusive tendencies; one towards a multipolar world and the other towards an international order dominated by a few Western states, led by the United States and based on unilateralism and military force. According to the concept, Russia's main national interest in the international sphere¹⁰⁵ is to secure its sovereignty and its position as a great power, one of the centres of influence of a multipolar world. The document focuses on domestic threats to security – e.g. separatism and economic problems – but also lists a range of international issues:

- international terrorism;
- attempts to hinder Russia's development as a centre of influence in a multipolar world;
- strengthening of military blocs, above all NATO's further enlargement; creation of foreign military bases and their presence close to Russia's borders;
- attempts to weaken important institutions in the realm of international security, primarily the UN and the OSCE;
- an increasing military-technological gap between Russia and its potential rivals;
- the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- weakening of CIS integration;
- eruption and escalation of conflicts close to the Russian Federation and CIS;
- territorial demands on Russia;
- NATO decisions to use force without the UN Security Council's consent;
- and the threat of a new arms race.

The Foreign Policy Concept, adopted on 28 June 2000, is intended as a 'compass' to 'direct Russia's steps in the international arena'. The concept notes that Russia's expectations of mutually beneficial relations with the surrounding world have not been realised. It states that the worsened international situation demands a reassessment of Russia's foreign policy priorities and the possibilities of achieving them.¹⁰⁶

Among 'new threats to Russia's national interests', a range of issues are listed: growth of separatism, ethno-national and religious extremism, international terrorism, transnational crime and the smuggling of drugs and weapons. Above all, the Concept warns of increased tendencies towards a unipolar structure under US command, which would destabilise the international situation, provoke tension, an arms race, etc. It states that Russia will continue to strive for a multipolar system based on mutual respect of interests, mechanisms of collective solutions and democratisation of international relations.

When setting foreign policy priorities, the Concept first of all pleads for the necessity to form a new 'peace order' realised by the UN and its Security Council. The concept criticises plans for an American NMD and the concept of 'humanitarian intervention' aimed at 'justifying

¹⁰⁵The concept of National Security applies a very broad conception of security, listing national interests in the economic, domestic, social, spiritual, ecological and military spheres, and in the areas of information and territorial boundaries.

¹⁰⁶*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8, 2000, pp. 3-11.

unilateral use of force' in the absence of UN Security Council consent. Discussing regional issues, it repeats that the OSCE ought to play an increased role in security matters and that NATO ought to refrain from any further expansion.

In addition to the moralising tone, one can discern a gradual change, from the universal, *pro-Western* Russian language of 1992 and 1993, via the rather *nationalistic* and *self-confident* content of the Concept of National Security of 1997, to the more *realistic* concept of 2000.¹⁰⁷ Ivanov describes the new Foreign Policy Concept as more realistic than the former with regard to the international situation and Russia's priorities, possibilities and resources.¹⁰⁸ The economic collapse in August 1998 probably contributed to this change.¹⁰⁹

Although the new concepts are more realistic and less self-assertive than their predecessors, the leaders did not give up the promotion of Russia as a worthy, strong great power. The new Foreign Policy Concept does not focus on self-images. However, when presenting the concept, Ivanov stated that Russia 'was, is and will stay' a great power; its greatness lay in its history, immense landmass, science, culture and spiritual potential.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Putin argued that Russia was a great power by virtue of its enormous potential, history and culture.¹¹¹ Moreover, the Concept on National Security describes Russia as one of the largest countries in the world, with a history of many centuries and rich cultural traditions. According to the Concept, Russia still plays a significant role in the world by virtue of its economic, scientific-technical and military potential and unique strategic location on the Euro-Asian continent.¹¹²

In sum, the reading of the documents indicates that they were issued as a consequence of the worsened international situation but were based on a strategy of moralising, rather than of threats. Furthermore, Russia and the West preserved functional relations in practice. Cooperation in the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) continued throughout 1999, although the agenda was confined to issues related to the Balkans.¹¹³ In addition, when Milosevic accepted all the demands of Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari on 3 June 1999, Russia had made a valuable contribution to peacemaking in the Kosovo conflict. Henceforth, Russia participated in KFOR, although relations with NATO were formally suspended. Eventually, those relations were gradually normalised.

Moreover, the rhetoric on the West was not entirely negative but clearly ambiguous. While quite consistent over their ethical points of view, the leaders all the same expressed a clear wish to preserve relations with the United States and NATO in practice, despite their 'evil' campaign against Serbia. This apparent contradiction emerges from a clash between the officially adopted ethical standards and *realpolitik*. Even at the height of the conflict on 26

¹⁰⁷By 'realism' the reference is not to I do not intend the school of realism in international relations, but applies, instead, to an awareness of Russia's limited resources.

¹⁰⁸*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 90-94 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 2000, pp. 104-107 (Ivanov).

¹⁰⁹See Godzimirski 2000.

¹¹⁰*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 90-94 (Ivanov).

¹¹¹*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 5-9 (Putin).

¹¹²Similarly, in November 2000, Putin called Russia a 'knot' tying Asia, Europe and America together (*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 9-11).

¹¹³Russia also continued its co-operation with the Northern and Baltic countries. At a meeting in May, Ivanov explained that a meeting taking place while NATO waged armed operation against NATO, was a sign of the unique good neighbourhood in the Northern and Baltic region (*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 6 1999, pp. 21-23).

March 1999, when Ivanov accused NATO of genocide, the leadership remained determined to maintain good relations with the West. The foreign minister argued that, although they were going through a difficult period, Russia and the West should not waste what they had built together in Europe, returning to the Cold War, confrontation and an arms race. He expressed the hope that the two would find a way out of their difficulties in order to be able to work together for a 'large, democratic, united Europe'.¹¹⁴ A few days later, he repeated that Russia was not interested in a worsening of relations and a return to Cold War and confrontation.¹¹⁵

In his address to the National Assembly in 1999, Yeltsin condemned NATO's campaign against Milosevic and its plans for further expansion. All the same, he stated that Russia would attempt to normalise relations with the United States and re-create constructive cooperation.¹¹⁶ He argued that the development of relations with the United States was one of Russia's priorities.¹¹⁷ In addition, the Foreign Policy Concept states that, although Russia has experienced serious difficulties in its relations with the United States, Russian-American cooperation remains a necessary prerequisite to securing global strategic stability.¹¹⁸ In his traditional New Year address, Putin stressed that Russia had succeeded in preserving relations with the United States during 2000, and had come closer on many issues.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 18-24 (Ivanov).

¹¹⁵*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 31-37 (Ivanov).

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 3-7 (Yeltsin).

¹¹⁷*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 9 1999, p. 62 (Yeltsin).

¹¹⁸*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 8 2000, pp. 3-11.

¹¹⁹*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no.1 2001, p. 7 (Putin).

CONCLUSION: RUSSIA AND EUROPE

Even if the conflicts in and around Kosovo are finally resolved, the issues brought to a head by Operation *Allied Force* are likely to linger on. Russian leaders will not for the foreseeable future cease debating 'humanitarian intervention', 'inviolable sovereignty', unipolarity versus multipolarity, Russian great power status, 'new threats', the nuclear factor in international relations and, not least, what role the UN, the OSCE and other organisers of European security ought to play.

Still, the future of Russia's relations with Europe and the United States does not look all that bleak. Rather than aggravating the conflict in and around Kosovo by threatening NATO with reprisals, the Russian leaders mostly applied a balanced rhetorical strategy, primarily appealing to the international community's sense of democracy, law, order and justice. Moreover, from the very beginning, they expressed a clear wish to restore relations with NATO and the West.

In fact, ever since 1992, Russia's policy regarding the West has been directed according to the following pragmatic logic: 'If you cannot beat them, join them. If you cannot join them, cooperate.' During the 1990s, Russia consistently sought to improve relations. Although protesting against several developments, such as NATO's enlargement and its actions in Kosovo, in the end Russia always complied.

Immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin's team strove to uphold the impression that the world was ruled by two global powers, the United States and Russia. The leaders promoted a kind of polarity that may best be described as a mix of unipolarity and bipolarity. The leadership role was shared by two states, the United States and the Russian Federation. Together, the two great powers would form and uphold a new worldwide security system, punishing lesser powers from space if they disturbed the global order.¹²⁰ When the preferred global order did not materialise, the leaders still expressed a willingness to join Western institutions, such as the G7, the Council of Europe, NATO and the EU. However, as the EU and NATO would not admit Russia, only one viable option remained – cooperation. Although put under severe strain by Operation *Allied Force*, this strategy has persisted. According to Webber, the tale of the decade (1990s) is 'an enduring, albeit increasingly problematic accommodation between Russia and the West'.¹²¹

Even if it wanted to, Russia could hardly have dictated the rules of the game in the 1990s. It was not only economically dependent on the West but also powerless to stop developments such as NATO enlargement and *Allied Force*. This does not, however, mean that Russia's leaders gave in entirely to the West. They carried on promoting their state as a great power, deserving worthy and equal treatment, by virtue of its potential, geopolitical location and cultural/historical assets. Moreover, they remain determined to establish a forum for international security in which Russia not only participates but has a decisive say, operating on an equal basis with the United States. From 1992 onwards, its leaders attempted to launch the OSCE as the main organiser of security in Europe. After Kosovo, they shifted the focus to some extent, making an increased effort of promoting the UN Security Council.

¹²⁰Wagnsson 2000: chapter 4.

¹²¹Webber 2000:33.

Cooperation with the West also produced benefits. Quite a few common interests may be identified, for example finding a solution to the Middle East crisis and fighting ‘new threats’, such as international crime, terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Russia’s participation in the G-8, the Council of Europe, and the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council has increased its international prestige and confirmed its position as a great power.

Russian leaders are also paying increasing attention to the European Union. The broad Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed at the summit meeting in Corfu in 1994, which came into force in December 1997, is the basis of mutual relations. In addition, the EU adopted ‘The Common Strategy on Russia’ at the June 1999 Cologne summit. Russia responded by publishing Russia’s strategy vis-à-vis the European Union in October 1999.¹²² The EU is Russia’s main trading partner and as such of paramount political importance. In the 1990s, the EU accounted for over 40 per cent of Russia’s trade. Russian leaders have approved EU enlargement to the East, although cautioning that it should take into account Russia’s economic and political interests.¹²³ In the end, Moscow might even renew its appeal for EU membership.¹²⁴

Moreover, the EU is an emerging forum for European security. It is important to Russia as a significant pole in a multipolar world, operating as a counterbalance to the United States.¹²⁵ From a Russian point of view, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) may be interpreted as a step towards multipolarity. As described in the preceding analysis, the leadership has been clearly positive to the EU’s taking on a larger share of responsibility in the sphere of security.¹²⁶ Even if the rapid reaction force is developed in collaboration with NATO – even borrowing resources from the Alliance – it will not *be* NATO, which, from a Russian perspective, is a most significant advantage.

Russia’s stance towards the EU depends on a range of factors, some of which are discussed below. First, how closely the Union is willing to cooperate is of key importance. If Moscow finds that the EU does not seek a close relationship, it might feel isolated. Fear of isolation has been a substantial theme in Russian rhetoric on security, most notably during the campaign against NATO enlargement.¹²⁷

The danger of Russia becoming isolated is adequately understood in the light of Lynch’s useful distinction between two separate working methods available to Russia on its way towards its goal of a multipolar world. Lynch concludes that Russia applied a policy of *inclusive multipolarity* during the 1990s. This kind of polarity is realised by Russia’s participation in Western institutions, with the aim of preserving a voice in European affairs, protecting its interests and constraining Western actions that might threaten Russia. Although jeopardised by Operation *Allied Force*, Primakov’s policy of inclusive multipolarity has persisted. However, if Russian leaders feel isolated, there is a risk that Russia could eventually shift to a policy of *exclusive multipolarity*. Such a withdrawal from cooperation could suggest that Russia would play the role of spoiler in matters of European security and

¹²²For a thorough analysis of these documents, see Haukkala & Medvedev (2001). Also see Gowan 2000:12-13.

¹²³*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 199, pp. 37-38 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 2 1998, pp. 22-23 (Chernomyrdin), Gowan 2000:15-20.

¹²⁴Rahr & Wolf 2000, Gowan 2000: 43-44.

¹²⁵*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 2000, pp. 5-9 (Putin).

¹²⁶*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 51-53 (Ivanov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 1 2001, pp. 21-22 (Ivanov).

¹²⁷Wagnsson 2000: chapter 4.

seek an alliance with India and China.¹²⁸ Such neo-isolationism is an improbable outcome, but remains a risk to be taken into account.

Future EU-Russia relations need more concrete stimuli than the rather vague policy documents mentioned above. Gowan suggests a range of moves that could further stimulate cooperation. For example, Russia could be granted the possibility of participating in some EU meetings, or could even be given access to the European single market without membership, an arrangement akin to membership of the European Economic Area. He also suggests that Russia could be integrated in the ESDP, e.g. by offering assets in support of an EU-led crisis-management operation, such as heavy-lift transport aircraft or satellite intelligence. The conclusions of the EU's Helsinki summit of December 1999 do allow for Russian participation in EU-led operations.¹²⁹

Talks on a more substantial mutual relationship took place at the EU-Russia summit in May 2000 and at the summit in Paris between Putin, Chirac, Solana and Prodi on 30 October of that year.¹³⁰ In March 2001, Swedish EU chairman Göran Persson affirmed that, for economic reasons, relations with Russia were of extreme importance to the Union.¹³¹

Vladimir Putin's participation in the EU summit in Stockholm in March 2001 was a visible sign of a desire to deepen cooperation. The two parties did not break much new ground, but the significance of a Russian president participating in an EU summit should not be underestimated. The leaders have repeatedly conveyed the message that Russia ought to be received as a worthy great power in the international arena, and definitely not as a state that lost the Cold War. For example, in 1994, Foreign Minister Kozyrev emphasised that the 'war machine NATO' did not win the Cold War, but rather that the democratic principles of the CSCE had.¹³² His successor, Yevgeny Primakov repeatedly argued that, in order to create a stable world, everybody had to free themselves both from the thought that the Cold War had winners and losers, and from the mentality of reasoning in terms of 'leaders' and 'followers' in the world arena.¹³³ According to this view, the Cold War had actually not been a war between states, but between 'hearts and fates in the East and in the West', the winners being those, including the current Russian leaders, who had fought against totalitarianism and defended democratic values.¹³⁴

When Russia's leaders argued that they had had no part in the evils of the Cold War, as the Soviet leaders had, but were part of the global, democratic community which had contributed to ending the confrontation, they minimised feelings of injured pride and tried to make themselves look righteous and worthy of respect in the international arena. They depicted the new Russian Federation as being part of the winning team, not as inferior to NATO. The

¹²⁸Lynch 1999, see Rahr & Wolf 2000.

¹²⁹Gowan 2000.

¹³⁰Gowan 2000:24-25.

¹³¹*Le Monde* 010323.

¹³²*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik* no. 7-8 1994 p. 55-56 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik* no. 19-20 1994 p. 4-6 (Yeltsin).

¹³³*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1996, pp. 64-68 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 1996, pp. 33-36 (Primakov), *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* 961022 198/1277 (Primakov).

¹³⁴*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 19-20 1992, pp. 18-20 (Kozyrev), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 23-24 1992, pp. 4-8 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7-8 1994, pp. 55-56 (Kozyrev), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 19-20 1994, pp. 46 (Yeltsin), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 10 1996, pp. 33-36 (Primakov), *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 7 1996, pp. 64-68 (Primakov), *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* 961022 198/1277 (Primakov).

rhetoric covered in the preceding chapters is another example of Russian leaders portraying their state as a worthy, even morally superior, member of the international community of democratic states. In sum, the formal treatment of Moscow, as an equal – and lately ‘strategic’ – partner, is of importance to future relations between the EU and Russia.

EU policy on the situation in Chechnya also affects its relations with Moscow. The issue highlights a clash of principles – sovereignty versus human rights – and is highly problematic. At the Stockholm summit in March 2001, Putin again defended Russia’s policy towards Chechnya. He linked the Chechen problem to events in the Balkans, arguing that Europeans face exactly the same problems of terrorism in Macedonia that Russia has encountered in Chechnya. The president stated that terrorism was ‘shaking Europe in its heart’ and urged decisive action to stop the Albanian insurgency in Macedonia.¹³⁵

Whatever EU’s policy, Russia is likely to keep pursuing a hard line vis-à-vis the breakaway republic, referring to the righteous cause of combating international terrorism. If seriously confronted, it might become less transparent regarding developments in the republic. As MacFarlane argues, a hard-line EU policy might jeopardise the West’s broader interests in the Caucasian region and cooperative security in Europe.¹³⁶ While the EU should not turn its back on the problem, there is no simple solution. MacFarlane suggests a range of measures available to the Western community, stretching from diplomatic pressure – intended to urge the Russians towards a political settlement, moderation of their behaviour on the ground, enhanced transparency and increased humanitarian assistance – to punitive actions. For reasons outlined above, his final recommendation, to stick to the ‘persuasive end of the spectrum’, seems appropriate.¹³⁷

Finally, on the macro or structural level, a few issues are of particular importance. The positions and methods Russia, the EU and the United States apply with regard to plans to enlarge NATO and the EU will decide much of the fate of mutual relations. Their handling of NMD is of similar importance. Ivanov has urged European states to support Russia in its struggle to preserve the ABM Treaty – thus impeding an American NMD – even cautioning that Russia’s cooperation with Europe will depend on the fate of the ABM Treaty.¹³⁸

Russia’s strong resistance to missile defence could be interpreted as part of a negotiation with the United States. By turning it into a decisive issue, Russia might hope to gain concessions. Moscow could, for example, try to make its compliance with NMD conditional on NATO refraining from any further enlargement.¹³⁹ Such an interpretation does seem a bit far-fetched. Yet even without concessions, if Russia is forced to comply once more it might still have obtained a fair deal. The issue has brought it closer to its European neighbours. Russian leaders have, for example, suggested a European missile defence, which Russia would assist in developing. Also, during the NMD debate, it has become increasingly clear that Russia is not waging its campaign for multipolarity on its own. Some European states, most notably France, are quite supportive of the idea of Europe becoming increasingly independent from the United States, as well as of the idea of inclusive multipolarity.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵*Dagens Nyheter* 010323.

¹³⁶MacFarlane 2000: 105.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*: 106-110.

¹³⁸*Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 12 2000, pp. 54-58 (Ivanov).

¹³⁹Fedorov 2000:118.

¹⁴⁰See, for example, *The Wall Street Journal Europe* 200315.

This suggests that Russia's leaders may be becoming increasingly open to the possibility that Europe may gain in importance as a strategic partner. The EU may perhaps even come to compete with the United States as Russia's most significant point of reference in international affairs. If so, Russian leaders might come to feel a bit less isolated in matters of European and global security, which would be no mean political achievement. Such a rapprochement with Europe would be in line with Russia's long-term strategy ever since the end of the Cold War. As indicated in the preceding section, the Russian leadership has applied a seemingly ambiguous rhetoric – a clash between the officially adopted ethical standards and *realpolitik* – which encompasses both long- and short-term policy objections.

In the short term, Moscow has been adopting a reactive, ad hoc kind of policy in order to counter specific developments contrary to its interests, such as the campaign against Serbia and the enlargement of NATO. In the longer perspective, however, the leaders have applied another, quite consistent argumentation, aimed at conveying Russia's willingness to share the fruits *and* the community of the 'Western club of democracies'. They have not passively adapted to the Western version of civilisation but have gradually worked out their own version of 'international morality', beginning with Mikhail Gorbachev's idea of a Common European House, evolving with Primakov's consistent promotion of multipolarity, and further developed during and after the war in Kosovo. They have officially adopted a type of ethics that they have hoped would also appeal to the international community. Based on respect for sovereignty, common international endeavours to fight 'new threats' and multilateral decisions in the UN Security Council, it would add up to a multipolar world order in which no single state has a decisive say in international affairs, particularly not regarding matters of domestic politics in other states. At the European level, this new world order would be embodied by multilateral cooperation aimed at a 'large, democratic, united Europe'.¹⁴¹

Yet the foregoing analysis exposes a dilemma. Will Russia be willing and able to build a functional strategic partnership with a Western community that under certain preconditions accepts military intervention in the defence of human rights (under certain preconditions), thus reinforcing precisely the kind of morality and code of conduct in international relations that Russia firmly rejects? The jury is still out.

¹⁴¹ *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, no. 4 1999, pp. 18-24 (Ivanov).

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