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Russian Strategy in the Baltic Sea Area

From Containment to Cooperation

Alexander Sergounin

Zusammenfassung

Der Aufsatz beschäftigt sich mit Russlands postkommunistischer Sicherheitspolitik im Ostseeraum. Den Schwerpunkt bildet die Behauptung, dass es einen Wandel im russischen Sicherheitsdenken und in den Sicherheitsstrategien gab. Die "sanften" Sicherheitsbemühungen sind wichtiger geworden als die "harten". Obgleich die militärische Problematik noch immer von Bedeutung ist, konzentrieren sich Russlands Strategen auf die weniger traditionellen Herausforderungen im Sicherheitsbereich – auf die Hindernisse für Wirtschaft, Handel und den freien Verkehr von Menschen und Waren, auf Umweltverschmutzung, Kriminalität über die Landesgrenzen hinaus, Drogenhandel, Schmuggel, illegale Migration, Seuchen, die Sicherheit bei der Energiegewinnung usw. Russland, der EU und diversen Organisationen ist es gelungen, eine gemeinsame Agenda für den "sanften" Sicherheitsbereich zu etablieren, obwohl noch viele Probleme gelöst werden müssen und es weiterer Zusammenarbeit bedarf.

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Im Anschluss an den Aufsatz befindet sich eine Liste der verwendeten Abkürzungen.

Introduction

Moscow's perceptions of, and its security policy towards, the Baltic Sea region have changed dramatically over the past decade. The general trend was from phobia or damage containment to cooperation. However, this process was quite contradictory and turbulent. On the one hand, Russia faced new challenges as a result of recent developments – the NATO and EU enlargements, tensions with the Baltic States, the degradation of the socio-economic and eco-systems in Northwest Russia, illegal migration, cross-border crime and so on. On the other hand, the Baltic Sea region (where Russia has its only border with the EU) offered numerous opportunities for international cooperation. Russia's northwestern regions, such as Kaliningrad, Karelia, Novgorod the Great and St Petersburg, are highly advanced sub-national units in terms of market reforms and integration into the European economy. The EU has indicated its desire to cooperate with Northwest Russia in areas such as energy, transportation, health care, civil society's institution-building, environment, etc. To provide

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such a cooperation with a proper institutional framework, the EU launched the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI). Other sub-regional organizations, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Barents-Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Nordic Council, and the Nordic Council of Ministers participated actively in collaborative projects with Russia. Even the United States launched the so-called Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) to tackle security problems in the region.¹ This paper seeks to broaden the understanding of Russian security policies in the Baltic Sea area by considering the following research questions: 1) How did Russian security concepts on the region change? 2) What major security problems does Russia face in the region? 3) What are the possible (and best) solutions to these problems?

Changing paradigms

The dynamic processes in the Baltic Sea area took the Russian political and academic communities by surprise. For example, in the case of the NDI and the NEI, it took Moscow almost two years to formulate its official strategy towards these initiatives² and to produce more or less thorough academic analyses of the issues.³ Among Russian political and academic elites, there are three main theoretical approaches to Moscow's policies in the Baltic Sea region:

1. Political realists and geopoliticians view the Baltic Sea region as a manifestation of an eternal geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West. In contrast with its former policy, the West now prefers economic rather than military instruments to pressurize Russia. According to these paradigms, the aim of the EU policies is to secure Russia's status as the West's "younger partner" and a source of cheap natural resources and labor force.⁴ According to this school of thought, the West is not interested in a revival of the local economy and it plans to make Northwestern Russia a mere transit point in communications between the Russian regions that are rich in natural resources and the EU and the Baltic States. This means that foreign investment will be employed to develop a transport infrastructure rather than to modernize local industry and agriculture. This group believes that Russia's attempts to become more open (for instance, the development of free and special economic zones, e.g., the Kaliningrad SEZ) are detrimental to the country's economic security and serve only as a façade for smugglers and corrupted officials.

Some realists believe that Western initiatives such as the Northern Dimension are merely a vehicle for Western geopolitical ambitions. For example, according to geopoliticians, Germany dreams of re-incorporating the former East Prussia into the "German Empire". The first step in this geopolitical plan could be the establishment of a sort of German economic protectorate over the Kaliningrad Region.⁵ These fears were widespread in the region in early 2001, following emerging rumors that Germany would cancel part of Russia's debts in exchange for securities of Russian companies (including the Kaliningrad-based firms). A series of rallies was held in Kaliningrad, where the local residents appealed to President Vladimir Putin to either confirm or deny these rumors.⁶

The radical versions of realism and geopolitics believe that the ultimate goal

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of the West is to disintegrate Russia and separate the Northwest (especially Kaliningrad and Karelia) from the rest of the country.⁷ The realists believe that the region should retain its strategic importance and criticize the government for the premature dismantling of a formidable military infrastructure in the region. They recommend tightening governmental control over the region to prevent its potential drift to the West. They believe that in the case of 'Western encroachments' into the region, Moscow should re-militarize the region, including the deployment of nuclear weapons.⁸ They also favor military cooperation with Belarus to counter-balance the eastward extension of the NATO and even make the Baltic States an 'exclave' in a strategic sense.⁹ With regard to Kaliningrad, geopoliticians suggest providing Russia with the freedom of the civilian and military transit via Lithuania similar to those granted to Germany in the case of East Prussia after World War I. Should Vilnius disagree, the realists suggest questioning the territorial integrity of Lithuania, which acquired some Polish, Belorussian and German territories as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and World War II.¹⁰

2. The liberal institutionalists point out that the military significance of the region decreased in the post-Cold War period and that the region is unable to play the role of the Russian military outpost. This change was proved at the doctrinal level. According to the previous Russian military doctrine (1993), the use of nuclear weapons had been limited to circumstances that constituted a "threat to the very existence of the Russian Federation as an independent sovereign state." According to the new doctrine (2000), the use of nuclear weapons is justified "if all other means of resolving the crisis situation have been exhausted or proved ineffective." Such a situation was simulated in a maneuver carried out in the summer of 1999, which assumed a NATO attack on the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. According to the scenario upon which the maneuver was based, Russian conventional strike forces could withstand for only three days.¹¹

The liberals hope that, due to its unique geo-economic location, the Russian Northwest will be further opened up for international cooperation, becoming a Russian "gate - way" region that could help Russia to be gradually integrated into the European multilateral institutions.¹² They believe that priority should be given to the issues that unite rather than disunite regional players - trade, cross-border cooperation, transport, environment, health care, people-to-people contacts and so on. In this respect, they view the EU Northern Dimension project as a beneficial framework for such a cooperation.¹³ The liberals are convinced that, if the mutual trust was developed, technical problems such as visa regime, border controls and transport systems could be easily solved.

3. The globalists go further than liberals in terms of the possible participation of Russia's northwestern regions in international cooperation. They believe that the processes of globalization and regionalization are worldwide and that Russia cannot avoid them. According to this school of thought, these two tendencies are intertwined in Northern Europe.¹⁴ On the one hand, this subregion is a subject of dialogue between two global players - the EU and Russia. On the other hand, there is a clear tendency to making a new international region/subregion - the Baltic Sea/Nordic area -

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where the Russian Northwest could find a mission of its own.

The globalists suggest that Moscow should not thrust sovereignty-related issues onto the regional agenda and should provide the Russian border regions with additional powers concerning external relations. They call for the EU to implement a "two - track" approach to cooperation with Russian regions. In their view, "pioneer" regions - such as Kaliningrad, Karelia, Novgorod and St Petersburg - can be put on the "fast track" in terms of further cooperation with the EU. In particular, they hope that such Russian regions could be part of the European Free Trade Area or even become associate partners of the European Union (before the main part of Russia acquires the same status). They insist on the feasibility of this model by referring to some North European countries such as Finland and Denmark, where some territories have special status with regard to relations with the EU (Åland Islands, Greenland and Faeroe Islands, respectively). Similar to the liberals, the globalists welcome any cooperative initiatives, including the EU's Northern Dimension.

Some radical sub-schools of globalist theory believe that we are living in a world of increasingly obsolete state borders. International borders are becoming so porous that they no longer fulfill their historical role as barriers to the movements of goods, people, and ideas.¹⁵ This can be perceived as being extremely close to some West European approaches that aim at social integration, transfer of sovereignty and cross-border cooperation. New states (or newly reborn states like Russia) naturally focus on borders, security, exclusion, sovereignty and national economies.

The realist-geopolitical school currently dominates the Russian security discourse. This leads to a discrepancy between the Russian and European discourses on borders and their role in the future international relations system. While the Russian discourse emphasizes the need to protect national interests and territorial integrity, including external borders, Europe increasingly finds itself in a post-modern world where borders are relatively unimportant (within the EU itself) and the emphasis is put on cross- and trans-border cooperation (in relations with the outer world).

Despite the dominance of the realist-geopolitical school in Russia, there are some indications that alternative paradigms have also some influence on policy-making.¹⁶ For example, Moscow indicated its interest in the Northern Dimension initiative and presented its suggestions to be included in the action Plan. Moreover, Russia's medium-term strategy for the development of its relations with the EU (2000-2010) characterizes the Northern Dimension as an important priority in the EU-Russia relationship. The document also underlined the possibilities regarding Kaliningrad as a pilot region for the EU/Russia relationship and a test case for this relationship in connection with the EU enlargement.¹⁷ It mentioned the option of a special arrangement for Kaliningrad with regards to enlargement; it also hinted that, if Kaliningrad turns out to be a successful test case, future cooperation would cover Northwest Russia as a whole. The federal task program on Kaliningrad (December 2001) is based on the same approach.¹⁸

A summary of the Russian discourse on Northern Europe cannot be reduced to the realist/geopolitical paradigm. It gradually becomes more

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diverse and creative. In terms of expertise, the Russian political leadership now faces diversity rather than uniformity and can choose among different views and options.

The Russian political discourse has already resulted in a number of important changes in Russian security thinking on the Baltic Sea region. Five main changes can be identified:

1. There is a clear shift from a 'hard' to a 'soft' security problematic. This was unusual for the Russian strategy planners, because the region has always been perceived as a zone of confrontation with the West (from the Teutonic Order in the Middle Age to NATO in the Cold War period). There was a high concentration of Russian armed forces – both nuclear and conventional – in the region; the Russian military always had a major influence in defining the future of the region. With the emergence of the NDI, the NEI and other collaborative initiatives, the 'hard' security issues lost their former importance and a completely new agenda is approaching. The regional agenda was desecuritized (the notion of 'desecuritization' came from social constructivism and implies the reduced importance of military/'hard' security issues and the rise of the 'low politics' agenda – see below); the regional cooperation focused on 'normal', non-security issues. 'Grand' policy retreated to the wings and 'low politics' (economy, trade, societal issues, ecology, border infrastructure, migration, etc.) dominated the scene. This 'soft' security agenda questioned the role and capabilities of the old actors (NATO, OSCE, etc.) in dealing with a new set of challenges. It seems that the EU, the Nordic institutions and some newly created organizations (CBSS, BEAC) are better equipped to tackle new problems than the traditional actors. It took some time for Russian foreign and security policies to become accustomed to the new reality.
2. The Northern Dimension project casts doubt on the key principle of the European Cold War security architecture - that European security is indivisible. Under the new circumstances, it became possible to make a region or subregion (such as Northern Europe) more secure without creating a security regime for the whole continent. This again challenged the role of the traditional security organizations (OSCE and NATO) as the major security providers in Europe. Russia should redefine its traditional European security policy, which aimed at making the OSCE a main pan-European security institution.
3. For the first time in the Europe-Russia relations, projects such as the NDI provide Russia with a certain freedom of choice. Prior to this, Russia had to play by the rules laid down by the West. The Northern Dimension suggests a rather loose frame for cooperation, inferring that each partner acts on equal footing and decides itself how it wishes to contribute to the cooperative process. The NDI invites Russia to define for itself which issue to choose as a priority for cooperation – energy, environment, societal issues, fighting organized crime and so on. Since Moscow was not accustomed to such a situation, it was unable to make a choice for a while. The Russian traditionalists would have even preferred to witness the

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failure of NDI, in order to be able to blame Brussels for the lack of cooperation and goodwill rather than to take the initiative themselves in designing a new political course.

4. Fourthly, and this will be explained in more detail afterwards, the NDI also revealed that Moscow underestimated the role of regionalism/subregionalism - both domestically and internationally. Internally, Moscow viewed regionalism as a continuation of, or addition to, the highly centralized federal policies at a local level. Internationally, Russia saw the regional/subregional cooperation either as a low priority (compared to 'grand policy') or as a scope for diplomatic maneuvering (if the 'grand strategy' failed). Hence, Moscow was quite suspicious of the subregional nature of the NDI, the NEI and other projects. As a result of the deep involvement of the Russian northwestern regions (especially Kaliningrad and Karelia) in subregional cooperation, the federal government was afraid of strengthening separatist tendencies in those areas. Only with time did Moscow realize that subregionalism brings more positive than negative results and begin to view the Russian Northwest as an exception or 'pilot' region.¹⁹
5. Russia's traditional concept of national sovereignty was challenged by the post-Cold War dynamics. Moscow's original position was that all Russian regions were integral parts of the Russian Federation and had equal status. International cooperation should not question any region's belonging to Russia and should not cause disparities between different regions by involving some territories in a deeper cooperation and rejecting others. Initially, Moscow feared that the NDI, the NEI and similar projects could intensify such disparities and provoke an unhealthy competition between Russian regions. Russia insisted that it was able to solve the regions' problems (even in case of Kaliningrad) itself. With time, however, Moscow understood that the international actors do not intend to challenge Russian territorial integrity and that, by engaging Russia's northwestern regions in cross-border and transregional cooperation, their aim is to create a zone of stability and economic prosperity rather than to disintegrate the country. Gradually, Moscow's preferences shifted from the semi-isolationist, unilateral options to a cooperative model and multilateral solutions (demonstrated in particular by the cases of Kaliningrad and Karelia). (This means that, in the case of Kaliningrad and Karelia, Moscow started a dialogue with the EU, the CBSS, the BEAC, etc., with the aim to find solutions to the above problems and accepted the assistance of these organizations via numerous programs – TACIS, TEMPUS, INTERREG, etc.)

Russia-Europe cooperative agenda

Russian security policies in the Baltic Sea region have two major components - 'hard' (military) and 'soft' (non-military - economic, societal, environmental and other areas). As mentioned above, the 'soft' security problematic is the most important one. The Russia-Europe collaborative agenda is quite impressive in terms of scope and diversity and includes several areas:

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The EU member states and Russia agree that economic cooperation should be the main stabilizing factor in the region and, thus, the main content of the Northern Dimension. According to diplomatic documents and suggestions made by politicians, businessmen, academics as well as NGOs (non-governmental organizations), the following priorities of the economic cooperation can be identified within the Northern Dimension:

1. Energy

Balanced development of the energy infrastructure and the connection to EU energy networks are high priorities for the NDI. According to EU Commissioner Chris Patten, there are three priorities of the EU's energy policy in the region: 1) technical assistance to strengthen cooperation with Russia; 2) improving program management to increase coordination of existing EU programs and instruments; 3) joint activities with international financial institutions and cooperation with industry to optimize the impact of financial instruments in the energy sector²⁰.

In October 1999, the conference of ministers of energy was held under the auspices of the CBSS in Helsinki. The energy ministers identified two essential areas for future energy cooperation: (a) organization and integration of the electricity and gas markets, including the basis for infrastructure investments; and (b) climate change policies, work on renewals and energy efficiency.²¹

As a result of similar initiatives, a Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation (BASREC) has been launched. Four ad-hoc groups have been created within the areas of electricity, gas, climate issues and energy efficiency. The dialogue between actors in the energy sector of the Baltic Sea region is an important part of the process. The European Commission also contributed to the BASREC secretariat in Stockholm.²²

The EU Action Plan on the NDI outlines a number of concrete tasks ahead of the regional actors, including: 1) the maintenance of an inventory of regionally relevant energy projects and financial sources in order to coordinate various activities and avoid duplication; 2) the promotion of mutual transparency of strategic objectives and the availability of financial support for the region; 3) Active participation by the EU in the activities of the Group of Senior Energy Officials created by the energy ministers of the region to define and manage the regional energy cooperation program; 4) monitoring energy investments and structural changes in the sector; 5) development of management capacity in the regional energy companies; 6) development and transfer of new technologies to north-western Russia.²³

Europe's future energy management will depend heavily on gas originating from Russia; one important route will go through Northern Europe. According to some data, Russian gas will constitute 40 - 70 per cent of the total EU gas consumption by the year 2020.²⁴ On the other hand, Europe will represent the most obvious export market for Russia's gas, so there is a clear meeting of interests here. Europe will need Russia, and vice versa. The Northern Dimension Gas Study indicated that there is a necessity and

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opportunities for increased commercial cooperation regarding natural gas. The 1999 Helsinki Conference of Foreign Ministers on the Northern Dimension stressed the need for close cooperation between producing and consuming countries in establishing favorable commercial framework conditions in the gas sector. There was a proposal to connect all continental countries in the region to European networks, creating thereby a joint space with common rules, and to ensure the security of supply and sufficient storage capacities for gas.²⁵

Projects related to oil are also under consideration. Latvia argues that the building of a new oil pipeline from Russia to the port of Ventspils would be economically more feasible and ecologically more sound than other similar projects in the region.²⁶ The EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction & Development) intends to provide financial support for such projects in order to create healthy competition and promote the development of the regional oil market.

As the conference of the Baltic Sea Energy Ministers demonstrated, the countries of the region are considering the integration of electricity markets and the establishment of commonly accepted rules, market mechanisms and environmental framework conditions.²⁷

The Action Plan explicitly calls for EU-Russia discussions on interconnecting EU and Russian electricity infrastructures and markets.²⁸ In particular, the NDI could focus on projects involving interconnections among the countries of the region with a view to optimizing the sharing of base-load, peak and spin-off reserve power, and to increasing trade in electricity, the reliability of power supply and the quality of the service through frequency stabilization.

2. Transport

It is generally accepted that the presence of an efficient transport system is one of the key prerequisites for the promotion of economic ties in the Baltic region. Therefore, transport development projects have become one of the top priorities of the Northern Dimension. The Action Plan observed the exceptional circumstances in the region: demands of winter transport (use of icebreakers, expensive road maintenance), long EU external frontiers and associated customs procedures as well as the proximity of the Arctic and sub-Arctic areas and the subsequent high logistics costs to the industry.²⁹

One of the most important priorities emphasized by Poland, the Baltic States, Russia and Finland is the development of the constituent parts of the Crete/Helsinki multi-modal transport corridor, namely the *Via Baltica*, the *Rail Baltica* and the *Via Hanseatica* projects. Given the special status of Kaliningrad, the Action Plan suggests the modernization of Transport Corridor IX D (Kaliningrad-Kaunas-Kaisiadorys).³⁰ Other EU priorities include the elimination of bottlenecks at border crossings, the improvement of safety statistics in all transport modes and the harmonization of transport legislation and regulations based on international agreements. Under the TACIS (Technical assistance to the CIS) program, a special project is now underway to modernize the Kaliningrad port.

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The EBRD finances a number of railway projects in the region, for example, the modernization of the Moscow-St. Petersburg railway link. The financial institution is also engaged in the Ventspils Port Rail Terminal Project, which is linked to the recently signed Ventspils Port Terminal Project (involving private sponsors) and potentially to a Moscow Intermodal Terminal, currently being developed by the EBRD and a major international operator.³¹

3. Information technologies/telecommunications

According to the EU's vision, the NDI offers a platform for accelerating transition to the information society; this is especially relevant in areas where great distances have to be covered and where the population is sparse.³² A Northern electronic Dimension Action Plan is being developed by the Council of Baltic States in partnership with the European Commission, consulting the involved countries and the relevant regional actors. The Northern eDimension Action Plan (NeDAP) aims at developing the information technologies in the region to the level of EU and world standards. The EU has established a website on the NDI. At the EU-Russia summit in May 2001, both delegations articulated their support for the NeDAP and pledged to make it an important priority in the NDI framework.³³ The NeDAP was adopted at a CBSS ministerial meeting in Riga in September 2001.

4. Municipal infrastructure

Restructuring and modernizing the municipal infrastructure, which is currently in a critical condition in Northwest Russia, could be one of the priorities of the Northern Dimension. Other projects are already underway: the EBRD-funded wastewater projects in Kaliningrad, Novgorod the Great and St Petersburg and the public transportation project in Novgorod the Great.

5. Support of private entrepreneurship

To date, the leading figure in cooperation in this sector is the EBRD. When many participant Russian banks became insolvent towards the end of the 1990s, the EBRD established its own specialized Micro Finance Bank, in order to help carrying out the program of lending to micro and small businesses in Russia.³⁴ Under the TACIS program, priority is given to the adjustment of the legal and institutional framework and to the simplification and streamlining of regulations for small- and medium-sized enterprises. The EU Commission also plans to launch a new multi-annual program for enterprise and entrepreneurship (2001-2006).³⁵

Environment

Many of the key actors are consistent in ranking environmental problems among the highest priorities of the Northern Dimension. According to the Russian Foreign Minister, "There are many urgent issues that should be tackled immediately. Among them, I would like to mention a sound environment and enhanced nuclear and radiation security. By the way, in expanding the economic activities in Northern Europe, we should strictly observe the principles of environmental security".³⁶ The EU also

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acknowledges the importance of environmental problems for the NDI. For example, an Environmental Work Program is now being developed with Russia under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Other regional arrangements, such as the "Environment for Europe" (EFE) process, the European Energy Charter, the Helsinki Commission and the Baltic Sea Agenda 21, are designed to meet the ecological challenges.

Specialists identify the following environmental problems in Northwestern Russia and the adjacent areas: water and terrestrial pollution; forest and bog destruction; climate change; fisheries and the maritime environment, and nuclear safety.

The EU attempts to pool the efforts of the international financial institutions (IFIs), in order to promote ecological programs in the Northern Dimension region. In March 2001, the NIB (Nordic Investment Bank) hosted the Helsinki meeting of the IFIs to discuss the prospects for environmental cooperation in Northern Europe. The meeting initiated a Working Group between the four IFIs (the EBRD, the European Investment Bank EIB, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development IBRD and the NIB), the EU Presidency and European Commission. The group met three times in 2001 in London to develop a proposal by the EBRD and others for the establishment of a Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership.³⁷ The NDEP plan was presented to the Luxembourg ministerial conference on the NDI in April 2001 and to the EU at the Gothenburg summit in June 2001; the initiative was welcomed by both fora.

The NDEP aims at addressing environmental hot spots and the energy efficiency of the NDI area, which are largely a legacy of the former planned economy period and which have cross-boundary impacts. In the Russian Northern Dimension area (NDA) in particular, the NDEP focuses on problems such as waste water and solid waste collection and treatment, rehabilitation of the municipal heating system and nuclear waste treatment. Among the Russian NDA regions, the NDEP gives priority to the Archangel, Kaliningrad, Leningrad, Murmansk, Novgorod and Pskov regions (*oblasts*).³⁸

Fighting organized crime

Cross-border crime is an important issue and a common concern, especially the trafficking of drugs, money, contraband commodities, stolen vehicles, and even human beings. These activities have a significant impact on people's lives, the pace of economic and political reforms and undercut government revenues. At the operational level, the police, customs officers, special services and border guards need to be trained to understand the implications of the international laws and conventions signed by their governments. Continual training for officials from these agencies will also increase their ability to counteract illegal activities.

Russia cooperates with Europe both at the bilateral and multilateral levels in this field. For example, a Russian-British Memorandum of Understanding on Combating Organized Crime was signed in October 1997. Since 1996, the Task Force on Organized Crime in the Baltic Sea Region (Visby Group), developed under the auspices of the CBSS, has taken a leading role in

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building cooperation between regional law enforcement agencies.³⁹ The group also deals with and coordinates action on illegal migration, money laundering, stolen vehicles, highly taxed goods, the trafficking of drugs or human beings, and corruption.⁴⁰ Through its Operative Committee (OPC), the Task Force has been conducting joint, multi-disciplinary law enforcement operations. The Baltic Communication System BALTCOM operates 24 hours a day. From the outset, Russia has been one of the most active members of the Task Force. Duly, the perception of the Russian NDA in the region is much better today than before commencement of the Task Force activities.⁴¹

Although the EU/Russia PCA contains several clauses related to the fight against crime, the EU-Russia cooperation on justice and home affairs (JHA) is still at an early stage. The PCA Sub-committee on the fight against crime began its dialogue on the PCA implementation in 1999. Stemming from the Common Strategy on Russia, the EU Council adopted a plan in March 2000 on common action for Russia to combat organized crime, focusing on judicial cooperation in criminal matters and on law enforcement cooperation. Europol received a mandate from the Council to negotiate cooperation agreements with certain third-party countries, including Russia.⁴² Currently, the EU-Russia Action Plan on Organized Crime concentrates on measures to combat double invoicing as an instrument of organized crime in trade between the EU and Russia.⁴³ A first ministerial meeting on Justice and Home Affairs between the EU Troika and Russia was held in April 2001. A second meeting followed in April 2002.

Border controls/visa regime

It is impossible to form a homogeneous economic space in Northern Europe without liberalizing visa and customs regimes. The nations of the region have expressed the view that it would be expedient to introduce more favorable (comparable with the Schengen agreement) visa and customs regulations for Russia. The multiple entry visa scheme of the present Russian/Finnish border management regime, which was set up with the support of INTERREG (EU's program on inter-regional cooperation program) and TACIS funds, might be replicated along the enlarged EU border with Russia in combination with the negotiation of a re-admission agreement.⁴⁴ Elimination of the bottlenecks on the Russian border crossings is also an important goal. A major part of the TACIS CBC (cross-border-cooperation) assistance - 57.1 million Euro - was allocated to border crossing projects including border management activities.

Some progress was made under the Danish EU presidency in the most complicated issue – freedom of movement to and from Kaliningrad. In October 2002, Russia, the European Commission and Lithuania reached a compromise on transit to Kaliningrad via the Lithuanian territory. Special simplified travel documents were introduced for persons traveling by train or car. However, many technical details of introducing facilitated travel documents (FTD) still remain to be resolved. Moreover, FTD is a temporary solution and the problem will re-emerge once Lithuania joins the Schengen Convention.

Other regional multilateral institutions (CBSS, BEAC) have also begun

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discussing these issues. The BEAC, in particular, has developed a methodology for a direct and very successful cooperation between Nordic and Russian customs authorities that could also be applied elsewhere.⁴⁵ In June 1997, the first conference of the heads of border guards of the Baltic region took place under the aegis of the CBSS in Helsinki. Under the Russian chairmanship at the Conference, four special operations were undertaken; 25 vessels that had violated the border regime were confiscated immediately. Between 1999 and 2000, the Russian border guards prevented an illegal transit of two tones of drugs from Afghanistan to the Baltic Sea region.⁴⁶

Illegal migration

Along with the liberalization of border controls, increased efforts should be made to prevent illegal migration. Under the Finnish EU-Presidency in 1999, several meetings were organized on illegal migration. Russia has occasionally taken part in meetings of the Center for Information, Discussion and Exchange on Asylum (CIREA) and the Center for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI), the Visa Group and other assemblies. The EU JHA Committee analyzed relations with Russia in this context in its meeting on the 4th of October 1999.⁴⁷ The first ministerial meeting between the EU Troika and Russia on the JHA was held in April 2001.⁴⁸ These activities should, however, be augmented by more regular and extensive programs under the auspices of the NDI.

Human needs*1. Social problems*

Unemployment is high in the Russian NDA; people are abandoning the region for a better future elsewhere in Russia. Whole communities, such as Nikel and Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula, now face an uncertain future. Specialists believe that social welfare programs should focus on issues such as (a) unemployment and retraining schemes, (b) care of children at risk and (c) the elderly people.⁴⁹

2. Health care

The health situation in some areas of Northwest Russia is deteriorating due to the economic and social circumstances. Mass diseases, such as tuberculosis, syphilis, hepatitis, diphtheria and HIV-AIDS, are increasing at an alarming rate; the consequences transcend national borders. Medical experts draw special attention to the dramatic rise in multi-resistant tuberculosis bacteria. Drug abuse negatively affects work force productivity and the rate of violent crime.

Therefore, it is vitally important to establish a regional cooperation aimed at combating the spread of communicable diseases. Some health care programs have already been initiated; Sweden launched an initiative to intensify them and to get more players involved. A seminar for experts from the Barents and Baltic Sea regions was held in Uppsala in January 2000 in order to identify the weaknesses and the requirements for this cooperation.⁵⁰ Public health issues are dealt with by the CBSS Task Force

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on Communicable Disease Control. The BEAC also has a Public Health Program.⁵¹ TACIS has a € 2m Northwest health replication project for the Kaliningrad, Murmansk and Archangel regions. The project aims at reducing health and social disparities across the border by supporting the reform of the local health system.⁵² The EU report on the Northern Dimension outlined three priorities in the area of public health: (1) information in the field of public health; (2) early warning systems for different health hazards and problems; (3) health promotion and disease prevention. It was also underlined that an improved exchange of knowledge and information between experts is very important.⁵³

3. *Education and research*

The human resources and scientific capacities of the European North can be developed through enhanced cooperation in training and research. This is crucial for the success of reforms and in forming a new generation in Russia. According to many experts, the NDI should pool and coordinate numerous educational and research programs both under the aegis of the EU (TEMPUS, COPERNICUS, INTAS, etc.) and the sponsorship of other regional institutions (Nordic Council of Ministers, CBSS, BEAC). Priority should be given to developing university and research centers focusing on the regional problematic.

Northwestern Russia benefits from the second generation of EU programs for education and training, such as YOUTH FOR EUROPE and TEMPUS III (2000-2006). The aim of the latter is to reform the higher education system in accordance with European standards. A number of public administration projects seek to contribute to the training of local government officials and the development of direct relations between local authorities. For instance, the Municipal Training Center at the Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) is successfully executing the program on training of the officials from Kaliningrad in cooperation with the Democracy Support Fund of the USA. Brussels believes that it is expedient to establish a permanent EU educational unit for public administration officials.

There are a variety of instruments at the level of EU and EU-Russia research cooperation to promote and finance joint research initiatives. The EU-Russia Science and Technology Agreement, in particular, facilitate cooperation and may lead to new joint initiatives.⁵⁴ The EU Sixth Framework Program for Research and Technical Development may be a suitable venue to develop the RTD cooperation in the NDA through joint projects, networking and training of researchers. A considerable number of research projects, particularly on environmental and climatic conditions, energy and transport issues as well as information technologies, are currently being pursued.

4. *Indigenous population of the Arctic*

Experts suggest focusing on problems such as the preservation of natural environment where these peoples live, their family economy and their traditional cultures.⁵⁵ It is considered important to respect the rights and interests of indigenous peoples in the context of industrialization and modernization of the industries and infrastructure in the northern part of

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As mentioned previously, 'soft' rather than 'hard' security issues are more important in the post-Cold War period. This is particularly true for the Baltic Sea area. With the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a completely new geopolitical situation:

1. Firstly, the Kaliningrad Region (Oblast) was separated from "Greater" Russia by the newly independent states such as Lithuania and Belarus. The new geopolitical situation led to numerous problems in areas such as supplying the region with basic provisions, energy, raw materials and equipment, transport, communications, military transit and travel. An increasing feeling of isolation from "mainland Russia" is widespread in Kaliningrad. For this reason, many experts prefer to term Kaliningrad a Russian "exclave" rather than "enclave".

2. Secondly, the military significance of the Russian northwestern regions declined dramatically in the 1990s. The Russian military presence has diminished significantly over the past ten years. For example, the current number of military personnel stationed in the Kaliningrad Oblast is estimated at between 18.000 and 25.000 men (from a total of 100.000 during the Cold War), plus some 5.000 border guard troops and some 1.000 internal forces. According to some reports, the number of troops stationed in the enclave should be reduced to 8.600 by the year 2003.

In late 1997, the Kaliningrad Special Defense District (Kaliningradsky Oboronitelny Raion, KOR) - the only remnant of the former Baltic Military District - was abolished (including the 11th Army). The residual land units were subordinated to the Commander of the Baltic Sea Fleet, which was also cut drastically. In 1990 - 94, the KOR reduced the number of its tank divisions from two to one. In 1996, the tanks division was abolished. Between 1994 and 2000, the number of tanks fell from 1.100 to 829. By 1996, an artillery division was transformed into three brigades, an airborne brigade was dismissed, and the number of surface-to-surface missile brigades fell from three to one. Between 1990 and 2000, artillery pieces were reduced from 677 to 330 and the number of combat aircraft fell from 155 to 28.⁵⁷

Over the same period, the Baltic Fleet reduced the number of its submarines from 42 (two strategic and 40 tactical) to two (all tactical), the number of surface ships from 450 (39 principal combatants, 150 patrol and coastal combatants, 120 mine warfare, 21 amphibious and 120 support vessels) to 190 (6 principal combatants, 30 patrol and coastal combatants, 19 mine warfare, 5 amphibious and 130 support ships).⁵⁸ The fleet is now comparable – in terms of the number of ships – with the German and Swedish navies. The configuration of the region's military structure became purely defensive. Many military analysts doubt that Kaliningrad, because of its remoteness and low combatant efficiency, is actually defensible from a strategic point of view.

3. Thirdly, in contrast with the Soviet era, the Russian northwestern regions

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are now open for international cooperation; they have one of the most liberal economic, customs and border/visa regimes in the entire Russian Federation. The Kaliningrad Oblast is especially exemplary in this regard. A Free Economic Zone (FEZ) and then a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) were established in the region in order to attract foreign investment. BMW and Kia, automobile giants from German and South Korea, respectively, opened production lines in Kaliningrad; Norwegian ships are also repaired in the city ports. Karelia and the Leningrad Region actively participate in cross-border cooperation with Finland. In sharp contrast to its former image of a "military outpost", as was the case in the Cold War era, the Russian Northwest is now perceived as the most pro-Western - or cosmopolitan - region in the country. In this regard, it exemplifies the most dramatic change in economy, society, foreign policy and mentality that happened in post-Communist Russia.

However, it is too premature to ignore a 'hard' security agenda in the region. Paradoxically, the end of the Cold War triggered some processes that were interpreted by Moscow as being detrimental to its security interests.

1. Firstly, Russia lost two-thirds of the former Soviet Baltic coastline; access to the Baltic Sea was significantly reduced. Moscow lost almost everything it had persistently aspired over several centuries.
2. Secondly, with the collapse of the USSR, Kaliningrad - which had been an essential component of the Soviet defense system in the region - became an exclave with doubtful defense capabilities. Presently, Kaliningrad has the appearance of a trap for the Baltic Sea Fleet rather than Moscow's military outpost in the region. Moscow is also very sensitive of any statements on a possible secession of Kaliningrad, either in the form of a 'Fourth Baltic Republic' or it being returning to Germany.⁵⁹
3. Thirdly, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact deprived Moscow of its most important strategic allies, Poland and East Germany.
4. Fourth, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact undermined the entire military structure in the northwestern part of Russia. Moscow had to re-deploy and accommodate the troops withdrawn from Eastern Europe and Baltic states. The system of military command, logistic support and management in the area had to be changed. The Russian strategic planners had to contemplate how to defend vulnerable regions (including Kaliningrad), given the geopolitical cataclysm and the shortage of funds, personnel and ammunition.
5. Fifthly, Russia failed to prevent the rise of antagonistic regimes in the three Baltic States. From the outset, the Baltic States aimed at withdrawing from the Russian sphere of influence and favored the pro-Western orientation.
6. Sixthly, the region's alliance system is shifting to the detriment of Russian strategic interests around the Baltic Sea Rim. In a sense, the NATO 'swallowed' East Germany. Poland is already a member of NATO and the Baltic States are candidates for NATO membership. The Polish and Baltic armed forces do not presently constitute a serious threat to Russia's security, but, if modernized and incorporated into NATO, they could pose a challenge. Since joining

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the EU and obtaining WEU (Western European Union) observer status, Finland and Sweden are no longer neutral. Moreover, some fractions in these two countries are in favor of joining NATO. At the same time, Russia is unable to create a strong military organization within the CIS and thus counter-balance the eastward expansion of the Western security institutions.

For these reasons, a 'hard' security problematic still plays some (albeit not crucial) role in Russian policy towards the Baltic Sea region. The military security issues could be identified as follows:

1. Force level and structure optimization. Despite a significant reduction in the Russian armed forces in the Baltic Sea area, the type and size of land and naval forces needed in the region are still unresolved. The Russian military analysts failed to provide an adequate assessment of threats to the region, of the needs and of the available resources.

Some specialists (close to the realist and geopolitical schools) believed that, in view of NATO enlargement, further force reductions would be dangerous; they suggested modernizing the Russian military structures and even increasing military presence in the region (including a deployment of tactical nuclear weapons) in the case of NATO extension.⁶⁰ Other experts (mainly from the liberal camp) consider the Russian Northwest as being non-defendable from a strategic point of view and specify the changes in the strategic environment and Russian military strategy. They also note that Russia, due to economic considerations, simply cannot afford Soviet-style armed forces. Moreover, they emphasize the need to overcome the image of the region as a military outpost in order to develop cooperation with European countries.⁶¹ A national discussion on military security of Northwest Russia among military and civilian specialists is necessary to resolve this dispute.

2. Conversion of the defense industry and infrastructure. The reduction of the Russian armed forces and military acquisitions in the northwestern regions made it necessary to adapt the local defense industry and retired servicemen to the post-Cold War dramatic changes. Although the defense enterprises still produce some naval armaments (especially for foreign customers) and repair warships, the level of state defense orders is insufficient to secure their existence. They are forced to restructure their production towards civilian products and technologies. Given the general economic crisis and the high competition on the local, national and international markets, such a restructuring remains a difficult task. It is advisable to develop a special program at federal level on the conversion of the Northwestern Federal District's defense industry and the former military personnel and infrastructure. Additional funds should be provided. (Currently, both the federal and local governments lack conversion programs; conversion continues without a clear plan, in a chaotic and contradictory way. I suggest here the development of a special conversion program to solve the problems of the regional defense industry. Both the federal and regional governments should allocate funds for this purpose)

3. Military transit. The issue of military transit between Russia and Lithuania has caused much political controversy in the 1990s. On 18 November 1993,

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Russia and Lithuania signed an agreement regulating the use of Lithuania's railway system and other transportation facilities for the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the former German Democratic Republic until 1995. Moscow, however, strove for a new accord on both military transit and a comprehensive political agreement. After lengthy negotiations and diplomatic conflicts, a compromise was reached. In January 1995, Moscow and Vilnius exchanged diplomatic notes, culminating in Lithuania's agreement to extend the current rules for Russian military transit to KO (Kaliningrad Oblast) until the end of 1995.⁶² Since then, the agreement on military transit has been extended on a yearly basis.

The regional players, however, are dissatisfied with the status of the Russian military transit. The issue became especially complicated in view of the forthcoming EU enlargement. Russia stressed that military transit is beyond the EU acquits and thus may be regulated with Lithuania on a bilateral basis. Moreover, the Russians have recently voiced the desire to review the existing agreement.⁶³ Vilnius argues that it is impossible to satisfy Russian demands, since Lithuania is obliged to coordinate its policies with the EU.⁶⁴ Brussels supports the Lithuanian position on this matter.⁶⁵

It seems expedient to form a joint Russia - Lithuania working group with observers from the EU, in order to discuss the issue of the Russian military transit in the context of EU extension and to draft a new agreement. Consultations on the expert level could also be held in one of the committees under the auspices of the PCA. Such an agreement should adapt the existing document to the new reality and be very specific regarding the intensity and conditions of military transit. This agreement should be seen as part of the whole EU-Russia package on the Kaliningrad issue.

4. NATO enlargement. This is still a security problem for Russia although it is gradually moving from a purely military domain to political and psychological domains. The Russian strategists realize that NATO enlargement does not pose any significant military threat to Northwest Russia; NATO has no intention to increase its military presence and activities in the Baltic Sea region. Rather, NATO offers a platform for sub-regional cooperation. For Moscow, however, the NATO extension is a clear message that the West does not completely trust Russia in security matters and does not want to accept it into the 'inner circle' or security 'club'. Although the second round of NATO enlargement is perceived by Moscow as less painful than the first one, it is not beneficial in improving Russia's relations with both NATO and the Baltic States. Rather, it makes Russian Euro - skeptics and isolationists more influential and decelerates Russia's integration into a single Europe.

Before the Balts join NATO, a number of pre-conditions should be accepted. Firstly, the Balts should agree to the so-called 'Norwegian model' - the non-deployment of foreign troops and nuclear weapons in peacetime. Secondly, NATO should refrain from the deployment of offensive arms on the territory of the newcomers. Finally, the Balts should join the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty, which, in turn, should be adapted

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to the new strategic situation.

Moreover, Russia and NATO should negotiate a cooperative agenda on the Baltics. It should be noted that, in contrast with other regions and areas of cooperation, it would be difficult to define such an agenda. The Russia-NATO global collaborative agenda includes the fight against international terrorism, non-proliferation, arms control, peace-keeping and rescue operations. However, many of these problems simply do not exist in the Baltic region. At the same time, NATO is hardly helpful in solving the problems that can be really found in the region - economic and social divergence between neighboring countries, degradation of the environment, the spread of communicable diseases, illegal migration and trafficking of human beings, the internationalization of organized crime and smuggling. Other institutions - the EU, the Nordic Council, the CBSS and the IFIs - are better equipped to tackle such a 'soft' security problematic.

It seems, however, that some niches can be found for Russia-NATO cooperation. For example, Kaliningrad could be chosen as the location for a joint Russia-NATO rescue center on the Baltics. Another joint institution - a center for the prevention of dangerous activities - could be also situated there. The NATO could also help in converting the local defense industry and, at the same time, developing military-technical cooperation with high-tech defense enterprises. The NATO's naval forces could also utilize the local shipyards to repair or modernize their vessels. NATO assistance in developing rehabilitation and re-training schemes for retired officers and housing programs would be appreciated. NATO's academic programs could prioritize the Russian Northwest, in an aim to support both natural and social sciences. It might be advisable to resume the NATO Democratic Institutions Fellowship program, which was quite helpful in bridging the gap between NATO and Russian political and academic elites. The discussion below addresses NATO's possible contribution to arms control and CSBMs (confidence-building and security measures) on the Baltics.

5. Arms control and CSBMs. In contrast with the rest of Europe, the Baltic Sea region lacks a proper arms control regime. The only international arms control agreement applicable to the Baltic Sea area is the CFE. Four Baltic Rim countries - Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia - are state parties to this agreement. The Baltic States refused to abide by the treaty because it was concluded at a time when they were part of the Soviet Union. Finland and Sweden did not join the treaty because of their neutrality policy. The CFE treaty targets the reduction of excess military equipment that is essential for launching surprise attacks and initiating large-scale offensive operations. Thereby, the agreement played a positive role in the prevention of military confrontation and conflict in the area.

Similar to the 1990s, the second round of NATO enlargement provoked a discussion on the future of the CFE. At the second review conference (2001), Russia cautioned against admitting the Balts to NATO because of the potentially adverse effect on the key provisions of the CFE Treaty, especially those concerning the flank and the Central European stability zone.⁶⁶ To avoid potential damage by the NATO enlargement to the regional arms control regime, the CFE Treaty should be revised again. To

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promote the disarmament process in the region, it should provide for further cuts, probably 15 - 20 per cent below the present CFE levels. A new treaty should include all OSCE states (i.e. the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden). Unfortunately, the Baltic States and the non-aligned countries (Finland and Sweden) still prefer the opt-out policies. NATO also continues to insist that no formal linkage can exist between NATO enlargement and the CFE, although it does not oppose the actual idea of the Baltic States joining the treaty. As mentioned above, NATO could put pressure on the candidate countries to join the CFE.

It should also be noted that the CFE Treaty is applicable only to land forces; the naval military is generally excluded from the negotiation process. Unilateral measures were reached on the reduction of naval armaments and naval activities, but they were related to obsolete weapons and cannot replace a real arms control regime. According to Volker Heise, the basic hesitancy of some NATO nations regarding naval armaments limitations in the Baltic Sea appears to be the belief that the initiation of naval arms control in one of the seven seas could lead to restrictions on maritime flexibility in the other seas.⁶⁷ However, given the changing nature of Russia-NATO relations, the two parties could initiate negotiations on naval arms control to further improve security environment in the region.

Along with the arms control regime, CSBMs are very important element of any regional security system. According to the Vienna Document of 1994, the OSCE participant states should notify each other at least 42 days in advance of military activities involving more than 9,000 troops or 250 battle tanks, 500 ACVs (armored carrier vehicles), or 250 self-propelled and towed artillery pieces, mortars and multiple-rocket launchers (100-mm caliber and above); 3000 in amphibious landing, heliborne landing or parachute drop. The air force is to be included in the notification if at least 200 airborne sorties, excluding helicopters, are flown. Military observers can be sent to exercises involving up to 13,000 troops, or 300 tanks or 500 ACVs or 250 artillery pieces, mortars and multiple rocket launchers (100-mm and above) or maneuvers foresee 3500 in airborne landing, heliborne landing or parachute drop.⁶⁸ In 1999, another Vienna Document was adopted to develop new CSBMs in the area.

Despite this rather impressive record, much more could be achieved. In particular, some experts believe that the extension of the CSBMs to the sea could be a useful addition to the Vienna Documents regime in the region.⁶⁹ In the case of NATO expansion to the Baltic States, the North Atlantic alliance could refrain from military exercises on the territory of newcomers (especially near the Russian borders, including the Kaliningrad Oblast). Along spatial limitations, temporal limitations could be established on Russian and NATO military activities in the region. Military-to-military contacts, joint exercises, exchanges and visits should be encouraged. The countries of the region should exchange information on their military doctrines, defense budgets and spending as well as on major arms export or import programs.

The Vienna Document 1999 encouraged the participant states to summon periodic high-level military doctrine seminars. For example, the 4th Vienna

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Seminar on military doctrines (June 2001) insisted on a continued discussion on the evolution of military doctrines at the plenary sessions of the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC), further clarification of the nature and objectives of military doctrines and defense policies, the FSC contribution to the process of bringing closer military doctrines and the existing arms control regimes, the impact of the military and technological revolution on the possible use of force, strategic stability and arms control prospects, and elaboration of a unified technology for the OSCE states used in their military doctrines.⁷⁰

The development of bilateral CSBMs should become an important priority for the countries of the Baltic Sea rim. Initially, Russia was reluctant to respond positively to the 1998 Finnish-Swedish proposal to adopt the bilateral CSBMs arrangements; Moscow changed its mind later. In 2000, Russia implemented bilateral CSBM accords with Estonia and Finland (extra evaluation visit and exchange of information). In 2001, a CSBM agreement was concluded between Lithuania and Russia. It provides for one additional evaluation visit to units in Lithuania and the KO and for the annual exchange of additional information about military forces on Lithuanian territory and the KO.⁷¹ This accord was warmly received, not only by Vilnius, but also by other neighboring states that interpreted this step as Russia's willingness to further open up the KO for international cooperation. Bilateral CSBM arrangements could, in the future, expand their scope to include new areas of possible cooperation.

In conclusion, the above recommendations (if implemented) could ensure military security in the region and create a favorable atmosphere for cooperation on the 'soft' security issues.

Conclusion

The post-Cold War period brought fundamental changes to Russian security thinking and Russian policies towards the Baltic Sea region. Although the realist/geopolitical paradigm still dominates the Russian security discourse, the mainstream of Russian political thought does not perceive Northern Europe as a zone of military confrontation with the West; it favors opening up the Russian northwestern regions for international cooperation. The PCA and the Northern Dimension are perceived as appropriate frameworks for seeking adequate solutions.

In contrast with the past, when Northwest Russia was perceived as an exclusively Russian problem, there is now a growing feeling among the regional actors (including EU) that the region should be a sphere of shared responsibility. This means that not only the Russian but also the EU policy towards Northwest Russia should be radically revised. It also demands international rather than unilateral efforts and solutions.

Moscow and Brussels agree in principle that the EU enlargement should not involve an increase in dividing lines in Europe and that the freedom of movement of people and goods in the region must be ensured. Both assemblies support various collaborative projects, including economy, trade, energy security, social system, health care, environment, and the improvement of the border and transport infrastructures. They also favor the

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conclusion of a special agreement on Kaliningrad to facilitate the Oblast's deeper integration into the European economic and legal space. There are still numerous barriers to reaching such an agreement, stemming from the inflexibility of the EU and Russian bureaucracies and legislation as well as from the divergence of economic, political and security interests. However, the positive dynamics in the EU-Russian relationship are obvious.

More generally, one of the most important lessons that can be drawn from the Northern Dimension case is that the subregional cooperation is becoming an increasingly important security factor in Northern Europe. Subregionalism offers opportunities to develop Russian democracy and civil society. Subregionalism need not imply the further disintegration of the country. Instead, it serves as a catalyst for successful reforms and international integration. Subregional cooperation facilitates the rise of a mechanism of interdependence in Northern Europe and promotes mutual trust and understanding among the nations. Thus, subregionalism helps to solve local security problems and to prevent the rise of new threats and challenges. If Russia and the EU are able to exploit fully the opportunities of subregionalism, Northern Europe would become a 'success story' of Russian - European cooperation.

List of abbreviations

ACV	Armored Carrier Vehicles
BALTCOM	Baltic Communication System
BASREC	Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation
BEAC	Barents-Euro-Arctic Council
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIREA	Center for Information, Discussion and Exchange on Asylum
CIREFI	Center for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union)
CSBM	Confidence and Security Building Measures
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EU	European Union
FSC	Forum for Security Cooperation
FTD	Facilitated Travel Documents
IFI	International Financial Institutions
INTERREG	Inter Regional Cooperation Program
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs

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KO	Kaliningrad Oblast
KOR	Kaliningradsky Oboronitelny Raion (Kaliningrad Special Defense District)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDA	Northern Dimension Area
NDEP	Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership
NDI	Northern Dimension Initiative
NeDAP	Northern electronic Dimension Action Plan
NEI	Northern Europe Initiative
NIB	Nordic Investment Bank
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
RTD	Research and Technology Development
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States

1 The NEI was initiated the same year as the NDI (1997). The official goal of the United States was to demonstrate that integration and cooperation in Northern Europe will benefit Russia and its Baltic neighbors. The NEI had six specific priorities: trade and business promotion, law enforcement, civil society building, energy, environment and public health. In reality, the NEI focused on the Baltic States rather than on Russia. It turned out that NEI's record in case of Russia was quite modest and incomparable with the more impressive experience of the NDI. For more information on the NEI, see Sergounin, Alexander: "The United States' Northern Dimension? Prospects for a U.S.-Russian Cooperative Agenda in Northern Europe." In: *Program on New Approaches to Russian Security Policy Conference*. Policy Memo No. 232, Washington DC 2002. (= Washington: Centre for Strategic and International Studies 2001, Policy Memo Nos. 210-242) 127-132.

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