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**SUPRANATIONAL VS. POST-IMPERIAL: ARE EU-RUSSIA
RELATIONS LEADING TO A SECOND COLD WAR?**

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ABSTRACT

European Union-Russia relations is based on exigence, cooperation and conflict. Particularly in the Putin-Medvedev-Putin period (2000-2015) the relations of the EU and Russia shifted gradually from cooperation to conflict. In the current state, the relations between the two is locked up in a deepest crisis ever since the Cold War and if one needs to make sense of this crisis it is necessary to examine the failing soft-power strategies of the EU vis-a-vis the Russia simultaneously with the shifts in the Russian domestic and external politics. Therefore, this paper, while elaborating on the EU policy preferences in 2000s, will examine the Russian assertive foreign policy decisions in the international system. In light of the findings, current developments in Ukraine and Syria will be analyzed in a larger scheme of the polarization between West and the East.

With a focus on the crisis in Ukraine and Syria from the perspective of EU-Russia relations this paper will attempt to find indicators of an international systemic transition into a new Cold War period.

Key Words: EU-Russia Relations, Putin Period, Second Cold War, Ukraine Crisis, Syrian Crisis.

INTRODUCTION

EU has a *sui generis* character with its supranational structure. The end of Cold War and the change in the international structure accelerated EU's effort for being an political union. EU constructed peaceful and neoliberal policies to strengthen its civilian agency. However, Russia, since Putin period, has a conflictual and an assertive foreign policy laid on its neorealist policies. Holding on an neorealist policy identifier, Russia does follow schemes of alliances but avoids cooperations. EU use neoliberal policies to expand its impact in its periphery and Russia uses neorealist policies to maximize its power in its periphery. EU and Russia are neighbours and their interests are clashing in their peripheries. Also these two actors seek to establish themselves as powerful actors in the international system.

In this article, EU-Russia relations will be analyzed observing the shifting relations from cooperation to conflict. In the first part EU-Russia Relations from Cold War to Yeltsin Era will be examined to observe cooperation in relations. This period is characterized by the dissolution of the Cold War balances during which Russia was economically and politically weak and followed close relations with the North Atlantic and western European Institutions. In the middle of 1990s, when Primakov became Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russia sought to be a center of gravity and Russia disenchanted with the West.

In the second part EU-Russia Relations during Putin-Medvedev Era (2000-2012) will be analyzed to focus on the reasons of tension in relations. After Vladimir Putin became President of Russia, EU and Russia on some areas their interests came across. Both Russia and the EU had actions in foreign policy on these areas.

In the third part of the paper, Ukraine and Syria crises were taken as case studies to analyze the polarization between the EU and Russia . Apart from Syria and Ukraine also other conflictual areas that are crucial in relations of EU and Russia were analyzed briefly.

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ON COOPERATION: EU-Russia Relations from Cold War to Yeltsin Era

With the end of the Cold War the bipolar system came to an end and this led to a new balance of power in the international system. As the new balance emerged the new system was characterized by the security vacuum that manifested between Western Europe and Russia—the political space of the former Iron Curtain countries in the East and Central Europe and former Soviet republics that covered the space from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea. To address the security vacuum the EC member states started to improve economic union and sought to spill over to political union in parallel to these changes in the system.

To analyze EU's relations with Russia EU's policies towards post-communist countries should be taken into consideration. PHARE program¹ was the corner stone of these policies with its economic and financial aid toolset to address post-Cold War transition of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. In 1989 EU started to provide aid to Poland and Hungary through the PHARE program.² Unfortunately, these programs had limited effect due to the political weakness of the EU owing to its supranational character. EU member states have had diverse foreign and security policies that sporadically changed and shifted in conjuncture. For example, Germany supported liberalization policies in these countries (especially Poland) since the Cold War in the framework of *ostpolitik* (eastern policy).³ In the post-Cold War period similar policies could be observed. The security vacuum between Europe and Russia is one of the crucial reasons lying under EU's close interest in CEE countries. Russia in early 1990's, while being in good terms with the western world, posed security concerns to post-communist countries.

As the Cold War ended EU and Russia appeared as competitors promising CEE markets. To gain the upper hand in this competition EU followed an inclusive policy towards the CEE countries and left other Eastern European countries, such as Ukraine, outside of their radar. Organizing its efforts, EU categorized CEE countries as potential EU membership candidates and the rest.⁴

With the aim of strengthening political, economic and cultural relations with Russia EU signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia on 24th June in 1994 in Korfu (the treaty entered into force on 1st of December in 1997). This treaty covered wide range of areas such as; political dialogue, business and investment, energy cooperation, cooperation on environment, culture, nuclear and space technology.⁵

With the EU's enlargement of 1995, Finland became a member state and evidently EU started to border Russia. The shared borders raised security concerns on the side of EU. In that context, the very same year in Madrid Summit (15-16 December 1995), a Strategy Paper was put forward⁶ in an aim to improve economic and political relations with Russia. The paper determined that Russia is still a potential security threat and it is essential for EU interests to have Russia seeking good relations with CEE countries.

In 1997 EU improved its Common Foreign and Security Policy with Amsterdam Treaty adding a new concomitant dimension to EU-Russia relations. In 1998 Asian economic crisis hit Russian economy hard and oil prices decreased significantly.⁸ At such a time when Russia was challenged by the repercussions of the Asian Crisis and contested internationally for its Russia's Human Rights abuses in Chechnya conflict, confronted the Euro-Atlantic community by supporting Serbia against the NATO operations, EU signed its Common Strategy on Russia in Cologne in June 1999.⁹ EU member states, agreeing on the Common Strategy on Russia, stated that they envisage a European continent that is peaceful, democratic, stable, prosperous with a "European" Russia. In October 1999, Russia determined medium term strategy for the period of 2000-2010 for its relations with the EU. Same year in the Helsinki Summit, EU and Russia agreed to cooperate on the issues of justice and home affairs.

When looked at from the Russian perspective defining national interests and reformation of foreign policy-making institutions appeared as significant issues to be dealt with. While the reforming communist institutional structures and recycling communist-raised officials, the authoritarian operational principles tried to be changed. With the fading of the communist ideology, Boris Yeltsin, the first president of the Russian Federation, and Andrey Kozyrev, the first foreign minister, adopted open policies towards the west which would eventually construct a common future with the capitalist countries. In this spirit, Yeltsin and Kozyrev prioritized membership of RF in western economic and security organizations as a national interest. Taking on that challenge, they assumed that Russian and Western interests were overlapping and therefore, projected a rapid economic and political modernization of the country. Modernization was essential because, from Kozyrev's perspective, only a democratic Russia could

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contribute into a peaceful world and transform itself. Again according to him a possible failure of this transformation could have been interpreted as failure of Russian democrats.

Rising domestic oppositional voices against the western friendly Yeltsin-Kozyrev policies manifested itself in the discourse of the sharpening Russian nationalism. These voices were embodied in political force with the results of December 1993 parliamentary elections (Liberal-Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy gained 22.9% of the votes). Being comprehensive of the election results, Kozyrev envisaged that Russia will either continue reforms on emerging rough political terrain or fall victim to the extremist forces.¹⁰ For preventing latter to happen, he argued, the outside world should recognize Russia's dedication to respect human rights and uphold a responsible record in international realm.¹¹ For that recognition to take effect he defended Russia's participation in G-7 meetings. For the Russian decision-makers another tool for keeping Russia on track with the domestic reforms was deepening relations with the Europe. Parties, taking advantage of the warm political climate, signed the aforementioned PCA in 1994. As another indicator of foreign policy attitude of the time, Russian administration signed the European Stability Pact (an initial step of European Common Foreign and Security Policy) in March 21, 1995.¹²

Even though Russian decision-makers were seeking ways to put their western friendly policies in practice factors such as negative influence of the foreign-policy making elite, NATO expansion plans, the Bosnian War (1992–1995) and the NATO intervention have effected Kozyrev's plans and caused eventual loss of support to policies he pursued. Ensuing days brought his resignation in December 1995.

Kozyrev was replaced by Yevgeny Primakov, a former secret service operative who had a background in the groups opposing the westward policies. The oppositional group (to the western friendly policies) developed with the impact of post-Soviet transition-caused social disappointments, corruption and reaction to the oligarchic groupings. From oppositional groups' perspective westward policies and westernization has been taken as the underlying reason for the misery in the country. Therefore, anti-western feelings deepened both in the wider popular realm and also among the ranks of political and cultural elite. In line with these developments the economic policies that leaves the fate of economy only to market forces lost their effect. In post-1995 period, instead, policies that emphasized strong state determination in economic realm were employed, while preserving free-market and individual ownership principles. As a reflection of this political basis distancing from the west and employing western market rules with a Russian interpretation gained validity in the eyes of the decision-makers.

Primakov's foreign policy strategy envisaged equal footing for Russia in the international realm and reestablishment of Russia as a center of influence and distancing from western-centrism by following diversified foreign policy directions. In diversification, relations with the Asian countries would play a central role.¹³ This shift in foreign policy strategy and EU's determination to put PCA in practice, created a false perception of strengthening Russian leverage in external affairs while gaining increasing respect from the international actors.¹⁴ While these changes were taking place, the PCA, which was signed in 1994 and gained power in 1997, provided grounds for Russia's gradual integration to the European economic space.¹⁵ On the Russian side, however, the deteriorating economic conditions and need for European credits were the main drivers of Russian interest in the EU.

Despite the foregoing developments and factors that draw both parties closer Russian government's structure, societal changes, and the repercussions of NATO and EU expansions have negatively impacted the EU-Russia relations.¹⁶ Particularly policies followed by the parties during the Kosovo War of 1998–1999 caused a major divergence between the parties, anchoring Russia in the eastern and EU in the western parts of the continent.¹⁷

TOWARDS CONFLICT: EU-Russia Relations during Putin-Medvedev Era (2000-2012)

In the period from 2000 to 2012, EU signed an agreement with Russia in EU-Russia Summit in Paris (30 October 2000) to protect its interests in energy sector and EU-Russia Energy Dialogue provided safe grounds for the Russian foreign policy aims in this regard. Therefore, EU sought to have a stable energy cooperation with Russia.¹⁸

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks EU-Russia relations gained a new boost. On November 11, 2002, during the EU-Russia Summit in Moscow, illegal migration problems in relation to Kaliningrad was overviewed from the perspective of international security to prevent illegal organizations' networking.¹⁹ In EU-Russia Summit which was held on November 6, 2003, both sides decided on a common position against terrorism. Russia's Chechen war was one of the most important reasons that pushed Russia to cooperate with the West in the context of measures taken against terrorism.

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The Iraqi War that started in 2003, caused a split among the EU member states in their foreign policy preferences vis-à-vis the war and the US. Pro-American EU camp was led by France and Germany was against the U.S. military intervention. The counter camp, led by the UK and the CEE countries (especially Poland and Czech Republic), favored American policies in Iraq. Poland aimed to be a role model of "new Europe" in the EU as it acted differently than the Franco-German axis in terms of foreign policy decisions.²⁰ Russia acted in parallel to Franco-German axis, and was against U.S. military intervention. Russia showed that it would have a central role in the international system after that.²¹

EU Enlargement of 2004 integrated post-communist countries (Poland, Hungary, Czech republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Estonia) into the EU. This enlargement process impacted the EU's internal and external policies²² and reflected on EU-Russia relations. With the enlargement Russia and EU ended up sharing the longest borders in their neighbourhood with 2257 km-long borders. Moreover, Ukraine and Belarus which were considered by Moscow as the backyard of Russia became new neighbours of EU. Soon after the 2004 enlargement, the Orange Revolution of Ukraine (started on 21st November 2004) and became determinant of the nature of EU-Russia relations.²³

Until the 2004 EU enlargement, the main aim of the Northern Dimension²⁴ was to assure integration of Baltic countries and Poland. After the enlargement, the Baltic Sea is surrounded by the EU.²⁵ When EU was expanding Russia was never considered as a potential candidate to the EU. In the context of the Northern Dimension, there exist hard security problems (especially the presence of Russian army in Kola peninsula) and soft security problems (Aids problem in Kola peninsula and Kaliningrad) in the border of Finland and Russia which impacted the EU-Russia relations²⁶

In the St. Petersburg Summit of 2004, EU and Russia agreed on four "common points", freedom, security and justice, to improve cooperation in the cross-border regions and sub-regions²⁷. Four common points are designed as complementary to the European Neighbourhood Policy which was put in power in 2004.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) expired on December 1, 2007. During the 17th meeting of the EU-Russia Summit (May 6, 2006), the PCA's extension was renegotiated. However, Poland vetoed new PCA with Russia largely because of Russia's embargo on Polish meat and dairy products.²⁸ During the 21st EU-Russia Summit (June 26-27, 2008), PCA opened again for a renegotiation.²⁹ Polish and Lithuanian problems on exporting meat and olive oil to Russia and Russian intervention in Georgia negatively impacted the renegotiations of the PCA and EU's overall attitude towards Russia.³⁰

In the same time period Russian foreign policy preferences has changed as a reflection of Russian domestic developments. As a result of ensuing developments Yeltsin was replaced by Vladimir Putin in May 7, 2000 and this caused a major change in the foreign policy orientations of the country. This change found its reflection in the foreign policy concept which was issued on July 10, 2000. The concept arguing that UN is being overtaken by the US, NATO and the EU, defined this overtake as a threat to the Russian interests. To deal with this perceived threat, the concept stipulated that Russia will resist emasculating of the UN Security Council and defunctionalisation of OSCE and that Russia will take on integratory policies on the basis of the CIS as a regional priority. Again the concept defined the relations with EU as a political and an economic partnership and that Russia would track transformation and deepening of EU closely and revise its interests accordingly.³¹

In early 2000s the Putin-led Russian foreign policy prioritized doing all to prevent emergence of a unipolar world that would be led by the US. For this sake Putin perceived rising EU power as a factor in formation of a multipolar world and sought closer relations with the EU. Moreover, to block any sort of political arrangements that might be cut between the US and the major powers of Europe, to the detriment of Russian interest, Putin placed an emphasis on development of bilateral ties with the European powers.³² In practice this preference was embodied during US's Iraqi intervention while Russia stood by anti-interventionist European powers such as France and Germany. No doubt, it is necessary here to mention that German dependence on Russian energy sources is an essential motive that upholds bilateral relations.³³

In the first half of the 2000s one can observe impact of EU on Russia while the latter was attempting to reform and harmonize with the EU legislation. An example was harmonization of the Russian laws of judicial procedures. In addition when Russia was attempting to reform its customs legislation EU and WTO was taken as a model.³⁴ Following these steps the EU recognized Russia as a functioning market in 2002. Pulling itself closer to EU

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lines Russia agreed to sign Readmission Agreement (2006) in a hope to gain privileges vis-à-vis the Schengen visa regime.

Even though there were factors forcing closer relations between the parties some other factors such as the Transnistria problem, 2004 EU expansion and Russian perception of encirclement, 2004–2005 Ukrainian Orange Revolution and diverging policies of Russia and the EU, Russian freezing of gas transfers to Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 and its negative impact on the EU energy markets, Russian sanctions on Polish meat and vegetable products, US plans to install missile shield in Poland, and Georgian-Russian War of 2008, have negatively impacted the EU-Russia relations.³⁵ On the other hand Russian domestic developments distanced Moscow from EU-emphasized values such as rule of law, democratic rule, political freedom and human rights and therefore, stretched the distance between the EU and Russian on the side of values and principles.³⁶ Such problems surfaced with peak crisis moments of Polish veto for the renewal of the PCA, Estonian removal of a Second World War monument in Tallinn and Russian reaction, and ensuing Russian threat to stop energy transfers to Estonia.³⁷ This period was defined then as the historical low since the Cold War in EU-Russian relations.

Having impacted by the aforementioned events (more specifically after 2006) Russia preferred to follow policies that would give it a free hand in international arena and started to distance itself from the EU particularly in foreign and defence policy issues. Nevertheless, while PCA being shelved, Russia kept following EU related cooperation schemes in economy, culture, and education/research.

Dmitri Medvedev, three months after taking over the presidents office from Vladimir Putin, declared his new foreign policy doctrine which defined Russia as a great power and aimed at establishing a European based security mechanism that would leave US outside of the European security schemes. As mentioned above in this period Russia distanced itself from the EU. This trend was underlined with the fallout in relations after the Georgian War. The pattern in relations further surfaced with the Russian fatigue of EU legislative procedures. The EU's reference to *acquis* at all times and bureaucratic operations within EU's organizations was interpreted by Moscow as a feet dragging. This was a problem to overcome. To that purpose Moscow pursued closer bilateral ties with the EU member states, paved the way for splits among the EU members and therefore, weakened position of the EU negotiators. An example for such as split was Medvedev's proposal for a new security pact issued in November 29, 2009. This proposal caused controversy between the Russian friendly Germany and France, and Estonia, Litvania, Lithuania and Poland which were posed unfavourable to Russia.³⁸

Nevertheless, we observe a thaw in the relations owing to slowing down of economic indicators both in Europe and Russia, antebellum in case of Georgia, resolution of Ukrainian gas crisis, relaxation of Russian-Polish relations after the TU-154 crash.³⁹ Enjoying the thaw EU activated Partnership for Modernization program that was supposed to partially fill the gap that of non-renewed PCA and encourage reforms in Russia.⁴⁰

CRISIS ERA: Ukraine and Syria Crises

Arab Spring in 2011 triggered Syrian crisis and created multi-dimensional problems that regional and extritorial actors were involved. Various opponent armed group could not put an end to Esad government, however the group called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which are activate in Iraq and Syria controlled the region more than the other groups and created an extereme Islamist control. Esad government, ISIS and the other armed groups caused over 200.000 people to death and millions of people to be immigrant.

Russia paid close attention to the fate of the Assad government particularly because of its interests formed throughout decades since the Soviet period. Soviet Union's interests in Syria extends back to 1950s, a time when Soviets were trying to balance the impact of the Suez Crisis and Bagdad Pact.⁴¹ In 1980 Syria and Russia signed an agreement that would allow Russian interference in case Syria would be subjected to an aggression. Again within the same lines Soviets had the idea of gaining a naval base in Latakia.⁴² While that idea has not been realized Soviets held a foot in Syria by enjoying technical services provided for its navy at the Tartus port starting from 1971. The Tartus naval workshop remained under Russian control even after the fall of the Soviet Union. The importance of the port is that during the Syrian crisis that started in 2011, Russian navy visited the port number of times as a sign of support to Assad. As of September 2015 there are reports that indicate increasing number of Russian navy ships in the Mediterranean Sea and presence of Russian soldiers on the Syrian territory. In the most recent setting Russian jetfighters in Syria are operating against anti-Assad opposition. This being the case the anti-Assad opposition has claimed capturing number of Russian intelligence and observation facilities in Syria.⁴³

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In these circumstances the relations of United States of America (USA) and EU with Russia reached to a new level of confrontation. When evaluated in the first instance, EU's stance in Syrian conflict is, also embodied in the France, Germany and Britain foreign policies, was to stop Assad's violence and put an end to his government. Keeping the declared policy principles, France, USA and Germany started to support anti-Assad oppositional groups after the protests in Syria on 15th of March 2011. EU, as a reaction to Assad suspended the EU-Syria Association Agreement. On February 4, of 2012 Russia and China vetoed draft UN Security resolution that called Assad to setp down. On March 2013, Britain and France proposed EU to place an arms embargo on Syria.⁴⁴ Even though Franch and British governments were favorable for a military operation in Syria, British Parliament and the EU did not act in favor.⁴⁵

EU (especially Germany) started to lean towards Russian solution for Syria, i.e. keeping Assad in power, as a conclusion of growing refugee problem which started to have serious impacts on EU and the growing power of El Nusra and ISIS terrorist organizations in Syria. To reach a settlement in Syria Angela Merkel of Germany defends a cooperation scheme between the EU and the Assad government, as well as with other regional actors such as Iran and Turkey.⁴⁶ However, there are differences in foreign policy decisions among the EU countries and Russia is taking advantage of it.⁴⁷ Weaknesses of EU's Middle East policies diminish EU's actorness capacity in the international system. However, individual countries such as France, took a more proactive military stance and joined to the US-led alliance and take part inbombarding ISIS in Syria.⁴⁸ In the last standing of the stand-off in Syria Britain, France and Germany are taking a rather active role on the side if EU in finding a solution to the Syrian conflict. Nonetheless, multi-party meetings held with the participation of the US, Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and some EU membersatates, have been far from finding a common strategy to end the conflicts in Syria.⁴⁹

The recent crisis in Ukraine is another determinant of EU-Russia relations. Viktor Yanukovych, the former President of Ukraine, declined to sign the EU Association Agreement at a last instance and caused popular protests to start in the capital of the country. Protestors defended pro-European policies while anit-Russian feelings run high.Yanukovych, after killing of more than hundred unarmed Maidan protesters and fearing a coup-d'etat, took a refuge inRussia

During the Revolution of Dignity Russia supported Viktor Yanukovych, who was perceived to be close to Russia, in a constant fashion. This created a confrontation with the US and EU that placed their lot behind the Maidan protestors. With the escape of Yanukovych and oppositional control of the Ukraine state administration, Russian decision-makers realized that they have been losing their political investments in Ukraine and took the opportunity to occupy Crimea. The occupation took place while the revolutionary forces were establishing a post-Yanukovych government. The fact that the new government had not established their control over the state apparatus provided grounds for an easy Russian take-over of the Crimean Peninsula. This occupation was followed by Russia-sponsored staged uprisings in the east and south of Ukraine. When these staged uprisings failed to turn into an actual popular uprisings Russia sponsored mercenaries to be transferred from Crimea to Donbas to started town occupations. At the present time Crimea is annexed and large parts of Ukrainian east is being controlled by armed elements composed of Russian military forces, mercenaries and locals. All the foregoing brought tensions between the EU and Russia to a historical high which eventually allowed Russian leaders to define EU as an unreliable partner.⁵⁰ Because of the tensions the central institution of bilateral relations, the EU-Russia Summit, has been called off. Though representatives of the parties met during number of occasions during which Russians do not hesitate to comment of EU's lack of capacity and weakness.⁵¹

Even though EU gave an open support to pro-European protests in Ukraine in the past and in the present, they failed to produce a strong voice against the Russian annexation of Crimea but sufficed to increased defence measures along their eastern borders. EU, because it lacks a standing army, follows a careful policy vis-à-vis Russia.⁵²

The current situation raises threat perceptions of the Baltic countries which demanded NATO's anti-ballistic missile system to be directed at Russia. However, the demand was turned down by some NATO members, led by Germany, on the grounds of not agitating Russia for further aggression.⁵³ Nevertheless, the NATO passed a resolution to found a rapid action force of 4000 strong that is to be deployed in 48 hours. Therefore, this boils down to the fact that EU countries vest their security concerns to be handled by NATO.⁵⁴

In addition to security measures through NATO schemes, EU members joined in placing economic sanctions on Russia. Russia reacted by placing counter-sanctions on some European cadres.⁵⁵ On these grounds the foreseeable future tension is not promising a thaw in the relations.

OTHER CONFLICTUAL AREAS

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Conflictual areas are defining the nature of EU-Russia relations and will remain to be a determinant of future of relations. If one considers the Caucasian region in the framework of European Neighbourhood Policy, it appears a one of the points of conflicting interests. This was and remains the case particularly after Russian invasion of Georgia and recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These developments increased tension in EU-Russia relations and solidified Russia unconforming conflictual image. In addition Russia's close military relations with Armenia and Russian negative attitude towards Azerbaijan about Nagorno-Karabakh conflict affects EU-Russia relations negatively.

Chechen conflict was another area which had a negative impact on EU-Russia relations. Human Rights issues are a part of European Treaties while Russia was against Geneva Convention, European Human Rights contract and the OSCE rules with its role and actions in Chechen conflict. Russia, evaluated Chechen conflict as an internal problem and a terrorist attack used fight against terrorism techniques in this conflict and reject EU's involvement in full denial of the human rights conventions.

Transdniestri conflict is another case that brought EU and Russia to a conflictive grounds. Russia argues that EU's efforts to have closer relations with Moldova is an abuse of Transdniestri (separatist region) people's rights in the region. Therefore, Moscow states that they would have closer relations with Transdniestri region if EU would have closer relations with Moldova. In 1999 Istanbul Summit of OSCE, it is decided that Russia should move its arms from the region but Russian soldiers kept remaining in Transnistria. Since 2009 Moldova-Transdniestri conflict is sought to be resolved in OSCE framework. Kaliningrad could be named as "Russian island" in the middle of EU and its geographic position creates a conflictual area for EU-Russia relations. Lithuania and Poland are Kaliningrad's trade partners and important neighbours. For Kaliningrad citizens, visa policies and cross-borders relations are vital and for the EU. Kaliningrad is crucial in terms of soft security issues. Kaliningrad is a centre of illegal operations and this creates a security threat for EU states (especially border neighbours).

CONCLUSION

At this time it is not possible to argue that EU-Russia relations are heading toward a second cold war. Within the current system of affairs states are interdependent (in a neoliberal fashion). Even though polarization is observed, as Ukrainian and Syrian cases display, the polarization lack ideological backgrounds. Yet rising impact of Russia is felt in the power balances both in Eastern Europe and Syria as European countries and US cannot take a stance to block Russia power of initiative. From this perspective one might argue increasing Russian influence in the international politics. However, this influence to be permanent has to be backed up with enough sources of power which Russia may fail to extract. On the otherhand, European powers and US while being more able to employ more sources into a power struggle against Russia, they do not calculate lucrative benefits in a cold war-like competition with Russia. In such a case where one side lacks the resources and the other the motivation one might foresee resolution of conflicts with negotiation rather than escalating conflicts and proxy wars. An indicator to this direction could be an agreement on a transition with Assad remaining in power and imposition of Minsk agreements in Ukrainian Donbas War.

In Ukrainian case Russia lost the legitimate grounds when it occupied and annexed Crimea and sponsored armed conflict in Donbas. In return EU prefers to remain with employing soft-power tools and considers supporting development of civil society in Russia. In the meantime EU plans to counter the Russian soft-power operations in the EU.⁵⁶

In the final analysis looking at the trend in the Putin period and cases of Ukraine and Syria it is possible to expect further aggressive foreign policy line from Russia. Yet it is too early to qualify the present-day international structure as conducive to another cold war but as Russia struggle to reclaim a global leadership position.

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² After 2000, EU started to provide aid to Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Czech Republic in the framework of its enlarged PHARE program. Hughes, “EU Relations with Russia: Partnership or Asymmetric Interdependency?” p. 2.

³The Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany Willy Brandt who is also a leader of the SPD constructed a policy for Eastern Germany called Eastern Policy (ostpolitik).

⁴ Hughes, “EU Relations with Russia: Partnership or Asymmetric Interdependency?” p. 2. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000651>

⁵ See “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” at, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ceeca/pca/index.htm. First Chechen War had a negative impact on entering into force of the agreement. OJ reference; L327, 28/11/1997.

⁶ “European Union’s Strategy for Future EU/Russia Relations,” Madrid, European Council, 15-16 December 1995, *Conclusions of the Presidency*, Annex 8.53. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/mad3_en.htm#annex8

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⁸ “AB’den sonra Rusya krizi,” <http://www.gazetevatan.com/ab-den-sonra-rusya-krizi--tuz-biber-olur--530975-ekonomi/>

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¹³ “Год Евгения Примакова,” с. 2.

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¹⁴ Караганов, “Коммунисты не уходят без борьбы,” с. 23-30.

¹⁵ “Ortaklık ve İşbirliği Anlaşması,” p. 3.

¹⁶ See К. Воронков, “Западная Критика: Эмоция и разум,” *Независимая газета*, №37 (2005); Dmitry Trenin, “Внешнее вмешательство в события на Украине и российско-западные отношения,” *Moscow Carnegie Centre Briefings*, 7/2, 2005; Андрей Загорский, “Примирение с НАТО необходимо и возможно”, *Сегодня*, от 21 июня.1996 г.

¹⁷ Bordachev, “West is West,” p. 3.

¹⁸ “EU-Russia Energy Dialogue,”

http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_birligi/1_9_politikalar/1_9_6_enerji_politikasi/2011_eu-russia_energy_relations.pdf

¹⁹ Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, p. 156.

²⁰ Bynander, “Poland and the Czech Republic,” *Changing Transatlantic Security Relations: Do the US, the EU and Russia Form a New Strategic Triangle?*, p. 67.

²¹ Mankoff, p. 149.

²² Ekengren ve Engelbrekt, “The Impact of Enlargement on EU Actorness,” pp. 18-44.

²³ Orange Revolution was a social movement that was led mostly by pro-European Ukrainians.

²⁴ Northern Dimension, is an EU policy which was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006. It is constructed to improve EU's policy vis-à-vis the Russia, Norway and Iceland in the fields of economy and politics. In July 2006, the Northern Dimension is initiated during Austrian EU presidency and under Finland's leadership. On the application for the Northern Dimension there exists a conflict between northern and southern EU countries. Southern countries believe that this dimension is competitive and alternative to the Southern Dimension.

²⁵ Missiroli, “The EU and Its Changing Neighbourhood: Stabilization, Integration and Partnership,” p. 20. Iceland, Norway and Russia stayed as non-EU member states. Norway and Iceland have different status comparing to Russia because they are in the European Economic Area and a part of Schengen Area. Also they are *de facto* members of EU's single market

²⁶ Haukkala, “The Northern Dimension, A Presence and Four Liabilities,” pp. 100-101. Ayrıca bkz Haukkala, “The Northern Dimension of EU Foreign Policy,” pp. 27-39.

²⁷ “European Neighbourhood Policy. Strategy Paper, COM (2004) 373,”

http://www.iemed.org/docs_oficials_migracio/regionals/COM_2004_373_ENP_Strategy_paper/ENP_COM_2004_373_strategy_paper_en1.pdf

²⁸ Kaminska, *Poland and EU Enlargement: Foreign Policy in Transformation*, p. 121-125.

²⁹ EU-Russia Summit on 26-27 June in Khanty Mansiisk to Lunch Negotiations of the New EU-Russia Agreement, Council of the European Union, Khanty Mansiisk, 27 June 2008, 11214/08 (Presse 192).

³⁰ Mankoff, p. 147.

³¹ *Независимая газета*, с. 1-6.

³² Schröder and Putin met number of times in year 2000. While Russia was suppressing the press and leaving little grounds for freedoms and also the second Chechen War was controversial Schröder has not criticized Russian policies in these fronts.

³³ See a memorandum on energy cooperation: “Меморандум о промышленном сотрудничестве в энергетическом секторе между Министерством топлива и энергетики Российской Федерации и Европейской Комиссией, (Москва, 11 февраля 1999 г.)” с. 185-187.

³⁴ Худолей, “Отношения России и Европейского союза: новые возможности, новые проблемы,” с. 14-15. Harmonization of Russian standards in education with that of the EU has occupied an important place in the agenda of the relations. For detailed information in this matter: *Россия и ЕС на пути к общеевропейскому пространству высшего образования: сценарии будущего*. See an announcement by Putin and the EU representatives which displays the increasing graphic of relations in early 2000s: Совместное заявление Президента России В.В. Путина, Председателя Европейского совета Й. Перссона, (при содействии Генерального секретаря Совета ЕС/Высокого представителя по общей внешней политике и политике в области безопасности ЕС Х. Соланы) и Председателя Комиссии Европейских сообществ Р. Проди, с. 192-200.

³⁵ EU designed a "Four Policy Areas" (common economic area, freedom, security and justice area, foreign and security area, research and education area) to improve relations with Russia. The framework of this strategy accepted in May 2003 in Petersburg Summit.

³⁶ Differences on norms and values became a issue of discussion at the May 2007 EU-Russia Summit. “Press release Eur Russia Summit: Despite Difficulties a Common Path,” <http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/estonian-dispute-looms-eu-russia-news-218198>

³⁷ “Estonian Dispute Looms over EU-Russia Summit,” <http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/estonian-dispute-looms-eu-russia-news-218198>

³⁸ See, Diesen ve Wood, “Russia’s Proposal for a New Security System: Confirming Diverse Perspectives”, pp. 450-467.

³⁹ See, Barysch. “The EU and Russia: All Smiles and No Action?”

⁴⁰ “Joint Statement on the Partnership for Modernization,”

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⁴¹ “Status Report on the Near East given by the Director at the White House to a bi-partisan Congressional Group, 9 Kasim 1956, FOIA: CIA-RDP80B01676R004200050014-8,”

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⁴² Россия (СССР) в локальных войнах и вооруженных конфликтах второй половины XX века, с. 263.

⁴³ “Syrian rebels discover Russian spy post near Israeli border. October 8, 2014 ,”

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⁴⁴ “Syrian arms embargo divides EU,” <http://www.dw.com/en/syrian-arms-embargo-divides-eu/a-16678339>

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- ⁴⁷ Dyer, “Russia Exposes European Divisions on Syria,” *Financial Times*, 30 September 2015. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b7884824-6723-11e5-a57f-21b88f7d973f.html#axzz3nIibS9SU>
- ⁴⁸ “France Launches ITs First Airstrikes Against ISIS in Syria,” <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/27/middleeast/syria-france-isis-bombing/>
- ⁴⁹ CNN Turk, “Esad Hakkında Önemli Açıklama”, 30.10.2015.
- ⁵⁰ Постоянное представительство Российской Федерации при Европейском Союзе <http://www.russianmission.eu/ru/kratkii-obzor-otnoshenii>
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- ⁵² Özkural Köroğlu, “Avrupa Birliği ve Rusya’nın Güç Alanları Arasında Kalan Ukrayna’da Yaşanan Halk Ayaklanmaları: “Turuncu Devrim” ve “Meydan Devrimi”, p. 47. (Trapped between the Power Domains of the European Union and Russia: People’s Revolts in Ukraine, “Orange Revolution” and “Maidan Revolution”)
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- ⁵⁴ “Alman Ordusu En Ön Cephe,” *AGDHaberAjansı*, 20 Kasım 2014, <http://www.agdha.berajansi.com/dis-haberler/alman-ordusu-en-on-cephede-h2075.html>, (11.12.2014).
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- ⁵⁶ “AB-Rusya ilişkileri kırılma eşiğinde” <http://www.dw.com/tr/ab-rusya-ili%C5%9Fkileri-k%C4%B1r%C4%B1lma-e%C5%9Fi%C4%9Finde/a-18511597>

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