



# TRANSATLANTIC CURRENT

National Defense University

## About the Author

Dr. Isabelle François is a Distinguished Senior Visiting Research Fellow in the Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, Institute for National Strategic Studies, at the National Defense University.

## Key Points

- ◆ The past 20 years have been marked by several U.S. and NATO attempts to reach out to the Russian Federation to develop a cooperative security framework aimed at facing common threats and challenges through joint actions. European security, however, remains marred by significant security challenges.
- ◆ In 2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev launched an initiative investing considerable efforts in redefining the European security architecture in an inclusive and comprehensive manner, but fell short of defining and addressing common interests.
- ◆ A broad dialogue on “hard security” issues that addresses Russian perceptions and concerns is required with a genuine attempt to reconcile differences. This paper offers the basis for developing such a dialogue making best use of the 2009 Russian proposal in the event that the United States and Allies can address the Russian desire to have a more expansive role and garner respect at the European table.

The research and writing for this paper were completed in August 2011.

## Whither the Medvedev Initiative on European Security?

by Isabelle François

From a Euro-Atlantic perspective, relations with Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union have proven challenging. On numerous occasions, the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have reached out to the Russian Federation in an attempt to build a cooperative security framework. While inroads have been made over the years, the overall relationship has been hit or miss, leading to regular resets of bilateral U.S.-Russia relations and periodic efforts by NATO to reengineer its relationship with Russia. In 2011, in the wake of an upswing following the U.S.-Russia reset policy launched by the Barack Obama administration and the positive spin on NATO-Russia relations in the aftermath of the 2010 Lisbon Summit, experts and decisionmakers already wonder whether the reset will continue to move forward or whether relations with Russia will again run aground on longstanding differences. For most of the successful results in the past two decades, there have been downturns. In reality, the Euro-Atlantic community and Russia have collectively failed to create a European security framework addressing shared challenges through common responses for the post-Cold War era. Some ambitious attempts have raised hopes, but none has led to building the community of trust needed to lay the past to rest once and for all.

This paper revisits Dmitry Medvedev’s initiative on European security,<sup>1</sup> one of the few comprehensive approaches to reshaping the framework to address the new security environment, and offers new ideas in an attempt to develop a genuine strategic partnership between NATO and Russia beyond the positive rhetoric of the 2010 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Lisbon summit. As the Alliance prepares for its May 2012 summit in Chicago, NATO and Russia have yet to develop a mutually agreeable framework for European security that reflects the interests of all NRC members. Whatever

may be the specific areas of progress in NATO-Russia practical cooperation, the overall relationship remains fragile without a broad strategic dialogue. This paper acknowledges the limits and the main reasons behind the lukewarm reaction among Allies to the Medvedev initiative. At the same time, it points to the current challenges in facing European security without an adequate framework, as the Euro-Atlantic community addresses the stalemate to revive the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty following Russia's unilateral suspension of its CFE commitments.

---

## developing a mutually agreeable vision for European security will require some creative thinking

---

The inability of the Allies, their partners, and Russia to modernize and ratify the CFE Treaty, which has been a main pillar of European security, points to the limits of their relationship. The challenge of developing a mutually agreeable vision for European security will require some creative thinking, and the Medvedev initiative may still offer some insights into Russian fundamental concerns. These have to be addressed to overcome what has become, over the past two decades, a NATO-Russia ritual dance—one step forward, two steps backward. A new approach might also provide depth to improved U.S.-Russia relations and avoid having to invest in yet another “reset” in the future.

### Context of the Initiative

In June 2008, Russian President Medvedev delivered a speech in Berlin that marked the first step toward what would become his initiative on European security.<sup>2</sup> This speech had a somewhat less strident tone toward the West than that taken by his predecessor, Vladimir Putin, in his February 2007 speech in Munich.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, Medvedev's speech in Berlin made clear that the aim of what would become the Russian

blueprint for a European security treaty (EST) a few months later was to prevent other countries or particular groupings, notably the United States and NATO, from pursuing objectives and policies that Moscow perceived as directed against Russian security interests.

At the end of 2009, in the run-up to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Ministers' Council meeting in Athens and the NRC meeting of foreign ministers in Brussels, the Kremlin Web site featured a draft EST<sup>4</sup> that was forwarded to relevant heads of state and government, as well as heads of international organizations such as NATO. This proposal was the result of significant efforts led by the Kremlin and developed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials with the engagement of a wide community of experts and officials. Since 2008, unprecedented consultations had occurred between Russian officials and the country's expert community to discuss the idea of a new framework for European security. Authorities in Moscow organized roundtable discussions, often including officials from European and North American embassies, to hear from not only their own experts, but also foreign think tank representatives.

Two major issues loomed large in these discussions. The first was whether this initiative should push for a legally binding framework, an approach supported by Russian officials, or for something looser and limited to political commitments, as favored by some Russian experts but mostly by foreign officials. Second, the debate revolved around the balance between soft and hard security measures in this proposal.<sup>5</sup> While Russian officials were clearly looking for a new approach to hard security issues (which most critics read as a move to replace NATO or at least to offer an alternative to it), experts and officials outside Russia were making a strong plea for Russia to push soft security as well, addressing issues of human rights in particular.

The proposal made by the Kremlin consisted of a legally binding document offering a draft treaty, including typical elements of an international treaty such as articles dealing with rules and decisionmaking procedures. With regard to the balance between soft and hard secu-

urity issues, Russian authorities heard the call to be more forthcoming on soft security. As a result, Moscow chose to table the draft treaty in the run-up to the OSCE ministerial for a first discussion within the OSCE, despite a lukewarm approach in Russian circles toward the organization during that period. That said, Russian officials remained more interested in defining a new approach to hard security and resetting relations around what was typically a NATO agenda. Reinforcing that point, at the December 2009 NATO ministerial (a few days after the OSCE ministerial), Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov tabled a draft agreement on basic principles governing relations among NRC member states in the security sphere.<sup>6</sup> This draft agreement was also looking for a binding commitment on the basis of politically agreed principles enshrined in the 2002 Rome Declaration and the 1997 Founding Act,<sup>7</sup> which presided over the creation of the NATO-Russia Council. The link between the draft treaty posted on the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site and the internally circulated draft agreement for the NRC was never spelled out clearly, but the simultaneous tabling of a document in the NRC in the margins of the OSCE debate on the draft EST indicated Russia's focus on hard security and the importance it still attached to the NRC as it was developing the draft treaty.

The Medvedev initiative rose out of the ashes of the Russian-Georgian war in the summer of 2008 and in the aftermath of one of the lowest points in NATO-Russia relations of the past 20 years. Tabling the EST on the eve of the December 2009 NRC meeting of foreign ministers was perceived within NATO as a Russian attempt to become the driving force in the debate on European security (at best) or to bypass NATO (at worst). Russian officials seemed to be looking for a way to reengage in the aftermath of the 2008 war, arguing for a need to deal with shortcomings in the European security architecture that, from their perspective, did not allow for addressing Russian post-Cold War concerns and, therefore, led to the war and the freeze in NATO-Russia relations.

In looking more closely at the content of the document, it is clear that Moscow, interested mostly in hard

security issues, aimed to address some of its key concerns in dealing with NATO, offering only lip service to soft security as a second track approach for deliberations within the OSCE. Nonetheless, there are some important principles in the draft EST worth considering and building upon, as they will probably be critical to further engagement with Russia on the reset trajectory, whether in the NATO-Russia context or in the U.S.-Russia security agenda. Moreover, these key principles reflecting longstanding Russian concerns over European security are likely to remain central to Moscow's position both in NATO and the OSCE, as well as within the context of bilateral relations.

---

## **there are some important principles in the draft European security treaty worth considering and building upon**

---

### **Main Tenets of the Initiative**

First, the Medvedev initiative departed significantly from traditional Russian foreign policy development insofar as it proceeded in full transparency, both internally (within the Russian community of security experts) and externally (with Russian officials reaching out to foreign experts and academic institutions as well as to some foreign officials). The early proposal was presented as a work in progress with a clear intent by officials to further develop the draft on the basis of inputs from various partners within and outside of Russia. Moscow seemed open to substantial amendments to its original idea. This approach denoted a willingness to engage and open up through significant outreach efforts rather than to impose Russian views.

Second, the draft EST summarized most of the key arguments and problems expressed by Russian officials over the previous 5 years in their relations with allies and other countries in terms of European security. First and

foremost, it sought to broaden the principle of indivisibility of security well beyond the understanding prevailing among the 28 NATO member states. For the Alliance, an attack on one of its members is an attack on all, and therefore their security is indivisible.<sup>8</sup> Although NATO had, over the years, developed a political understanding of indivisibility in a Euro-Atlantic context in the light of its cooperation with its Euro-Atlantic partners, Russia was seeking with the draft EST to go beyond the political implications developed within NATO partnerships. The EST was to elevate the principle of indivisibility as

---

**the European security treaty was meant as a document open for signature by all Euro-Atlantic states “from Vancouver to Vladivostok”**

---

a justification for legal obligations among parties to the treaty, according to which parties would be barred from strengthening their own security at the expense of other parties to the treaty, member states, or organizations.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the EST attempted to redefine an Article 5-type of obligation beyond that of NATO. Intent on diluting NATO’s Article 5 commitment, which Moscow had long perceived as a remnant of the Cold War that prevented meaningful cooperation with Russia, the EST gave any party to it the right to intervene militarily in support of another party in case of an attack or the threat of an attack. It stipulated in Article 7 that “every party shall be entitled to consider an armed attack against any other party an armed attack against itself.” In including such a clause, Moscow pursued its interest in a legally binding commitment akin to NATO’s Article 5 commitment but opening it to non-NATO members. This was perceived as inimical to NATO’s interests, obviously undermining the Alliance’s open door policy.

Fourth, the draft EST reflected a strong desire on the part of Russian officials to be inclusive. Beyond the

outreach made while developing the draft, the EST was meant as a document open for signature by all Euro-Atlantic states “from Vancouver to Vladivostok,” as well as by international organizations such as the European Union, the OSCE, NATO, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Commonwealth of Independent States in light of their respective areas of interest and competence in European security.

## Limits to the Medvedev Initiative

*NATO Resistance.* From the start of discussions, notwithstanding the significant differences among Allies vis-à-vis NATO’s policy toward Russia and the debilitating lack of consensus within NATO on Russian matters, the overall impression in the West was rather negative. It ranged from skepticism by the Allies friendly to Russia to absolute opposition on the part of the Allies most cautious regarding Russia.<sup>10</sup> There were several reasons for the lack of enthusiasm. Most importantly, it was commonly accepted that the European security architecture, albeit imperfect, was still able to deliver, and there was little appetite for a complete departure from existing structures,<sup>11</sup> especially at a time when transition and transformation were on the agenda of various organizations and the security environment was eminently volatile and even at times dangerous. The problem, however, remained that Russia did not feel that the existing European security structure was taking its interests into account, and turning a deaf ear to Russia’s complaints was not acceptable.

From the beginning of his tenure, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen had made it clear that he intended to listen to Russia and that the Alliance had to pay attention to Russian concerns regarding the inability in the West to accommodate Russian interests within the existing European security framework.<sup>12</sup> The challenge with the draft EST, and ultimately the main stumbling block, was its overarching approach to European security: the treaty, with its wider approach to indivisibility of security and its

overarching defense clause, would become the overall framework and would therefore subsume NATO within a new structure. Considering Article 7 together with Article 9, which added that “the Parties to the Treaty shall not assume international obligations incompatible with the Treaty,” the EST would effectively limit NATO’s ability to call on its own Article 5 and to exercise its own obligations and privileges.

While the draft EST was not going to be acceptable to NATO, the Alliance nonetheless stood ready to discuss the Russian proposal. At the NRC ministerial in December 2009 and thereafter, the Secretary-General welcomed the draft as a contribution to greater transparency regarding Russian views and objectives, but ultimately the position within NATO developed toward the necessity to debate the draft treaty within the OSCE rather than NATO and the NRC.<sup>13</sup> Given the Russian focus on debating hard security issues, discussions on the draft EST died out, leaving a sour note in Moscow. Russian authorities and the expert community remain skeptical about the reset agenda, convinced that the West is not serious about addressing Russian concerns. Perhaps more problematic, many feel that even when Moscow engages and contributes a new idea instead of denying or pushing against Western policies and objectives, Moscow is still unable to get its point across and to contribute to shaping decisions on European security.

**Lack of Support Beyond NATO.** In its attempt to get the draft EST to gather momentum, Russian authorities reached out beyond NATO and the Allies toward NATO partners and other organizations. Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, all members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, expressed support for the initiative in a joint statement with Russia. However, vested interests on the part of other organizations and the lack of appetite all around for a significant reformulation of the European security architecture did not offer much traction to Russian authorities. The OSCE already served as a forum to address soft security issues, covering them more broadly than what the Russian draft offered in this area. The Russian proposal

remained seen in the West as a clear attempt to circumvent existing international security agreements concluded within the auspices of the OSCE. Moreover, the NRC was already providing a forum to address issues of common concern between Russia and its allies in Europe, even issues on which the parties “agree to disagree.” And the prevailing authority of the United Nations and its Security Council was felt to be sufficient in terms of enforceable commitments. The overarching and legally binding nature of the draft EST largely buried the proposal.

**Incoherence in the Russian Position.** From an intellectual perspective, the draft EST seemed inconsistent with Russian policy vis-à-vis Georgia and the break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Ukraine (with which Russia was having a dispute over gas at the time), and Moldova. Some argued that had the EST existed in its legally binding nature, it would have served as a platform to prosecute recent Russian policies and

---

## the Russian proposal remained seen in the West as a clear attempt to circumvent existing international security agreements

---

actions in Georgia and beyond, notably through the preamble of the EST, which recalls that “the use of force or the threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other way inconsistent with the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is inadmissible.” Moreover, some experts pointed to the “very ambiguous” terms used in the draft EST, which would likely trigger “dozens of disputes as to meaning.”<sup>14</sup>

## Potential for Recasting and Further Developing the Initiative

Because of its overarching approach to European security, reminiscent of Moscow’s interest in designing a new European security architecture in the early post-Cold War

period, the draft EST is highly unlikely to gain the necessary support to see the light of day. It is rarely mentioned in European security talks and certainly is no longer on the NATO-Russia agenda. There remains little prospect for a legally binding overall framework that would reconcile two different approaches and fundamentally opposite analyses of today's security environment in Russia and the West.

On the one hand, Russia has aimed toward a hierarchical structure subsuming multilateralism and key security organizations to prevailing national interests in the hope of sitting at the table with nations whose representatives would speak exclusively in their national capacity, instead of reflecting an agreed position developed in a multilateral forum such as NATO. Allies and their partners, on the other hand, have favored a looser arrangement that allows for coalitions of the willing to make the best use of each organization on the basis of its respective value added in the face of today's multidimensional and multidirectional threats. This approach, offering maximum flexibility to adjust both to a changing international environment and to evolving policies and interests among Allies and partners, clashes with the idea of a neatly hierarchical structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

---

### **Russian concerns with the current European security environment beg for a clear response**

---

However, the reasons that prompted Moscow to develop the draft EST as an alternative framework have not disappeared. Russian authorities continue to believe that their interests are not being taken into account and, from their perspectives, systemic flaws remain in today's European security environment. Officials remain convinced of the need to develop a common approach to European security and continue to remind their Euro-Atlantic partners of the existing proposal on the table.<sup>15</sup> Russian concerns with the current European security environment beg for a clear response; as long as they are pushed aside or absorbed into

some looser and broader process, these concerns will remain a significant handicap undermining any real progress in NATO-Russia cooperation and will hamper a full reset of U.S.-Russia relations in the long run.

### **Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty and Draft EST**

So far, the Allies have responded to the Russian EST proposal with the OSCE "Corfu process"—a dialogue on European security launched in June 2009 at an informal gathering of OSCE foreign ministers to discuss European security challenges. This meeting fell short of the Russian call for an OSCE summit to discuss the Medvedev proposal. Nonetheless, it was possible to use this process constructively to address security in the broad sense of the Helsinki Accords, across the three Helsinki baskets, while addressing CFE-specific concerns on a separate track. One could consider revisiting the Russian proposal on European security to help resolve the impasse on the CFE Treaty, as both treaties aim at keeping Europe undivided and at guaranteeing predictability and transparency. Both treaties provide for a multilateral process for joint consultations where the current security challenges can be addressed, thus contributing to conflict prevention.

In fact, speaking at the OSCE meeting on December 1, 2009, French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner was quick to point out that the Russian proposal omitted the issue of arms control.<sup>16</sup> His British colleague also highlighted the need for a "resolution of the crisis of the CFE Treaty." It might be interesting for policymakers to consider whether President Medvedev's proposal for a European security treaty could be considered and coopted in an ultimate effort to preserve and update the CFE Treaty and to reengage with Moscow, which announced in December 2007 that it was "suspending" its observance of the original treaty.

The CFE Treaty, signed in 1990, has remained the cornerstone of European security and is de facto linked to the debate over the Russian proposal on a draft Eu-

ropean security treaty. CFE helped stabilize military relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact through limitations on military materiel, resulting in the destruction of tens of thousands of pieces of equipment. CFE was, however, the legacy from another era of European security. With the end of the Warsaw Pact, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and NATO's successive enlargements, the European security landscape was dramatically altered. As a result, CFE member states signed in 1999 an adapted CFE treaty to take account of these changes. Although ratified by Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine, the adapted treaty was never ratified by NATO members, who linked their ratification process to the fulfillment of side commitments Moscow entered into with regard to Russian troops and equipment at bases in Georgia (South Ossetia) and Moldova (Transnistria). Incensed by the lack of ratification by the Allies while Russia had to abide by its legal treaty limitations, effectively restricting its ability to deploy additional forces on its southern flank to cope with threatening instability from the North Caucasus, President Putin decided to suspend observance of the original treaty. Nearly 4 years later, the CFE Treaty regime remains in limbo.<sup>17</sup>

A diplomatic effort led by the United States was launched in April 2010 to develop a framework statement of key provisions and principles that could guide negotiations to strengthen the CFE regime. Allied and Russian leaders met on numerous occasions in this context, having overcome the initial Russian opposition to any preconditions for resuming CFE talks. Russian opposition to the principle of host-nation consent (linked to the flank issues previously mentioned) and to resuming its own compliance with the suspended CFE Treaty led to a stalemate.

Recent attempts at resuming negotiations have not yet led to a change of heart in Moscow. Given the complexity of the CFE and confidence-building measure negotiations, it is clear that CFE negotiations will demand a separate approach. However, progress on a separate track toward developing a set of “com-

mon understandings”<sup>18</sup> on European security requirements and a dialogue on a pan-European security vision could assist the resumption of CFE negotiations by addressing longstanding Russian concerns, while reassuring Russian neighbors on Moscow's intentions and plans.

#### *Identifying Redlines, Building on the Agreeable.*

Given the lack of consensus among Allies on the best way to cooperate with Russia, how does one develop a clear joint response to the Russian concerns expressed in the draft EST? Creative thinking will be required, but a broad strategic dialogue should be launched without further delay in response to the Russian EST proposal. This dialogue should first set out clearly why the proposal was met with lukewarm reactions on the part of Allies and draw redlines on what was deemed unacceptable. Second, it should stress the readiness to engage in a fruitful debate and outline how to develop common

---

### **a dialogue on a pan-European security vision could assist the resumption of CFE negotiations**

---

understandings for European security, which might ultimately help in future negotiations, notably on CFE. It could also assist with ongoing discussions with regard to missile defense and help launch a process aimed at addressing future potential negotiations on tactical nuclear weapons. Through the development of specific common understandings, this strategic dialogue would help the overall arms control agenda.

The dialogue should start by formally spelling out the redlines with regard to the draft EST. First, the idea of an overall legally binding treaty is inconceivable, given the differences of threat perceptions and diverging national interests in Europe. Second, it should be clear that no Ally and very few partners would be prepared to subsume the authority of NATO to a higher body, which would limit its ability to act and to accept new

members. As pointed out by some analysts, diluting existing treaties and alliances would be destabilizing.<sup>19</sup> Third, any attempt by Moscow to develop a self-proclaimed sphere of privileged interests will continue to be met with considerable resistance.<sup>20</sup> Fourth, it should be equally clear that preserving an undivided Europe cannot be achieved without Russia and that the fact that Russia feels excluded from the European security framework requires a serious and joint response.

The dialogue should pursue the development of common understandings on European security. When Moscow unveiled the text of its proposed legally binding treaty, much of it was familiar and agreeable: notably, the respect of members' territorial integrity, conflict prevention, and the inadmissibility of the use and threat of force. Moreover, one could build on the four main tenets of the draft EST: transparency, indivisibility, legal commitment, and inclusiveness. These principles did not find their way into the draft fortuitously. They are indicative of a deep malaise in relations between Russia and the West in general, and Russia and NATO in particular, despite significant recent successes in U.S.-Russia security relations and pragmatic steps forward

---

### **Moscow's desire for legally binding commitments is symptomatic of the prevailing mistrust toward Western intentions**

---

in the NATO-Russia relationship. The overall relationship remains marred by mistrust and fundamental differences in threat perception and can hardly yield joint responses to address current and emerging security challenges. Building trust will take a long time, and remarkable successes like the ratification of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty may lead the way but will not be sufficient to nurture the reset of relations.

Moscow's desire for legally binding commitments is symptomatic of the prevailing mistrust toward Western

intentions vis-à-vis Russia—a lack of trust shared by many in the West. Given the Russian insistence on legal commitments in various areas,<sup>21</sup> it would be useful to ultimately tie discussions on a pan-European security vision to a process of negotiations that will result in a treaty, thus providing formal assurances to Russian authorities. Through the adapted CFE negotiations, Moscow has been seeking a way to address its inferiority in terms of conventional weapons—an objective well known to its Western partners who addressed the same dilemma through the original CFE Treaty 20 years ago as they were facing the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact. Arms control in general and the specific case of the adapted CFE Treaty would naturally build confidence and provide for legally binding commitments able to reassure Russia in the area of European security. These are likely to be the only formal multinational negotiations able to yield a legally binding document in the area of European hard security.

Moreover, building transparency in European security is one of the major achievements of the CFE regime. In that sense, the adapted CFE would respond to the Russian desire in developing the draft EST to reach out to various audiences multilaterally and show a real commitment to transparency. In addition, the CFE inspections, information exchanges, and monitoring have long contributed to building transparency in Europe aimed at diminishing tensions and suspicions on all sides. This remains one of the main objectives in wanting to preserve the CFE regime and resume negotiations. The call for enhanced transparency in the draft EST would be best addressed through the CFE regime and its confidence-building measures.

The principle of inclusiveness stressed in the draft EST is another area where the adapted CFE could pave the way in concrete terms. The adapted CFE provides for a multilateral process for joint consultations where current security challenges can be addressed. More importantly, it extended CFE discussions to nonsignatories

to the original treaty,<sup>22</sup> some of which became NATO members, thus potentially extending transparency and inspections to Russian neighbors—a useful reciprocal process that could greatly contribute to building confidence and reassuring many in Europe. Finally, through this inclusive process of CFE discussions currently extending to 36 nations, the adapted CFE treaty would be the most concrete—and possibly the only—example where one can talk of the indivisibility of security in the sense of the draft EST.

While setting aside the original attempt to design a comprehensive, legally binding framework for European security, the Medvedev initiative may still prove useful toward developing “common understandings” in terms of European security, where Russia would feel that its interests are not ignored. A set of common understandings making best use of the key principles outlined in the Medvedev initiative could provide a framework for a genuine reset of NATO-Russia relations beyond the mere rhetoric that has prevailed in the aftermath of the Lisbon summit. It may also assist in drawing Russia back into negotiations over CFE.

*Carving a Role for the NATO-Russia Council.* A political declaration could recall the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and indivisibility of security as they prevail in the Euro-Atlantic community, along with the principles enshrined in the 1997 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, and initiate a broad strategic dialogue between the Allies and Russia as a follow-up to the Medvedev initiative.

This broad strategic dialogue would aim at developing in the NRC a set of common understandings on European security requirements, which would address the hard security aspects to complement the OSCE Corfu process. Among these common understandings, a particular effort could be launched to come to grips with a longstanding dispute between Russia and the NATO Allies on the exact meaning of “substantial additional combat forces” as NATO committed in 1997 to refrain from deploying such forces on the territory

of its new members.<sup>23</sup> This would likely yield sufficient progress for Russia to consider reversing its suspension of the adapted CFE and for the Allies and Russia to agree on the necessary steps toward ratification and implementation of the adapted CFE.

As the Alliance prepares for a summit in Chicago in 2012, the issue will soon be raised as to the salience of an NRC summit in that context. The decision will largely depend on the substance and the potential deliverables for such an event. A political declaration, including concrete proposals as a follow-up to the Medvedev initiative, might appeal to both Russia and the Allies. Launching a broad strategic dialogue would create the necessary momentum for genuine progress in NATO-Russia relations and could also strengthen the reset in U.S.-Russia relations.

---

## the Medvedev initiative could provide a framework for a genuine reset of NATO-Russia relations

---

To the extent that the United States and its Allies can address the Russian desire to have a more expansive role and garner greater respect at the European table, it is in U.S. interests to take this process seriously.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively, it will have to reinvent the reset every 5 years, and the NATO-Russia Council will never amount to anything more than a forum to “agree to disagree” and occasionally cooperate. Ultimately, Russia’s desire for an equal seat at the European security table must build upon the existing system of European security structures and must be channeled through approaches that further integrate rather than divide Europe. This requires a genuine attempt to listen to and accommodate each other.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the Medvedev initiative is available at <[www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/afet/dv/201/201006/20100622\\_russianprop\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/afet/dv/201/201006/20100622_russianprop_en.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Speech available at <[www.in.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/C080D-C2FF8D93629C3257460003496C4](http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/C080D-C2FF8D93629C3257460003496C4)>.

<sup>3</sup> Speech available at <[www.securityconference.de/Putin-s-speech.381.0.html?&L=1](http://www.securityconference.de/Putin-s-speech.381.0.html?&L=1)>.

<sup>4</sup> Draft European security treaty (EST) available at <[www.mid.ru/ns-dvbr.nsf/dveurope/065fc3182ca460d1c325767f003073cc](http://www.mid.ru/ns-dvbr.nsf/dveurope/065fc3182ca460d1c325767f003073cc)>.

<sup>5</sup> While *soft security* would deal with issues such as human rights, hard security issues would focus on discussion regarding collective defense and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) defense commitments.

<sup>6</sup> See <<https://www.armscontrol.org/print/4041>>.

<sup>7</sup> See <[www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm)> and <[www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_19572.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19572.htm)>. These founding documents for NATO-Russia relations were agreed at the level of heads of state and government and offered “political commitments” as opposed to treaties, which have provided “legal commitments.” Russia has long argued for the need to agree to a legally binding document for European security to reinforce mutual trust and confidence.

<sup>8</sup> This pact is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which founded NATO.

<sup>9</sup> Article 2 of the draft EST states that “a party to the Treaty shall not undertake, participate in or support any actions or activities affecting significantly security or any other party or parties to the Treaty.”

<sup>10</sup> “European Leaders Split on Russian Security Plan,” *Deutsche Welle*, July 2, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> On the American side, the draft EST was welcomed by State Department spokesman Ian Kelly as “an important contribution to the ongoing debate on European security.” He stated that the administration was going to study it carefully, but it was quickly added that from a U.S. perspective, “Any proposal must build on the existing body of commitments we have developed together over three decades, as well as central structures such as the OSCE and NATO.” See <<http://en.rian.ru/world/20091202/157063806.html>>.

<sup>12</sup> His very first speech was devoted to NATO-Russia relations signaling his own readiness to listen to Russian concerns. See <[www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_57640.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_57640.htm)>. Others added their voices to the need to engage with Russia on these ideas, in particular French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in their joint op-ed. See “La sécurité, notre mission commune,” *Le Monde*, February 3, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See <[www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-A45FED8E-A81AAEE9/natolive/opinions\\_60223.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-A45FED8E-A81AAEE9/natolive/opinions_60223.htm)>.

<sup>14</sup> Quotes from Steven Pifer from his December 23, 2009, interview. See <[www.armscontrol.org/print/4041](http://www.armscontrol.org/print/4041)>.

<sup>15</sup> See references to the EST proposal by Sergey Ivanov in Washington in May 2010, available at <<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100517/159053606.html>>.

<sup>16</sup> See <[www.osce.org/cio/40580](http://www.osce.org/cio/40580)>.

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough analysis on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty regime, see Anne Witkowsky, Sherman Garnett, and Jeff McCausland, “Salvaging the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty Regime: Options for Washington,” Brookings Arms Control Series, Paper 2, March 2010.

<sup>18</sup> An agreed definition of *European security requirements* would be impossible to reach between Allies and Russia given the major differences in perception and vision. However, working together toward developing common understanding and building on commonly agreeable principles while outlining differences and working toward narrowing the gaps could slowly help develop a common vision.

<sup>19</sup> Marcel H. Van Herpen, “Medvedev’s Proposal for a Pan-European Security Pact,” Cicero Foundation, October 2008, available at <[www.cicerofoundation.org/lectures/Marcel\\_H\\_Van\\_Herpen\\_Medvedevs\\_Proposal\\_for\\_a\\_Pan-European\\_Security\\_Pact.pdf](http://www.cicerofoundation.org/lectures/Marcel_H_Van_Herpen_Medvedevs_Proposal_for_a_Pan-European_Security_Pact.pdf)>.

<sup>20</sup> Sally McNamara, “Russia’s Proposed New European Security Treaty: A Non-starter for the U.S. and Europe,” Heritage Foundation Backgrounder 2463, September 16, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Russia has insisted on the Adapted CFE ratification by Allies to force legally binding commitments on the NATO side, although Allies were observing these commitments in practice despite the absence of ratification. Similarly, Russia offered the draft EST as a legally binding document. Finally, Russia more recently insisted on a legally binding document with respect to missile defense as a precondition for potential cooperation in this field.

<sup>22</sup> Current discussions to resume Conventional Armed Forces in Europe negotiations/implementation include 30 CFE member states and six non-CFE NATO Allies. See <[www.armscontrol.org/print/4997](http://www.armscontrol.org/print/4997)>.

<sup>23</sup> “NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.” See the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, May 27, 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Witkowsky, Garnett, and McCausland, 16.

## New Series from NDU Press

# NATO Partnerships and the Arab Spring: Achievements and Perspectives for the 2012 Chicago Summit

Isabelle François

(Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, *Transatlantic Perspectives 1*, December 2011)

In November 2010, heads of state and government at the Lisbon Summit called for a “streamlining” of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partnerships. In early 2011, the Alliance developed a more flexible and efficient partnership policy. It did so in accordance with the Lisbon tasking, and prepared simultaneously for a new mission, with contributions from several partner countries, as events unfolded in Libya. These developments involved significant NATO consultation with partner countries.

In this inaugural *Transatlantic Perspectives* from the Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, Dr. Isabelle François highlights the synergy between the new policy and NATO’s response to the Libyan crisis. It points to some of the challenges facing the Alliance in the context of Operation *Unified Protector*, and in further developing NATO partnerships with countries south of the Mediterranean. The paper finally offers recommendations in preparation for the next NATO summit so as to make best use of Alliance partnerships if the Allies decide to build on the Libyan operation and develop a new strategic direction in the face of tumultuous political transition in the Arab world south of the Mediterranean.



## INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES

The Center for Transatlantic Security Studies within the Institute for National Strategic Studies provides research and policy advice to senior Department of Defense and other U.S. Government leaders through studies, research projects, and outreach and education programs. CTSS draws on its unique interface with U.S. and international governments and research institutions to provide timely and relevant policy recommendations.



The *Transatlantic Current* series presents original research by members of the CTSS resident scholars as well as nonresident subject matter experts. The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Defense Department or any other agency of the Federal Government. Visit NDU Press online at [www.ndu.edu/press](http://www.ndu.edu/press).

Ambassador Robert Hunter  
Director  
Center for Transatlantic Security Studies

Hans Binnendijk  
Director  
INSS

Francis G. Hoffman  
Director  
NDU Press

### **NATO and the Arab Spring**

**Isabelle François**

(Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, Transatlantic  
Current 1, October 2011)

### **Korean Futures: Challenges to U.S. Diplomacy of North Korean Regime Collapse**

**Ferial Ara Saeed and James J. Przystup**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Perspectives  
No. 7, September 2011)

### **The Ongoing Insurgency in Southern Thailand: Trends in Violence, Counterinsurgency Operations, and the Impact of National Politics**

**Zachary Abuza**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Perspectives  
No. 6, September 2011)

### **Countering the Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa**

**Andre Le Sage**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Forum 270,  
July 2011)

### **Chinese Military Transparency: Evaluating the 2010 Defense White Paper**

**Phillip C. Saunders and Ross Rustici**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Forum 269,  
July 2011)

### **The Evolving Threat of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb**

**Andre Le Sage**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Forum 268,  
July 2011)

### **Joint Interagency Task Force– South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success**

**Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Perspectives  
No. 5, June 2011)

### **Iran's Islamic Revolution: Lessons for the Arab Spring of 2011?**

**Michael Eisenstadt**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Forum 267,  
April 2011)

### **Secret Weapon: High-value Target Teams as an Organizational Innovation**

**Christopher J. Lamb and Evan Munsing**

(Center for Strategic Research, Strategic Perspectives  
No. 4, March 2011)