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Russia's future security policy

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Putin's return to the Kremlin and Russia's future security policy

Abstract:

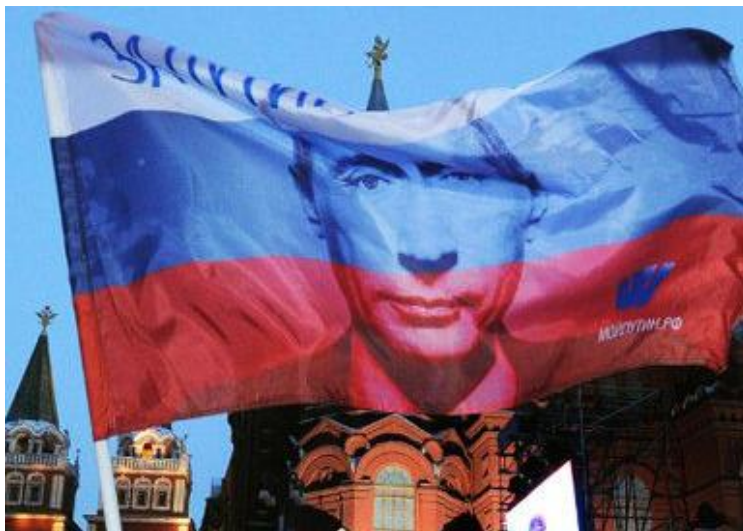
Putin's return to the Russian presidency has raised maximum international attention, due to the antecedents of the confrontation with the West during his previous second term (2004-2008), the nationalist rhetoric used during the electoral campaign, and the opposition protests against the alleged irregularities committed both in those last elections and in the elections of December 2011. This Document analyses the main future characteristics of the Russian security policy, based on the program that Putin detailed for the elections, and the world security environment in which these programmatic ideas must be developed.

Keywords:

Putin, Russia, Asia-Pacific, Europe, United States, security, proliferation, terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

Vladimir Putin will return to the Kremlin as the President of the Russian Federation on May 7, thanks to his victory in the first round of the March Presidential Elections¹. In 2008 Putin had to leave the position to Dimitri Medvedev, after serving for two consecutive terms, as established in 1993 Constitution. It is well known that Putin has served as Prime Minister since 2008. Although it has not been confirmed, it is highly likely that Medvedev will take over the position when Putin decides to step down. Putin will be Russia's Prime Minister for the next six years, since the duration of the Government was prolonged by two years through a constitutional reform.



Putin's return to the Presidency has attracted international attention for his previous confrontations with the West during his second term (2004-2008), the nationalistic rhetoric displayed during his election campaign and the opposition's complaints about suspected irregularities during the aforementioned elections and the legislative elections of 2011 which gave the absolute majority by a small margin to the ruling party "United Russia". This document analyzes the future foreign and security policy, based on the program that Putin presented during the elections and the global security environment in which these ideas will be developed.

(¹) See RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Valoración del resultado de las elecciones rusas*, FUNCIVA comment on current events, available in: http://www.funciva.org/uploads/ficheros_documentos/1330970028_120305_valoración_del_resultado_de_las_elecciones_presidenciales_en_rusia.pdf.

PUTIN'S WORLD VIEW: DOCUMENT "RUSSIA AND THE CHANGING WORLD"

In early 2012, the then presidential candidate Putin published various articles in the Russian mainstream media explaining the program he would apply were he to win the presidential elections. On February 28 an article "Russian and the changing world"² was published in "*Moskovskie Novosti*". The aforementioned article will be explained in the following paragraph.

Several key points of the foreign policy model that Putin wants for Russia are already explained in the introduction, in particular: the opening up policy's objective is no other than enhancing Russians welfare and strengthen their trust, that Russia will act in accordance with their own objectives and interests and not based on foreign decisions, that Russia will only be respected and be able to apply an independent foreign policy when the country is strong to do so and that global security can only be achieved through joint decisions with Russia and not by acting independently, weakening its geopolitical positions or harming their defense capabilities.

Putin has a broad security concept which includes, as the main priority, guaranteeing a minimal economic safety for the country's population, Russia's main objective since the nineties due to the socio-economic catastrophe that took place during Boris Yeltsin's presidency. It is obvious that the political class still feels resentment because of the situation lived during the aforementioned decade, since the Russia's total loss of material capabilities led to an international irrelevance which also entailed its positions and interests being completely ignored³. Lastly, Putin is aware that once the country started recovering these capabilities during his first term (2000-2004), all Russian attempts of collaboration with the

⁽²⁾Available in Russian: <http://mn.ru/politics/20120227/312306749-print.html> and in Spanish: http://sp.rian.ru/opinion_analysis/20120227/152834844-print.html.

⁽³⁾ After a first stage of integration efforts in the West with Andrei Kozyrev as Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov sought to establish a multi-vector foreign policy in 1996, with Russia as a global decision taker. Instead there was an initial expansion of NATO to the East, the Kosovo campaign against Serbia (traditional Russian ally) and the breach of the Russian pipelines monopoly with construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), without taking into account a country that was economically impoverished after 2008's financial crisis.

West⁴ failed, consequently resulting in a position hardening and an eventual confrontation⁵.

Another important mention in the introduction is that, according to Putin, the objectives of Russian foreign policy are strategic, do not depend on historical circumstances and correspond to Russia's importance in the world, its role in history and in the development of civilizations. This is absolutely essential in order to assess Russian foreign policy, as any attempt to evaluate it solely from a realistic prism of international relations⁶ would be doomed to utter failure. Russian *strategic culture* consists of unique geopolitical features and an ancient history of which the current Federation is the heir. For the reasons explained, a series of conditions (or drivers) are imposed to its security model, increasing or limiting the practical use of available material capacities (or tools)⁷.

The introduction ends by listing the main Russian security threats, which, according to Putin, are the proliferation of nuclear weapons, regional conflicts and crises, terrorism and drug trafficking, which is virtually identical to the U.S.'s and EU's opinion.

Those who undermine Russia's credibility

Putin states that he believes in the security indivisibility of all States, the inadmissibility of using excessive force and unconditional compliance with the basic norms of international law, Putin sent a tirade to the U.S. and NATO by declaring that "Some aspects of their

(⁴) Russia reacted to the 11-S 2001 attacks by opening its airspace to the U.S. for its campaign in Afghanistan and also facilitating the contact between Washington and the "Northern Alliance" which fought the Taliban, and not objecting to the installation of Western military bases in Central Asia countries. In 2002 the "NATO-Russia Council" was formed, a qualitative leap in bilateral relations, and in 2003 the EU adopted the four "common spaces" around which a new strategic partnership should be created.

(⁵) 2002 U.S. complaint of the 1972 ABM Treaty, 2003 Iraq's invasion, the Moldovan refusal to sign the peace plan for Transdniester sponsored by Moscow, the "color revolutions" in former Soviet republics (Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, Kyrgyzstan 2005), the renewal stall of the "1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement", plans to install a U.S. missile shield in Eastern Europe, or the purpose of integrating Ukraine and Georgia into the NATO.

(⁶) In schematic terms, the view that all states seek to maximize their profits in their interaction with others, and that they all act in a similar manner (like-units) in response to opportunities and threats, so that the differences simply depend on the different material capabilities of each country. MORALES HERNÁNDEZ Javier, *La Política de Seguridad de Rusia en el nuevo Sistema Internacional*, Doctoral Thesis, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 2009, 49.

(⁷) Idealism / Constructivism has come to emphasize the value of ideas as an important factor in international relations, complementing the deficiencies of a realistic approach for its exclusive focus on material factors. GARCÍA PÉREZ Rafael, "La investigación en política exterior de España", en ARTEAGA MARTÍN Félix (coord.), *Peace research guide.. Security and Defense*, UNED-IUGM, Madrid, 2006, 212-213.

performances do not fall within the logic of modern development, but on the topics of bloc politics". He specifically cites the eastward advancement of NATO (installation of new military infrastructure) and the missile shield plans.

With regard to the enlargement issue, opposition has been a Russian constant since the final stage of the Soviet Union when, apparently, a commitment was undertaken so that the borders of NATO would not move an inch to the east⁸. 1999⁹ first enlargement was a *fait accompli* policy thanks to the weak position of Russia, the great enlargement of 2004¹⁰, when Russia was resurging as a great power, was a challenge for the Alliance, as it was incorporating Eastern Europe countries and even former Soviet republics (the three Baltic republics) which perceived the Federation as a threat to their security. U.S. intention to integrate Ukraine and Georgia into the NATO, proposal that was firmly rejected by Germany and France in the Bucharest Summit of 2008, deteriorated the relations between Russia and the West to a level unheard of since the end of the Cold War, a process that led to the Georgia war in August of that year.

With regard to missile defense, President Obama's abandonment of Bush's original project and the thaw in bilateral relations which led to the meeting between "NATO-Russia" in Lisbon in November 2010 enabled the collaboration in this area¹¹. However, the negotiations have not advanced properly since the collaborative model proposed by each part is

⁽⁸⁾ A few days after Hard's visit [Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom], on 2 February 1990 Genscher [German Foreign Minister] came to Washington in order to meet with Baker. Genscher stressed that the key to progressing in the negotiations to reunify the Soviets was to ensure that the NATO territory would not advance eastwards. Baker accepted this formulation, perhaps not realizing the problems this would pose to the NATO ". George H.W. BUSH & SCOWCROFT Ben, *A World Transformed*, First Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1999, 237. Meanwhile, the U.S. ambassador in Moscow in 1990. Jack F. Matlock made the following statement before the U.S. Congress: "Gorbachov was promised that, if Germany were to reunify and remain in the NATO, the borders of the Atlantic Alliance would never move to the East". *U.S. Policy Toward NATO Enlargement: Hearing*, House Committee on International Relations, 104th Cong., 2nd session, 20 de junio de 1996, 31.

⁽⁹⁾ Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

⁽¹¹⁾ See RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Las relaciones OTAN-Rusia desde la caída del Muro de Berlín: la Cumbre de Lisboa*, IEEE Analysis document, available in:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2010/DIEEEA16-2010RelacionesOTANRusiadesMurodeBerlin.pdf.

completely divergent¹². This is especially important because, even if much was agreed on in Lisbon, missile defense has become the relationship's *measuring stick*. Unless an agreement is reached, relations will be damaged again.

The second part of the paragraph also addresses a key issue: the right of interference in internal affairs of sovereign states for humanitarian reasons, based on the so-called responsibility to protect (known by the acronym R2P), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005 and implemented for the first time with the Security Council's approval in March 2011 Res. 1973, which allowed the military action in Libya against the Colonel Gaddafi's regime. Russia is extremely reluctant towards this idea, although it did not use its veto right and abstained just like the rest of the BRIC (Brazil, India and China) and Germany.

The Russian view is that the NATO military intervention in Libya greatly exceeded what was authorized by the UN Security Council Resolution 1973. In the words of Putin, the sacred principle of State sovereignty is being now undermined by justified armed conflicts carried out for humanitarian purposes. In his opinion, the use of the principle R2P in different ways according to the interests of some States must be avoided, even if he agrees with the idea that the International Criminal Court should punish crimes against humanity. The only way to ensure compliance with international law is that no one usurps the powers and duties of the UN Security Council. He especially warns against the severe temptation of the NATO to do so, exceeding its logical tasks as a "defence alliance".

The "Arab Spring": lessons and conclusions

Closely related to the foregoing section, Putin has expressed his opinion on the uprisings that started in 2011 in the Arab world. Starting from an initial backup of both the Russian government and citizens, the demands of change and democratic reforms, the Russian leader explains that, in many cases, these uprisings have only contributed to replace one oppression for another, together with a persecution of political opponents. This negative

(¹²) See RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *La postura de Rusia ante el escudo antimisiles de la OTAN: ¿una vuelta a la Guerra Fría?*, FUNCIVA Comment on current events, available in: http://www.funciva.org/uploads/ficheros_documentos/1322237590_la_postura_de_rusia_ante_el_escudo_antimisiles_de_la_otan.pdf.

nuance benefited from external military interventions in favour of one of the two sides. He cited as the peak and paradigm the arrest and lynching of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya in “not even Medieval but primitive scenes”.

Of course, this vision gives rise to Putin to justify Russia's position against Syrian crisis¹³. He states that the key lies in achieving an end to violence as soon as possible, regardless of its origin, as well as initiating a dialogue involving all elements of society, without preconditions, without the intervention of foreign forces and respecting the Syrian full sovereignty. Based on these principles, Russia was negotiating in the Security Council of the UN when it was introduced in February a draft resolution. Moscow and Beijing rejected it for its alleged ambiguity since it did not demand to the opposition exactly what the Damascus government had been demanded: the withdrawal of armed militias in the cities, to achieve what Russia considers essential, the protection of civilians.

In this regard, Putin warns against the reaction of his Western colleagues against the Russian-Chinese veto, describing it as “bordering on hysteria”, and he mentions, once again, the existence of a temptation to elude the UN Security Council and to form an ad hoc coalition for military intervention. For this reason, he reminds that the right of veto is not a whim but an inherent part of the conflict management system, which is included in the United Nations Charter, precisely by US request. On a more practical level, Putin does not conceal the Russian displeasure caused by the results of these riots: just as it happened in Iraq, Russian companies conducting important businesses in the Arab countries have been excluded and replaced by Western corporations. This, according to him, questions the real reasons for intervention.

Another key issue is the fact that the attempts to impose a political model from outside have had the opposite effect that the one intended. Putin cites the emergence of extremist religious political powers that are removing the secular nature of these States (appears to be

(¹³) On this issue, see also RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *¿Qué explicación tiene la postura de Rusia ante la crisis en Siria?*, Comment in actualidad FUNCIVA, available on: http://www.funciva.org/uploads/ficheros_documentos/1328786539_que_explicacion_tiene_la_postura_de_rusia_ante_la_crisis_en_siria.pdf.

occurring in Libya, Egypt and even Tunisia)¹⁴. Putin highlights the good relations between Russia and the States with a moderate version of Islam, which is the same regime as traditional Russian Muslims have adopted (with Sufism as a doctrine)¹⁵. In this sense, and although Putin did not mention it, the contrast with the Wahhabi doctrine, promoted by Saudi Arabia, which in turn is the ideological roots of the radical Islamist international terrorism, cannot be more obvious.

Finally, besides reiterating the Russian commitment to finding a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as part of the “quartet” (USA, Russia, UN, EU), an important reflection has been made about the role of new technologies and social networks in the Arab uprisings in particular and in the world:

- Among the positive aspects, Putin mentions the increase in communication capacity offered on the Internet, the use of “soft power” as a tool for external action of the States, the freedom of speech, the civilized work of humanitarian and philanthropic NGOs (even those who criticize the public authorities), and the possibility of acting in an open and transparent way as pressure groups that anticipate the interests of the States and other actors as does Russia, for example, with the “Russian Cooperation Agency” or the “Russian World Fund”.
- Among the negative aspects, he states the possibility for criminal and terrorists groups to use these networks, which are used to incite acts of terrorism, separatism and nationalism, or to manipulate the public opinion and intervene in sovereign States' external affairs. Putin also highlights that some pseudo-NGOs are seeking to

⁽¹⁴⁾ To conduct an analysis on how this process has taken place in certain ways in Iraq, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *El Irak que quedó atrás*, IEEE Analysis Document, available on: http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2012/DIEEEA15-2012_FJRG_El_Irak_que_quedo_atras.pdf.

⁽¹⁵⁾ There are about 15 million Russian citizens who follow the Islamic faith, mainly concentrated in the Autonomous Republics of the North Caucasus (Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia) and of the Volga Region (Tatarstan, Chuvashia and Bashkortostan).

destabilise some countries and that their interests and resources do not arise from local social groups but are externally funded and controlled from the outside¹⁶.

New challenges and threats

The next section "Russia and the Changing World" is about the "New challenges and threats", some of which have already been mentioned in the introduction. Nuclear proliferation is Russia's main concern. With respect to Iran, Putin's key ideas are the following:

- The Iranian conflict must be resolved peacefully. A military strike against Iran could have catastrophic consequences and it is impossible to estimate its magnitude a priori.
- Teheran's right to develop a civilian nuclear program, including the possibility of enriching uranium, needs to be recognized.
- On the other hand, a complete control of all the Iranian activities in this field needs to be carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency.
- Should all these conditions be met, all the sanctions, including the unilateral ones, could be suspended.

Regarding North Korea, a country bordering the Russian Federation, its nuclear status is "unacceptable" for Putin, since it involves a violation of the "non-Proliferation Treaty" (NPT), and the completion of two nuclear tests. However, in this case, he also considers that there is no military solution to the crisis, and that priority should be given to political and diplomatic means (Six-Party Talks between U.S., Russia, China, Japan and the Koreans), the reconstruction of mutual trust in the Peninsula and, most importantly, take advantage of the change of leadership in Pyongyang in order to try to advance the process.

¹⁶) An example of this issue would be the NGO "Golos" (Голос means in Russian both "voice" and "vote") set up in 2000 to supervise electoral processes. It is accused by pro-Kremlin media of being financed by the U.S. Department of State through its cooperation agency USAID. The "Live News" channel made public 60MB of data about an exchange of information between "Golos" and USAID in December 2011, enclosing some reports on how provided funds had been spent. See <http://www.lifenews.ru/news/76604> (only available in Russian).

In this area the statement that foreign military interventions are a precursor of further nuclear proliferation is also highlighted, since the obtaining nuclear weapons would "reinforce" the States against the foreign interference. Without naming the U.S., there is no doubt that the overwhelming superiority of conventional forces, as demonstrated in Iraq in 2003, led to two diametrically opposed movements in the countries grouped by President Bush in his famous "axis of evil":

- In the case of Libya, Gaddafi resigned in December 2003 from his programs of weapons of mass destruction in return for which Libya was readmitted as a responsible member of the international community.
- Concerning Iran, the regime of the Ayatollahs accelerated its programs, in the assurance that possession of nuclear weapons, or at least the ability to obtain them, would prevent the country from suffering the same fate as Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime¹⁷.

The document continues with an extensive reference to the vision of Russia on Afghanistan, the neighbouring country to which Russia wants "*a peaceful development, sustainable and, above all, to stop being the focus of drug trafficking.*" On the basis of that support that Russia offered to the military operation of 2001, Putin notes that despite the efforts of the international community the threat of terrorism and drug trafficking have not decreased. The most worrying scenario for Moscow is that the U.S. withdrawal in 2014 left behind an unstable country, an exporter of Islamic radicalism and heroin¹⁸ to Russia through the Central Asian republics, and the remaining U.S. military bases in the latter (as the basis of Manas in Kyrgyzstan) without closing deadline.

⁽¹⁷⁾The fate of Gaddafi seems to indicate that Tehran is not going too far out as to which option best ensures their safety and the fate of the regime, which in turn would reinforce Putin's vision on the impact of a threat of external intervention in the nuclear proliferation.

⁽¹⁸⁾ In Russia 70 tons of heroin a year are consumed, which represents 21% of the world consumption. The number of heroin addicts in the Russian Federation is estimated at two million people, with an HIV infection rate of about 37%. About a quarter of the Afghan heroin production, which in 2011 increased by 40%, comes from Russia through Central Asia. This is a full-scale problem for Moscow public health and order. Data obtained from "RIA Novosti".

To cope with it, Russia offers a greater involvement, not only individual but also by the multinational organizations it leads¹⁹, but on condition that the international force in Afghanistan acts to destroy opium poppy crops and laboratories for drug treatment. Besides this fundamental interest, Putin is willing to help build a stable Afghanistan, in which a process of reconciliation with the armed opposition can be developed, provided that they renounce violence, recognize the country's constitution, and break all ties with Al-Qaeda.

That reference to Al-Qaeda precisely serves to link with Putin's view of the threat of international terrorism, based in a series of ideas that Russia has defended since long before this question completely attracted the attention of the international community:

- The political instability is the main breeding-ground for terrorism.
- The focus of the threat is closer to Russia than to EEUU or Europe.
- The Global Strategy of the UN to fight this phenomenon has not turned into a coherent plan accepted by all countries.
- The action against terrorism must be constant and not only in reaction to the specific events such as the 11-S or the slaughter in a school of Beslan.

Even though the coordination among police and intelligent services in recent years has been improved, it still exists the temptation of cataloguing the terrorists according to double standards²⁰, depending on the fact that their actions could favour, currently, the interests of certain States. The civil society must take part in the prevention of the phenomenon, being key the role of the interreligious Dialogue, to which Russia can

⁽¹⁹⁾ Putin mentioned the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Organization of Collective Security Treaty (CSTO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). On the OCS, see Francis J. RUIZ GONZALEZ, *La Organización de Cooperación de Shanghái en su X aniversario*, IEEE Document Analysis, available at: http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA18_2011OrganizacionCooperacionShanghai.pdf.

⁽²⁰⁾ It is clear that, even though he does not mention it, with this argument Putin criticises the sympathetic attitude of some occidental countries towards the Chechen terrorists through the nineties. In 1999, when the second war of Chechnya began, nobody supported Russia, even though the Afghanistan of the Taliban was the only State that recognised the independence of Chechnya between 1996 and 1999, and despite the fact that Moscow has advised Washington about the links of the Chechen extremists (such as Shamil Basayev) with Ben Laden and Al-Qaeda. The dramatic events of the 11-S have entailed for the United States a finding of the fact that they have underestimated the threat.

contribute with its internal experience as a multi-faith country.

The regional approach of the Russian foreign policy

After that, Putin devotes three important epigraphs to the main lines of foreign action of Russia: the Asia- Pacific, the rest of Europe and the United States.

The first analysis is that, if we consider that the aforementioned order is a reflect of the importance that Putin gives to each region, that means an important change towards the Russian traditional view, because in all the previous doctrinal documents the euro-centric approach was very pronounced. Since this fact coincides in time with a similar position in the United States, it proves that Europe (that is, the EU) is still losing strategic relevance for the other centres of global power, a tendency that should be stopped in the immediate future.

Regarding the “strong role of the Asia-Pacific region”, the ideas- forces of Putin are:

- The growth of the Chinese economy is not a threat, but a challenge with a great potential to achieve business cooperation, from which Russia can benefit to the development of its Far East²¹.
- The Chinese external action does not show that it aspires to a world primacy, so Moscow will continue collaborating closely with Peking within the UN, as one of the BRICS, in the G-20 and in the aforementioned SCO.
- The main problems with China, like the delimitation of borders, are solved, which does not mean that problems such as conflicting commercial interests²², a low level of mutual investments or possible uncontrolled migratory population flows do not exist.

⁽²¹⁾On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *El lejano oriente ruso ¿fortaleza o debilidad de la Federación?*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA07_2011LejanoOrienteRuso.pdf.

⁽²²⁾ On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *El papel de los recursos energéticos en la relación Rusia-China*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA27-2011ElPapeldelosRecursosenlaRelacionRusia-China.FRuibz.pdf.

- The importance of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), chaired by Russia in 2012 and whose next summit will take place in Vladivostok.
- The institutional development of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which includes 3 billion people and 25% of global GDP.

According to the same Schedule, what Putin calls the “European factor” can be summarized in:

- Russia is an inalienable and organic part of the “Greater Europe”, the wide European civilization. Its citizens feel Europeans, and building “the European Union” – an economic and human common space- from the Atlantic to the Pacific is of the interest of Russia.
- The economic boom of the emerging powers contrasts (“painfully”, in the words of Putin) with the EU economic disruptions. The EU is the main economic and commercial partner of Russia, so Moscow will continue supporting the Stabilizing measures of the FMI and does not preclude direct financial support.
- Russia supports the view of a strong EU promoted by Germany and France and a subsequent integration with the Federation of that Union reinforced by a free trade area or even by a union of the economies from “Lisbon to Vladivostok”.
- In the bilateral relationship, energy is a keystone. The start-up of the North Stream²³ gas pipeline (and, at the time, that of the South Stream²⁴ one) will bring to Europe a flexible and safe distribution system, which does not depend on the political whims of the transit countries.
- In this connection, the “third energetic package” promoted by the European Commission in order to make the investment of the Russian business difficult does

(²³) On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Novedades y tendencias en la geopolítica europea del gas*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA31_2011GasRuiz.pdf.

(²⁴) On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Geopolítica del gas: las novedades en el corredor sur de suministro a la UE*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2012/DIEEEA10-2012_FJRG_Geopolitica_del_gas_las_novedades_en_el_corredor_sur_de_suministro_a_la_UE.pdf.

not contribute to building relations²⁵. If it is coupled with the increasing instability of some producing regions different from Russia, that restrictive legislation should be completely annulled.

- A real cooperation between Russia and EU will be impossible while there are barriers which prevent personal and economic contacts such as the visa rules. To its permanent abolition (something in which Russia continues to emphasise), the bases were established last December.

To conclude with this regional approach, Putin includes the epigraph "Russian-US relations" that outlines:

- The instability of the relations, with periods of improvement and periods of deterioration, as a result of the phobias and traditional stereotypes that still exist.
- The obvious lack of a solid economic rationale in the relation, with a very low level of commercial exchanges and investments between them.
- The negative influence of the systematic attempts of the US to realise what Putin call "political engineering" in the Russian and the rest of the post-Soviet election campaigns.
- The Russian concern about the Missile Shield, because nowadays it will only be useful to compromise the Russian capacity of nuclear deterrence, highlighting that this can jeopardise the progresses achieved with the sign of the new START Treaty.

He concludes this epigraph by mentioning a current conversation with Henry Kissinger, with who Putin says he often meets. During this conversation they agreed on the fact that in periods of international turbulence, close and trust relations between Moscow and Washington are especially needed.

Other issues

The document of Putin ends with another two epigraphs called "Economic Diplomacy" and

(²⁵) On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Cumbres del G-8 y de la UE-Rusia: postura rusa ante los eventos clave de la actualidad internacional*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA16_2011CumbresG-8_UE_Rusiapdf.pdf.

“the support to the compatriots and to the Russian culture abroad”.

With regard to the first, he highlights the conclusion of the negotiation on Russia's accession to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), after 18 years of negotiation. For this reason, Putin thanks the last offer of the President Obama and other European leaders. To this end, the transposition of the WTO principles to the regulation of the “Single Economic Area” that Russia has with Byelorussia and Kazakhstan.

It is also mentioned the lack of reciprocity in the open of the markets to respective investments, with cases in which for example Russian investors couldn't buy “Opel”, despite the position in favour of the German government and trade unions, or the constrains enforced to the Russian business in order to profit on their investments, once made, in Centre and East Europe. Therefore, Russia will use the appropriate political and diplomatic tools in order to accompany the Russian businesses abroad, without excluding the possibility of implementing response measures to deal with those that practice unfair competition.

It highlights that Putin raises an important change in the strategic culture of Russia, claiming that his huge territory (taking into account even the losses caused at the end of the Cold War) continues being the main asset of Russia, not to protect it from invasions like in the past, but to own the main nature reserves of the world, including the freshwater ones that the future President considers such as one of the main treasures of the nation.

In the other epigraph, Putin states what it has concerned Russia since the disappearance of the URSS: the situation of the Russian ethnic minorities that stayed out of the new borders of the Federation. Twenty years later, with Estonia and Latvia as members of the EU and the NATO, the question of the “non-citizens” is not solved yet, status that Putin describes as “shameful”, and that affects one out of six Latvians and one out of thirteen inhabitants of Estonia, what deprives them of fundamental political, electoral, economic and social rights.

Finally, it is mentioned that Russia is heiress of a strong culture, but it invests very little in its promotion in the global market, despite it being an important element of soft power. Changing this trend is necessary, trying to make the most of events such as the APEC summit, The G-20 and the G-8 summits that will take place in Russia in 2013 and 2014

respectively, the Universiade of Kazan in 2013, the winter Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014 or the Football World cup in 2018.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

To start with, it needs to be noted that the document called "Russia and a changing world" is a point of reference to understand the current global strategic scene, since Vladimir Putin deals with most of the issues in which the international community are interested in, no matter whether they agreed or not with the diagnostic made.

Putin left the Presidency on May 2008, in a period particularly difficult to the relations between Russia and the Western world. His successor, Medvedev, started his mandate in June 2008 in Berlin with a proposal to establish a new pan-European order of security that ends definitively with the legacy of the Cold War. Unfortunately, the events of August of that same year in Georgia left the ghosts of the past more alive than ever but they also brought to light how appropriate the proposal of Medvedev was and were an incentive to find more conciliatory proposals with the Federation.

In this sense, the achievements of Medvedev are the improvement of the relations with Ukraine, after the victory of Yanukovich in the presidential elections of 2010; the three-way negotiation efforts with Armenia and Azerbaijan in relation to the conflict of Nargorno-Karabaj; the shutdown of the S-300 anti-aircraft missiles distribution to Iran in retaliation for the nuclear programme; the customs union with Byelorussia and Kazakhstan; the abstention in the vote of the resolution 1973 of the Security Council; the clear improvement of the relations with Poland ²⁶; the restarting of the activity of the "NATO-Russia Council" at the Lisbon Summit in 2010; the holding of the Astana Summit of the OSCE; and, above all, the resetting of the relations with the US, with important agreements such as the signing of a new START.

Nevertheless, there are still many problems on the horizon, questions that Putin will have to

⁽²⁶⁾ On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., *Las relaciones ruso-polacas y su influencia en la UE*, Analytical Document of the IEEE, available on:

http://www.ieeee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA13_2011Relacionesruso_polacasyUE.pdf.

address on the action lines included in this document. In that regard, the first reflection is that Russia will continue acting in the next six years according to its strategic culture, kept without interruption during its age-old history (except from the years 1992-1993, when it just yearned to be one more State in the Euro-Atlantic Institutions), that it has very clear national interests and the will to defend them and that its restored condition of great power does not allow the harbouring of hopes, as certain people seem to think, of ignoring their positions as happened in the nineties before its chaotic internal situation.

Therefore, the Western world has two equally legitimate ways: an open clash with Russia, as the US Republican candidate for president, Mitt Romney, seems to postulate when he declared that Russia is "*the main geopolitical enemy of the US*"²⁷, or the second one that will be the cooperation based not only on the conjectural interest of tackling some common threats, but also some values that, despite certain isolated differences, are shared by the geographic area that goes from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as inheritance of a single European Civilization.

In fact, to almost everything said by Putin in this document we can achieve common understanding between the three major actors of the region (US, EU and Russia), and only the existing prejudices with regard to the relation that are still alive seem to hamper it. Promoting mutual trust and rejecting maximalist positions, not adopting double standards when dealing with themes as public freedoms and human rights in Russia, in terms which are not used in other regions of the planet (as, for example, the Persian Gulf), should be the first step. To that end, the cliché adopted by Putin of having more belligerence with the Western world than his predecessor, promoted to internal consumption of the nationalist bases of the United Russia Party, does not help much.

The maintenance of the UN's role as the only source of the legitimacy of the involvement of the international community in the internal affairs of a State; the fight to the death against radical Islamist international terrorism and its ideology; the fact of curbing the nuclear proliferation if Iran and North Korea and the joint development of the anti-missile defence

(²⁷) "Mitt Romney Says Russia Is No. 1 Geopolitical Foe", *ABC News* (29.3.2012).

shield towards that potential threat; an stable and pacific Afghanistan, that does not shelter terrorists or massively export opiates; or a greater energy security and legal mechanisms that promote mutual investments and commercial trades. All the aforementioned are areas where a close coordination of the United States, the EU and Russia will optimise individual efforts.

Nevertheless, special mention should be made of a basic difference in the relation of Russia with the United States and the EU. In the first case, the strategic objectives of Washington, in its condition of only world superpower, can be achieved easily if Russia contributes, or at least, if it does not constitute a bar, to the US action, but it is not a *sine qua non* condition. That is, the United States does not recognise the need to have Russia as an indispensable strategic partner, what is very often reflected in its attitude towards Moscow.

However, the relation between Russia and the EU is based on completely different terms. In this case, it is a vital that a two-way association exists for both. It has been perceived in that way, for many years, by countries such as Germany, France, Italy and Spain that, in view of the impossibility of seeking European-wide arrangements, strong bilateral links with Russia outside the Community framework have been established, but it will still be necessary that also the European Commission and other East countries be definitively aware of that reality.

In that sense, towards the dependence of the EU of the external energy supply and the mounting lack of physical and legal security of other supplier areas such as the north of Africa, the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Guinea or Latin America, it needs the energetic resources of Russia. But it will also benefit from other natural resources (such as the freshwater mentioned by Putin); from the highly important human and intellectual capital of the Russian people; from the common efforts in the settlement of the "frozen disputes" that still remain in our continent; or from the projection towards Asia of the Russian Federation, complex field where the European interests are also at stake. Finally, even in the crisis management there are many lacks in the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU, in terms of military capabilities, that could be covered by agreements with Russia²⁸.

(²⁸) On this subject, see RUIZ GONZÁLEZ Francisco J., "Las relaciones Unión Europea-Rusia, la Asociación

In all these domains, Russia also needs the EU, which is its main customer when exporting hydrocarbons, an example of the two-sided relationship between them. The renewal of “The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” of 1997, expired in 2007, on the basis of the four “common spaces” of 2003 and the “roadmaps” established in 2005 that develop these last ones and that should be the basis of the new strategic association, that is going to be the most important one for the future of the EU together with the maintenance of the transatlantic link with the United States.

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