

# Confrontation in Eastern Europe: The Russian Challenge to the European Union

by Roger E. Kanet

## INTRODUCTION

A quarter century after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR, relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union are frozen, in large part as a result of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine and the ensuing economic and political sanctions imposed on Russia by both the EU and the United States. But, the conflicts between the two sides extend much further than just to the issue of Ukraine. Other potential flashpoints, from Nagorno Karabagh and the secessionist regions of Georgia, to frictions in Russian relations with the Baltic states, and Russian meddling in domestic politics in European countries are all evidence of the fragility of relations between Russia and the European Union. Over the course of the past decade, Russia has increasingly challenged the existing global order to which the member states of the EU have been strongly committed for more than half a century. It has also begun to challenge the Union itself, as well as the democratic institutions upon which the national governments of the EU are based.<sup>1</sup>

In the following pages we intend to trace the factors that explain the shifts in Russian policy from the early to mid-1990s, when Russian leaders were committed to joining the international system dominated by the European Union and the United States, to the present confrontation between Russia and the West.<sup>2</sup> Why has the relationship deteriorated as it has? I will first discuss briefly the essentially unsatisfactory nature of relations between the Russian Federation and the West; from the Russian perspective, in the 1990s, and their role in determining the central goals that have driven Russia's evolving sense of identity and policy since Vladimir Putin came to power at the turn of the century. I will note the aspects of Western policy that seemingly led to the decision in Moscow, around 2005, that cooperation with the West on terms of equality was impossible and that Russia should forge ahead to achieve its own objectives, even if that resulted in confrontation with the

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West. This decision resulted in the so-called “gas wars” with Ukraine in 2006 and 2009, the Russo-Georgian war of August 2008, and more recently the intervention in Ukraine since 2013, including the absorption of Crimea into the Russian Federation and the ongoing military support for the government of President Bashar Hafez al-Assad of Syria, an assessment of which will comprise the final substantive section of the article. All these Russian policies contributed to the growing confrontation in relations between Russia and the European Union, as did EU efforts to tie East European states more closely to the EU itself.

### **FROM THE SHORT-LIVED HONEYMOON TO THE POLICY SHIFT UNDER PUTIN**

During the 1990s, when Russia was attempting to adjust to its new and reduced post-Soviet status and seemed willing to join with the West, Europe and the U.S. generally ignored Russia’s interests and expanded their own involvement into what had been the Soviet sphere of domination. This expansionist approach, which included NATO intervention in the former Yugoslavia, despite strong and persistent Russian opposition and growing Western criticism of political developments in Russia itself, culminated in the middle of the 2000s with the extension of both NATO and the EU into Central Europe and the Baltic region, the EU’s commitment to a new Eastern Neighborhood policy even further east, and Western support for the “color revolutions” that deposed Moscow’s allies in Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Bishkek and brought to power groups committed to closer ties with the West.<sup>3</sup>

Although Russian policy toward the West had begun to shift in the mid-1990s, as the United States and its NATO allies intervened militarily in the former Yugoslavia, ignoring and challenging Russian interests, it was not until Vladimir Putin became president — and most clearly, after the Bush Administration’s unilateral decision to invade Iraq, the expansion of both NATO and the EU eastward, and the challenge of the “color revolutions” — that Moscow decided that achieving security and foreign policy objectives on the basis of cooperation with the West was impossible.<sup>4</sup> The result has been a shifting sense of identity that differentiates Russia from Europe and a growing challenge to the dominant position of the West, both in Central and Eastern Europe and globally, as Russia has pursued the goal of reestablishing its position as the preeminent regional power across Eurasia and as a top global actor.

The Western initiatives that impacted relations with Russia so very strongly had their roots in the 1990s but expanded with the decisions of the

United States to intervene militarily in Iraq as part of the new “War on Terror.” Moscow, as well as several U.S. allies, strongly opposed that policy, which set the stage for a broader deterioration of East-West relations. The second set of developments that impacted Russian relations with the European Union was the EU and NATO’s expansion eastwards, the EU’s Eastern neighborhood policy, and the EU’s support for the color revolutions. Although Russian leaders strongly opposed NATO’s expansion eastward, they did not initially oppose post-communist states joining the European Union.<sup>5</sup>

By the early 2000s, however, Russia recognized that EU membership not only would cut into future markets for Russian exports, but was also part of a much more comprehensive economic-political-social approach — part of the European Union’s game plan for integrating East European states and societies into the Western order and, thus, undercutting long-term Russian interests in the region. The development of the Eastern Neighborhood program, which aimed at tying six former Soviet republics closely to the EU, without granting full membership, along with visible support for the political upheavals in several post-Soviet states, referred to as the color revolutions, were important factors in the evolving tensions in Russo-EU relations. As viewed in Moscow, these were disguised efforts of Western governments and Western NGOs to shift the political orientation of these countries toward closer ties with the West.<sup>6</sup> As Vladimir Putin has noted much more recently, “We see what tragic consequences the wave of so-called color revolutions led to. For us this is a lesson and a warning. We should do everything necessary so that nothing similar ever happens in Russia.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, by 2005, the leadership in Moscow viewed the continued entrance of post-communist states into European political, economic, and security institutions as a long-term challenge to Russia’s commitment to reestablish its dominant position in Eurasia and to reclaim its role as a major global power. This development directly impacted relations between the two sides. President Putin’s commitment to reestablish Russia’s role as a global power — through a combination of assertive domestic and foreign policy initiatives and the good luck of exploding world market prices for energy — allowed Russia to reemerge as a major player in Eurasia and world politics. It was around this time that Putin publicly claimed that the collapse of the USSR had been the most catastrophic geopolitical event of the twentieth century and that he began asserting that NATO and the United States were serious threats to Russia and international security.<sup>8</sup>

President Putin’s wide-ranging attack on the United States and the West, at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, represents a rhetorical watershed in Russian foreign policy, for it announced that Russia was once

again a major international actor and would no longer follow the lead of the West in pursuing its security and foreign policy interests. It also indicated that Russia saw itself as a pole in the international system separate from, and in conflict with the West. It is at roughly this time that Moscow also began to assert itself rhetorically in response to Western charges that it was corrupting or abandoning democracy.<sup>9</sup> For example, in response to EU and US criticisms of the quality of Russian democracy, the Russians argued that they had their own special form of “sovereign democracy” that had a great emphasis on the sovereignty aspect, what Nigel Gould-Davies terms “sovereign globalization.”<sup>10</sup> It is during this time that concrete Russian policy actions targeting Western interests, including those of the European Union began.

The initial major confrontation with the European Union concerned the “gas wars” of 2006 and 2009 between Russia and Ukraine, cutting off natural gas supplies to EU member countries in mid-winter as a spillover result from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the military intervention in Georgia in 2008 (when the Georgian president decided to use his new US-built military to force the reintegration of secessionist territories), and economic boycotts and cyberattacks against new EU member states, which Russia was in increasing political disagreement with. All these conflicts had their roots in the West’s push eastward and Russia’s determination that further Western encroachment into what Moscow viewed as its legitimate sphere of influence had to be stopped and reversed.<sup>11</sup>

In the case of the “gas wars,” the issue was the longstanding division over both costs of Russian supplies to Ukraine and Ukrainian transit charges for Russian gas being marketed to Europe. Until the Orange Revolution and the overthrow of the pro-Russian government in Kyiv, this issue had been successfully worked out each year. Now, however, with an EU-friendly government in Ukraine, it became a deal contingent on the relative political status of the two countries. This impasse resulted in a showdown in which Moscow accepted the costs to its longer term economic relationship with the EU for failure to deliver gas supplies, which resulted in the complete shutdown of gas flowing to Ukraine, as part of Moscow’s objective of showing Ukraine who was the dominant actor in the dispute.<sup>12</sup> As part of the commitment to reestablish Russian dominance in post-Soviet space, Russia could not appear to back down in the dispute with Ukraine, even if that resulted in long-term costs with the EU, who began a strategy of energy diversification to shift energy reliance away from Russia — a strategy that has contributed to the deterioration of relations between Russia and the EU.<sup>13</sup>

In many respects the underlying issue that led to the five-day war between

Russia and Georgia in August 2008, contributing to the deterioration of Russian-EU relations, had similar root: Russia's growing opposition to the continued shift of former Soviet republics toward integration into Western-dominated institutions. The Rose Revolution had brought to power in Tbilisi a government committed to closer ties to the West, including first and foremost NATO membership and expanded ties to the EU. In other words, from Moscow's perspective, developments were likely to move counter to Russia's goal of reestablishing preeminent position within former Soviet space. Even though NATO was not yet prepared to accede to President Bush's desire to admit Georgia to membership in 2008, Georgian president Saakashvili decided that the refurbished military that NATO and the United States had provided through the Partnership for Peace program could be used to resolve the longstanding problems associated with Russia's frozen-conflict strategy in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia.<sup>14</sup> The result for Georgia was a total disaster. Russia forces overwhelmed the new Georgian army, the secessionist provinces declared their formal independence, emulating the Kosovo example, and the Russian Federation officially recognized their independence. The Russian military intervention sent a clear message to several audiences — the Georgians, the Ukrainians, and the Americans most clearly — that after more than a decade of verbal opposition to NATO expansion, Russia was now in a position, and willing, to use military means to prevent further eastward expansion, even if this meant a further deterioration in relations with both the United States and the countries of Western Europe, resulting in Western sanctions to “encourage” Russia to reconsider the wisdom of its policy.<sup>15</sup>

Besides these broad negative developments in East-West relations, several other factors contributed to the increasing frigidity of the relationship. Most important was the entrance of former communist states into full membership in the European Union, which brought with them concerns and animosities toward Russia based on decades, or centuries, of past dealings.<sup>16</sup>

Russia's willingness to coerce and bully small neighbors revived serious fears among new EU members about the prospects for their long-term security in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia. In 2007, for example, after the Estonian government decided to move a Soviet war memorial from the center of Tallinn to its international military cemetery, Russians — in both Estonia and in the Russian Federation — mounted attacks on the Estonian government in Tallinn and its embassy in Moscow. This was followed Russian oil and coal delivery cut-offs and a massive cyber-attack that virtually closed the entire information technology sector of this former Soviet colony. In addition, after bilateral disagreements with Russia, both

Poland and Lithuania used their “veto” power to prevent for more than a year and a half the negotiation of a new partnership agreement between the EU and Russia. At a joint meeting between the EU and Russia in May 2007, these and other issues split the two sides and precluded any meaningful agreement on issues deemed important by either side.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, during the period of Putin’s second term as Russian President and into the Medvedev presidency, Russian relations with the European Union and with its major member countries deteriorated significantly. Russia no longer saw the EU as a largely irrelevant institution around which it was easily able to maneuver. Even though the European Union lacked a unified response to relations with Russia, during this time, on issues such as energy dependence, overall relations declined significantly. Russian challenges to the EU’s claims to moral authority and the charge that the EU pursued a double standard expanded during this period.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, by the time that Vladimir Putin turned over the presidency to Dimitri Medvedev in 2008, relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union had deteriorated both as part of the general developments in East-West relations, which included the United States, but also for reasons independent of the Russo-American confrontation. The four years of the Medvedev presidency did little to change the overall nature of Russian-EU relations, even though Medvedev was able to pursue a somewhat more liberal foreign policy.<sup>19</sup>

### **THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND THE COLLAPSE OF EU-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

In a series of articles published prior to the 2012 presidential elections in Russia, then prime minister and presidential candidate Putin laid out his new foreign policy program which was now focused on “preserving Russia’s distinct identity in a highly competitive global environment.”<sup>20</sup> Abandoning the remnants of earlier efforts to integrate into the West-dominated international system, Putin emphasized the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Russian civilization and how Russia represented the core of a special Russian world composed of people who associate themselves with traditional Russian values, such as the Eastern Slavs of Belarus and Ukraine. He also argued that Russia should be the center of a large geo-economic unit, or Eurasian Union, consisting of political, cultural, economic and security ties between the states of the former Soviet republics. Putin argued the importance of defending indigenous values in a highly-globalized world and highlighted how this new vision promotes that path. He maintained that Europe has taken a negative turn from its historical model that existed prior to the 1960s



and now possesses a “post-Christian” identity that values moral relativism, a vague sense of identity and excessive political correctness.<sup>21</sup> Putin concluded that European countries have begun “renouncing their roots, including Christian values, which underlie Western civilization.”<sup>22</sup> Putin rather emphasizes the values of old Europe, while stressing Russia’s unique ones rooted in the Orthodox Christian tradition. These values include the union between a man and a woman and the sanctity of family, religion, the centrality of the state, and patriotism.<sup>23</sup> This set of arguments is relevant to relations with the West, and the EU in particular, since it lays the ideological groundwork for Russia’s merger with post-Soviet states into a Eurasian political and economic union, in direct competition with the EU’s Eastern Neighborhood Policy and the incorporation of countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus into a broad EU-centered political-economic system.

By the time of the presidential election campaign of 2012, Russian leaders clearly viewed the emergence of a special relationship between the European Union and additional post-Soviet states such as Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia as a direct challenge to long-term Russian interests in the region and a threat to the campaign to reestablish Russia’s role as the dominant regional power and a major global actor. In part, as noted by Mikhail Molchanov, this confrontation between Russia and the EU resulted from the latter’s decision that those countries that opted for involvement in the EU’s Eastern Neighborhood policy had to forego any special economic ties with other international institutions, such as Mr. Putin’s proposed Eurasian Union. In many respects, closer economic ties to the EU were actually economically disadvantageous to countries like Ukraine which could market its industrial products in the emerging Eurasian Union, but was hardly competitive in industrial production when dealing with the countries of the European Union.<sup>24</sup> Since the EU insisted on an “all or nothing” approach from those to whom they offered Neighborhood status, countries such as Ukraine were forced to make a choice between a westward or eastward orientation.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, when Russia began to push its Eurasian integration project, the geopolitical confrontation with the EU escalated.<sup>26</sup> This is important for our understanding of the Russian explanation of their policy in the Ukraine crisis and its impact on overall relations with the European Union. As Foreign Minister Lavrov has stated in repeating the points made by President Putin,

*The EU Eastern Partnership program was also designed to expand the West-controlled geopolitical space to the east.... There is a policy to confront the CIS countries with a hard, absolutely contrived and artificial choice – either you are with the EU or with Russia. It was the use of this approach to Ukraine that pushed*

*that country...to a profound internal political crisis.*<sup>27</sup>

After Vladimir Putin resumed the presidency of the Russian Federation in 2012 he moved forcefully to implement plans for the consolidation of the Eurasian Union. In the western portion of former Soviet territory this meant that Russia and the European Union were both actively pursuing six states — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. In reality, the competition focused on Armenia and Ukraine and, to a lesser extent Moldova. Russia initiated a major pressure campaign to “encourage” these countries to opt for EEU membership — from economic and security threats targeted against Armenia, should the latter decline to join the organization, to major loans to Ukraine as part of a membership package.<sup>28</sup> By summer of 2013, it was clear that Georgia and Moldova were prepared to counter Moscow and to strengthen their ties with the European Union, that Belarus and Armenia would join Russia’s Eurasian Union, and that Azerbaijan would remain outside both organizations. Ukraine, under the government of President Yanukovich, attempted to play off the EU and the EEU as long as possible and eventually scheduled a signing ceremony with the European Union for fall 2013. When Yanukovich announced in November 2013 that Ukraine would, instead, join the Eurasian Union, massive demonstrations against his government broke out that eventually resulted in his fleeing the country, a new Western-oriented government coming to power.<sup>29</sup> The change in government led to direct Russian military intervention in Ukrainian affairs, including the Russian incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation and support for Russian and Russophone secessionist elements in southeastern Ukraine.<sup>30</sup>

Almost immediately the European Union and the United States introduced sanctions against Russia as punishment for the latter’s military intervention in Ukraine and in the hope of convincing the Russians to rethink their policy and to withdraw their support and their troops from the *de facto* Ukrainian civil war. As Peter van Ham has noted,

*Since Russia’s annexation of Crimea (in March 2014) and its on-going support for anti-government rebels in eastern Ukraine, relations with the EU have deteriorated. The EU no longer considers Russia a strategic partner and has made it clear that its sanctions policy will remain in place until Russia is prepared to recognize the integrity and sovereignty of its neighbors.*<sup>31</sup>

## **THE RUSSIAN CHALLENGE TO THE EUROPEAN ORDER**

More than three years after the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, of Russian



intervention in that crisis, and the introduction of Western sanctions, little has changed in the overall relationship. The confrontation continues, the sanctions are still in place, and relations are still frozen. Russia has proven to be more resilient than many in the West had expected. Despite the collapse in international energy prices and the costs associated with the sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States, the Russian economy appears to be in the process of stabilizing, with growth of 1.1 and 1.2 percent predicted for 2017 and 2018, respectively.<sup>3233</sup> More important, the sanctions and the ensuing domestic economic problems in Russia have not influenced the political leadership — or the general population, for that matter — to initiate a significant shift in Russian policy. In fact, Russia's assertive policy in Ukraine, as well as more recently in Syria, have become an important part of the Putin regime's drawing upon growing nationalism to strengthen its political support among a large portion of the population — this is despite the economic malaise already noted as a result of the economic sanctions.<sup>34</sup> Not only has Russia not backed off from its confrontation with Europe and the US, but it has also taken that confrontation to its opponents by intervening in the political process of a number of countries by providing substantial support to extreme nationalist, rightwing political movements, in different forms, especially cyber involvement in elections.<sup>35</sup>

As we have demonstrated throughout this discussion, Russian relations with the European Union have declined precipitously since the turn of the century and the commitment under President Putin to reestablish Russia's dominant role in regional and global affairs. Given the Russian political elite's commitment to re-establishing Russia's place as a major global power, as well as its own control over the Russian domestic political system, assertive nationalism by the Russian Federation has become an important instrument in accomplishing both of those objectives. The European Union, which a quarter century ago was viewed in Moscow as a benign development, is now seen as a challenger for influence in post-Soviet space and as an impediment to Russia's reestablishment as the dominant actor in Eurasia and as a major player in global affairs. This competition lay at the root of the confrontation that exploded in Ukraine in 2013-2014, which continues to sour relations almost four years later.

Prospects for a significant improvement in relations in the foreseeable future are dim, since the longer-term goals of Russia and those of the European Union contradict one another.<sup>36</sup> The Russian leadership's commitment to reestablish a dominant position across Eurasia comes into direct conflict with the specific EU objectives of stabilizing post-Soviet space in Eastern Europe and the more general objectives that have been in place

ever since the Second World War of establishing and strengthening, along with the US, the liberal international order that has been dominant for the past quarter century.

As Russian leaders, from Vladimir Putin to Sergei Lavrov, have made most clear in recent years, Moscow does not accept the fundamental principles that underlie the current international system and will do whatever it can to undermine that system.<sup>37</sup> Military intervention in Georgia and Ukraine, cyber-attacks against a range of post-communist states, support for radical nationalist groups in EU member states, meddling in the electoral processes of democratic states in Europe and North America are all tools that Russia has used in recent years to help weaken the Western-dominated international system in place since the end of the Cold War.<sup>38</sup>

The confrontation between Russia and the European Union will continue until one side or the other abandons some of the objectives that have been central to their policy — in effect, to its sense of identity — which is highly unlikely to occur in the near future.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of this effort can be seen in the recent meddling in the electoral process of some countries in the EU, support for right-wing political movements that are nationalistic and authoritarian in orientation, and similar attacks against the United States. See John R Schindler, “Putin’s Support for Europe’s Far-Right Just Turned Lethal,” *Observer*. October 27, 2016. Available at <http://observer.com/2016/10/putins-support-for-europes-far-right-just-turned-lethal/> and Ronald Browstein, “Putin and the Populists,” *The Atlantic*, January 6, 2017. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/putin-trump-le-pen-hungary-france-populist-bannon/512303/>.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that it is impossible to discuss Russian-EU relations without considering the impact of the United States and of US-Russian relations on the former. See Roger E. Kanet, “Russia, the EU and the United States: Intertwined Relationships”, in Kanet and Maria Raquel Freire, eds., *Russia and European Security*. (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Republic of Letters Publishing, 2012) , 147-177. The current article, in part, builds on this earlier analysis, as well as on Roger E. Kanet, “The Russian Challenge to the European Union,” *Debater a Europa*, (University of Coimbra), and is included with permission here.

<sup>3</sup> Analysts such as George F. Kennan and Stephen If. Cohen warned already in the 1990s that NATO expansion would initiate a new cold war. See Thomas Friedman’s interview with Kennan, *New York Times*, 2 May 1998, Russian discussions of the color revolutions as a form of irregular warfare are summarized in Tony Papert, “Mocow Conference Identifies ‘Color Revolutions’ as War,” *Executive Intelligence Report*, 13 June 2014, pp. 7-11. available at [http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2014/eirv41n24-20140613/07-25\\_4124.pdf](http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2014/eirv41n24-20140613/07-25_4124.pdf); Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia*. New York: W. W. Norton, Updated edition Pub. 20.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of this change see Roger E. Kanet and Nuray Ibryamova, „Verpaßte Gelegenheiten? amerikanisch-russische Beziehungen in den 90er Jahren,“, *Osteuropa*, 51: 8 (2001), 985-1001.

<sup>5</sup> See James Green, “Russian Responses to NATO and EU: Enlargement an Outreach,” Cha-

- tham House, Russia and Eurasia Programme, June 2012. [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0612bp\\_green.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0612bp_green.pdf).
- <sup>6</sup> On Russian resistance to color revolutions see Abel Polese, and Donnacha Ó Beachán, “The Color Revolution Virus and Authoritarian Antidotes: Political Protests and Regime Counterattacks in Post-Communist Spaces,” *Demokratisiya*, 19;2 (2011), 111-132.; on the role of Poland in supporting democratic elements in Ukraine see Tsveta Petrova, “Polish Democracy Promotion in Ukraine,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (April 2014), [http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/10/16/polish-democracy-promotion-inukraine/hs21?mkt\\_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRoku6nNZKXonjHpfsX54%2BsvXq%2Bg38431UFwdcjKpMjr1YEATcp0aPyQAgobGp515FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D](http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/10/16/polish-democracy-promotion-inukraine/hs21?mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRoku6nNZKXonjHpfsX54%2BsvXq%2Bg38431UFwdcjKpMjr1YEATcp0aPyQAgobGp515FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D); On the argument that the West *de facto* manipulated the color revolutions see Paul Craig Roberts, “Russia’s Rise to Global Power,” *Strategic Culture Foundation*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2014/05/22/russia-rise-to-global-power.html>; On the growing ideological divide between Moscow and the West see Joan DeBardleben, “Backdrop to the Ukraine Crisis: The Revival of Normative Politics in Russia’s Relations with the EU?” in Roger E. Kanet and Matthew Sussex, eds., *Power, Politics and Confrontation in Eurasia: Foreign Policy in a Contested Area*. (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- <sup>7</sup> Darya Korsunskaya, “Putin says Russia must Prevent ‘Color Revolution’”, Reuters, *Yahoo! News*, 20 November 2014, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/putin-says-russia-must-guard-against-color-revolutions-135807378.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> In a speech to the Russian people in 2005 President Vladimir Putin stated: “The collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century. For the Russian people, it became a real drama. Tens of millions of our citizens and countrymen found themselves outside Russian territory. The epidemic of disintegration also spread to Russia itself.” see Vladimir Putin, ‘Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation’, April 25, 2005,’ *President of Russia, Addresses to the Federal Assembly*. [http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031\\_type70029type82912\\_87086.shtml](http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml).
- <sup>9</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Putin Slams US for Making World More Dangerous,” *DW—World. DE Deutsche Welle*. February 10, 2007. <http://www.dw6.world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2343749,00.html>.
- <sup>10</sup> Nigel Gould-Davies, *Russia’s Sovereign Globalization: Rise, Fall and Future*, Research Paper (London: Chatham House The Royal Institute of International Affairs, January 2016), 2. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russias-sovereign-globalization-rise-fall-and-future>.
- <sup>11</sup> See Polese, and Ó Beachán, “The Color Revolution Virus”; Papert, “Moscow Conference Identifies ‘Color Revolutions’ as War”; and Putin, “Putin Slams US for Making World More Dangerous.”
- <sup>12</sup> For the rationale of Russian policy in the gas wars see Dina Moulioukova and Roger E. Kanet, “Decoding Russia’s Energy Security. Perceptions Matter,” in Piet, Rémi, Bagley, Bruce, and Zorovich, Marcello R.S., eds., *Energy Security and Environmental Policy in the Western Hemisphere*. (New York: Lexington Books, 2017), 275-98.
- <sup>13</sup> Frank Umbach, “Global Energy Security and the Implications for the EU,” *Energy Policy*, 38:4 (2010), 122-40. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421509000421?via%3Dihub>.
- <sup>14</sup> See Thomas Ambrosio, “Instrumentalising the Frozen Conflicts of the Greater Black Sea Region,” in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security*. London: Routledge, in press; Luke March, “Nationalist Grievance and Russian Foreign Policy: The Case of Georgia,” and John B. Dunlop, “The August 2008 Russo-Georgian War: Which Side

Went First?" in Maria Raquel Friere and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *Russia and Its Near Neighbours*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 63-88, 89-105.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of Russian policy leading to the five-day war in August 2005 see Bertil Nygren, "Russia and Georgia: From Confrontation to War. What is Next?" in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 101-20.

<sup>16</sup> Joan DeBardeleben, "The Impact of EU Enlargement on the EU-Russian Relationship, in Roger E. Kanet, ed., *A Resurgent Russia and the West: The European Union, NATO, and Beyond*, (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Republic of Letters Publishing, 2009), 93-112; Anke Schmidt-Felzman, "Is the EU's Failed Relationship with Russia the Member States' Own Fault?" *L'Europe en Formation*, 4: (2014), 40-60. Available at <https://www.cairn.info/revue-l-europe-en-formation-2014-4-page-40.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Christian Lowe, "EU Snubs Russian Requests at Frosty Summit," *Reuters*, May 18, 2007. Reprinted in *Johnson's Russia List*, no. 2007:113, available at [www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/](http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/); Judy Dempsey, "EU and NATO Seek to Quell Russia-Estonia Spat," *International Herald Tribune*, May 3, 2007. Available at <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/05/03/news/union.php>; "Bronze Meddling: Russian Hypocrisy and Heavy-Handedness Towards a Former Colony," *The Economist*, 5 May 2007, 65; and "A Cyber-Riot," *The Economist*, May 12, 2007, 55.

<sup>18</sup> See Iver B Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. (New York: Routledge, 2014); Roger E. Kanet, "The Failed Western Challenge to Russia's Revival in Eurasia?" *International Politics* 52:5 (2015), 503-522; and Isabelle Facon, "The EU-Russian Summit in the Light of the Georgian Crisis," *European Issues*, no. 17, 10 November 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Russia's Breakout from the Post-Cold War System: The Drivers of Putin's Course*. (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center), 22 December 2014. <http://carnegie.ru/2014/12/22/russia-s-breakout-from-post-cold-war-system-drivers-of-putin-s-course-pub-57589>.

<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Putin, "A new integration project for Eurasia: The future in the making," *Izvestia*, October 3, 2011, <https://russiaeu.ru/en/news/article-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-new-integration-project-eurasia-future-making-izvestia-3->; Vladimir Putin, "Russia and the changing world," *Moscow News*, February 27, 2012, <http://worldmeets.us/Moskovskiy.Novosti000001.shtml#axzz4xs0qNxbK>.

<sup>21</sup> Masha Gessen, "Russia Is Remaking Itself as the Leader of the Anti-Western World," *Washington Post*, March 30 2014, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/russia-is-remaking-itself-as-the-leader-of-the-anti-western-world/2014/03/30/8461f548-b681-11e3-8cc3-d4b-f596577eb\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/russia-is-remaking-itself-as-the-leader-of-the-anti-western-world/2014/03/30/8461f548-b681-11e3-8cc3-d4b-f596577eb_story.html).

<sup>22</sup> "Russia Will Develop as Democratic State, Defend Christian Values—Putin," *Voice of Russia*, September 19, 2013, [https://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/news/2013\\_09\\_19/Russia-will-develop-as-democratic-state-defend-Christian-values-and-morality-Putin-2355/](https://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/news/2013_09_19/Russia-will-develop-as-democratic-state-defend-Christian-values-and-morality-Putin-2355/).

<sup>23</sup> Trenin, *Russia's Breakout*.

<sup>24</sup> Mikhail A. Molchanov, "Choosing Europe over Russia: What has Ukraine Gained?" *European Politics and Society*, 17:3, (2016), 380-395; Mikhail A Molchanov, "Regionalism and Multivectorism in Europe's Borderlands: The Strange Case of Ukraine," in Roger E., ed. Kanet, *The Russian Challenge to the European Security Environment*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 211-34. As Putin argued in his speech in Sevastopol justifying the occupation of Crimea, the West's actions in eastern Europe such as support for the color revolutions and the NATO membership promise to Georgia and Ukraine were offensive in

- nature. "Crimea Crisis: Russian President Putin's Speech Annotated," *BBC News*, March 19, 2014. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26652058>.
- <sup>25</sup> The dramatic deterioration of US-Russian relations at this same time also contributed to the general decline of the EU's relations with the European Union. For example, U.S. legislation passed in 2012 targeting Russian political leaders associated with President Putin for their presumed role in the death of the Russian civil rights lawyer Sergei Magnitsky received a very hostile response in Moscow. Max Seddon, and Neil Buckley, "Russia: Magnitsky's Bitter Legacy," *Financial Times*, June 12, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/1eb38914-2ca4-11e6-a18d-a96ab29e3c95>.
- <sup>26</sup> Richard Sakwa maintains that EU policy has consistently attempted to exclude Russia from Europe. See his "The New Atlanticism: The Alternative Atlantic Security System." *Russia in Global Affairs*, 21 September 2015. Available at <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-New-Atlanticism-17695> and his more comprehensive argument in *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*. (London: Tauris, 2015).
- <sup>27</sup> Sergei Lavrov, "Conferencia del Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Serguéi Lavrov sobre la política exterior de Rusia," October 20, 2014. [https://spain.mid.ru/blogosfera-y-periodistas/-/asset\\_publisher/w90ODju28zfw/content/id/8014711](https://spain.mid.ru/blogosfera-y-periodistas/-/asset_publisher/w90ODju28zfw/content/id/8014711).
- <sup>28</sup> Stephen Blank, "Russia Pressures Armenia to Join Customs Union," *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 27 August 2013. <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12793-russia-pressures-armenia-to-join-customs-union.html>.
- <sup>29</sup> Oksana Grytsenko, "Yanukovich Confirms Refusal to Sign Deal with EU," *KyivPost*, 26 November 2013. <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yanukovich-confirms-refusal-to-sign-deal-with-eu-332493.html>.
- <sup>30</sup> Boris Barkanov, "Crisis in Ukraine: Clash of Civilizations or Geopolitics," in Roger Kanet and Matthew Sussex, eds., *Power Politics and Confrontation in Eurasia: Foreign Policy in a Contested Region*, (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 228-30.
- <sup>31</sup> Peter van Ham, "Introduction," in *The EU, Russia and the Quest for a New European Security Bargain*. Clingendael Report, November 2015, 3. [https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2015/eu\\_russia\\_rapport/](https://www.clingendael.nl/pub/2015/eu_russia_rapport/).
- <sup>32</sup> Rebecca M. Nelson, *U.S. Sanctions and Russia's Economy*. R43895. (Washington: Congressional Research Service, 17 February 2017), 6.
- <sup>33</sup> "Russian economy seen growing from 2017 onwards: World Bank," *Reuters*, May 23, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-worldbank/russian-economy-seen-growing-from-2017-onwards-world-bank-idUSKBN18J1DK>.
- <sup>34</sup> Mikhail Alexseev and Henry Hale, "A New Wave of Russian Nationalism? What Really Changed in Public Opinion after Crimea," Policy Memo 362, *Ponars Eurasia*, May 2015. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/new-wave-russian-nationalism>.
- <sup>35</sup> Oren Dorell, "Alleged Russian political meddling documented in 27 countries since 2004," *USA TODAY*, 7 September 2017. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/09/07/alleged-russian-political-meddling-documented-27-countries-since-2004/619056001/>; Edward Graham, "Russian Election Meddling in Europe Growing Bolder, Officials Say," *Morning Consult*, June 28, 2017, <https://morningconsult.com/2017/06/28/russian-election-meddling-europe-growing-brazen-officials-say/>.
- <sup>36</sup> The following argument assumes that the commitment to an integrated Europe that has characterized the EU for the past half century continues to flourish. The author is aware of the negative implications of the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and the rise of authoritarian and nationalist political movements across several EU countries for the continued strengthening of integration.

<sup>37</sup> For a more complete discussion of this issue see Roger E. Kanet, “Russia and Global Governance: The Challenge to the Existing Liberal Order,” *International Politics*, (2017).

<sup>38</sup> In some respects, Russia has been joined by the United States under President Donald Trump as an opponent of globalization and of many of the global institutions still supported by the European Union. [Thomas Wright](#), “Trump, Xi, Putin, and the axis of Disorder,” Brookings, 8 November 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/11/08/trump-xi-putin-and-the-axis-of-disorder/>.