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The Ukraine conflict: Russia's challenge to European security governance¹

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Introduction

Russia's role in the Ukraine conflict, in particular its intervention in eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, appears to mark a turning point in the evolution of European security governance. Official Western statements claim that Russia's actions constitute a threat to regional and even global security. President Obama has stated that the US stands at the forefront of "opposing Russia's aggression against Ukraine, *which is a threat to the world*" [Wintour 2014, p. 8; emphasis added]. Prime Minister David Cameron, at an EU summit behind closed doors, compared the risk of appeasing Putin to the situation with Hitler prior to World War II [Traynor & MacAskill 2014]. A UK Government report concluded that Russia's policies represent '*a strategic threat to NATO... Member States must now be prepared to invest in NATO capabilities to enable the Alliance to deter, and if necessary counter, this threat*' [House of Commons 2014, p. 7; emphasis added]. The NATO Wales Summit Declaration declared that 'Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine have fundamentally challenged our vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace *[with] long-term consequences for peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and stability across the globe*' [Wales Summit Declaration 2014, p. 1; emphasis added]. The European Parliament 'strongly condemns Russia's aggressive and expansionist policy, which constitutes a threat to the unity and independence of Ukraine and *poses a potential threat to the EU itself*' [European Parliament 2015; emphasis added]. A leading commentator on European affairs summarises the widely held view: 'revisionist Russia emerges as a largely unpredictable player, which no longer gives prime importance to

¹ The author is indebted to Natasha Kuhrt, Kataryna Wolczuk, Mark Webber and Stefan Wolff, as well as an anonymous reviewer, for very helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

abiding (even in appearance) by international law, with a neo-imperial vision in the form of the Eurasian project and an across-the-board enmity for Western institutions in Europe and Western values in the world' [Heisbourg 2015, p. 34].

Western policy-makers have promised a robust response. NATO has pledged to reverse the decline in Allies' military spending, improve its defence capabilities, bolster the NATO Response Force, conduct more regular live exercises and forward deploy air, ground and naval assets in the Baltics, Poland and Romania. These measures have been accompanied by US and European sanctions against the Putin regime. The US Freedom Support Act [2014], designed to assist the government of Ukraine in restoring its sovereignty and territorial integrity, has condemned Russian aggression and – rhetorically at least - lined European countries up behind a policy of containment. Official statements - in Obama's own words, aimed at the 'mobilization of world opinion and international institutions' to counter Russian claims [*Remarks by the President* 2015] – have sought to marginalise alternative narratives by placing Russia 'on the wrong side of history' [Lewis et al 2015] and dismissing any suggestion of appeasement [see Charap and Shapiro 2015, p. 38]. With Moscow responding in kind, as we shall see, the reciprocal delegitimation of the 'other' appears to have had a profound effect on the European security environment: Russia's relations with Europe are no longer based upon 'dependable expectations of peaceful change' [see Webber 2007, p. 61] but appear to present an intractable 'security dilemma'.

Yet there is uncertainty about Moscow's strategic objectives and disagreement among Western policy elites over the extent of the challenge posed by Russia. A report commissioned in advanced of the NATO Wales Summit concluded that the Ukraine conflict generates risks unprecedented since 1989 but 'does not presage a return to the Cold War. Russia and the West are not engaged in a global ideological contest for influence, nor are their differences the organizing principles of international politics' [Group of Policy Experts 2014, p. 2]. EU policy papers have indicated that the door remains open to re-engagement with Russia if a resolution of the Ukraine conflict can be found [*Issues paper on relations with Russia* 2015]. The view that 'Putin surely has no place in the high councils of an international system whose rules and values he so blatantly subverts' [*The Observer Editorial* 2014, p. 42] contends with the opinion of distinguished former practitioners that NATO and the EU have failed to understand Russia's security interests and that NATO's escalatory response 'amounts to more of the same, with little if any assurance of better outcomes'; they argue that a serious diplomatic effort to

re-establish the core principles of the European political order must be sought [Matlock et al 2014]. One authoritative scholar warns of the danger of 'escalation dominance' and the need to resume diplomacy to dispel uncertainty about Russian decision-making by seeking shared understandings about thresholds and boundaries [Freedman 2014, pp. 9-10].

The academic literature has seen a tendency for scholars to resurrect previous debates rather than offering a critical analysis of the security implications of the Ukraine conflict. Mearsheimer [2014a, 2014b] argues that the 'logic of realism' has trumped liberal interpretations of international affairs; in the absence of 'world government to protect states from one another' and the West's weakening structural and ideational power, Russia inevitably responds 'ruthlessly' to threats to its core interests: 'International law and human rights concerns take a back seat when vital security issues are at stake'. His recommendation - to make Ukraine a neutral buffer and forego further NATO enlargement - echoes Kissinger's and Brzezinski's preference for the 'Finlandisation' of Ukraine [Brzezinski 2014; Kissinger 2014]. Wohlforth also heralds "'the return of Realpolitik'" to explain US-Russia confrontation, while arguing that a 'far more thickly institutionalized' international system constrains revisionist power and limits the chances of a power transition [Wohlforth 2015]. Sakwa provides a much more subtle analysis, pointing to Europe's failure to 'deepen[] the structures and practices of liberal internationalism within the framework of a shared continental vision', but also concludes in realist vein that the EU's normative agenda is vitiated by the 'geopolitical aspirations of the new Atlanticism to extend its zone of influence to the east' [Sakwa 2015a, pp. 566-7; see also Sakwa 2015b, pp. 48-9]. Realism's preoccupation with geopolitics and material structures does not capture the multiple causal factors - political, ideational, identity – influencing the nature of this intra-European conflict. Prominent liberal scholars have rejected realist prescriptions as legitimising aggression against Ukraine and called on the West to respond to the challenge of Putinism, but offer little in the way of scholarly enquiry [Garton Ash 2015, p. 33]. Empirical academic contributions have offered more interesting analyses of the legal aspects of Russia's intervention [Burke-White 2014; Kaminski 2014], domestic politics [Allison 2014] and the challenges posed to arms control and nuclear non-proliferation [Yost 2015; see also *Survival* Forum 2015].

However, the existing literature has given much less consideration to the political and institutional consequences arising from Russia's challenge to the European order and to the belief systems that inspire Russian behaviour. This paper seeks to redress this shortfall through an explanatory framework based in the concept of security

governance, as the most appropriate one for our empirical considerations: the response of NATO and the EU to Russia's revision of the rules-based order, and Russia's criticism of European institutional arrangements while claiming a bigger regional role, are crucial events in the evolution of the wider Europe. The problem we address revolves around two questions. First, to what extent is Russia's intervention in Ukraine shaped by a more assertive defence of its interests in its neighbourhood and inspired by a revisionist approach to the European rules-based system of security governance? Second, how do Western institutions and states respond to Russia's actions and manage the changing environment of European security governance?

This paper proceeds in five stages. We first outline key ideas in the security governance literature about the evolution of the post-Cold War European security order, particularly with respect to Russia's role. Second, we examine Russian debates on the Ukraine conflict, highlighting conflicting trends in Russian thinking about the changing strategic and normative environment. Third, we consider European institutions' reaction to the conflict and to what extent the premise of Russia's exclusion, as a result of the West's policy of containment and deterrence, or self-exclusion now constitutes a structural factor in the security politics of the wider Europe. Fourth, we analyse the challenges facing both Europe and Russia and how the Ukraine conflict may impact on the European security order. In conclusion, we consider what the prospects are of re-shaping this order to give real meaning to partnership and shared security governance: is the institutionalised system of European security now aimed unambiguously at constraining Russia's purported revisionist intentions, or are there prospects for re-engaging Russia?

A central aim in this paper is to interrogate the policies of the institutions and actors through which the practices of security governance are played out. Accordingly we adopt an interpretive approach to policy analysis, based on extensive research into official policy documents from Russia, sourced primarily from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President's web sites, and into official NATO, EU and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) documents. This is backed up by secondary source material written by authoritative Russian and Western scholars and policy commentators on the political and security implications of the Ukraine conflict.

Russia and European security governance

The concept of security governance has developed as a framework to analyse ‘the coordinated management and regulation’ of European security arrangements by multiple authorities, acting both formally and informally and involving states and non-state actors, and the ways in which regulation is ‘structured by discourse and norms, and purposefully directed towards particular policy outcomes’ - the regulation of inter-state relations based on trust, the voluntary acceptance of common goals and collectively recognised norms of interaction that underpin order [Webber et al 2004 p. 4; Webber 2007 p. 62-3]. Empirical analysis focuses on coordination, how actors interact and which of them leads policy-making; on management, meaning risk assessment and negotiation to mitigate risk; and on regulation, and the motivation underpinning policy objectives. Much of the literature on security governance has centred on Europe², and the institutional and normative regulation of security challenges by NATO and the EU. This reflects the fact that NATO and the EU became the preeminent actors in developing in Europe a system of regulation that can claim wider legitimacy; the institutional settlement following the end of the Cold War was predisposed to a Euro-Atlantic understanding of order and Russia, mired in domestic problems and much less influential than during the Soviet period, was unwilling or unable to challenge this order [Flynn and Farrell 1999]. With time, however, the ‘idea that global solutions to security problems can better be achieved through the existence and the practices of post-Westphalian states... spurred debates on the exportation of *the* European system of security governance’, including to the EU’s eastern neighbourhood [Christou et al 2010, p 344; see also Kirchner and Sperling 2007].

A closer look at this process is needed. In the closing years of the Cold War the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) encouraged the acceptance by all European states of what were at the time groundbreaking principles of inter-state cooperation, within a framework of sovereignty and non-intervention, to underpin the rules for co-existence in Europe [Pourchot 2011, pp 180-1]. States would refrain from the threat or use of force; aim at peaceful settlement of disputes; respect human rights and basic freedoms; ensure equal rights and self-determination of their peoples; and fulfil their obligations under international law. The principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act, a political declaration of intent, instituted a nascent security regime in which Europe’s states recognised the indivisibility of European security. But the Helsinki principles also served ‘to articulate shared aspirations as well as to codify formally extant practices’, and shaped the views – including

² A notable exception is the 2010 edited volume by Emil Kirchner and James Sperling on patterns of global governance, which contains a chapter on Russia [see Averre 2010].

about human rights - of Soviet elites which inspired both Gorbachev's domestic reforms and 'new thinking' in foreign policy [Herman 1996, p. 290]. The norms of inter-state and domestic behaviour were legitimised in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and subsequently accepted by the Yeltsin leadership. This laid the foundations for a pluralist European international society: with the emergence of the OSCE, the wider Euro-Atlantic space was institutionalised in an inclusive process of decision-making, guided by 'change and adaptation to the shared [] values of the organization as a whole' [Pourchot 2011, p.192]. An underlying assumption was that this institutionalisation would become a causal factor for reform in Russia and the post-Soviet states.

However, this did not lead to the emergence – favoured by Moscow – of the OSCE as the central European security organisation. Within an evolving governance environment underpinned by CSCE/OSCE norms, NATO and the EU proceeded to take on the leading role in managing and regulating the security agenda in Europe. In successive Strategic Concepts NATO made a conceptual shift away from territorial defence and deterrence to encompass a broader, cooperative approach to security management [Webber et al 2004, p. 9]. The Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, both of which included Russia, signalled the inclusive nature of the Alliance's thinking. The 1997 NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council failed, largely due to Russian resentment over NATO's intervention in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia over Kosovo, but the NATO-Russia Council (established in 2002) provided a forum for bilateral consultations in recognition of Russia's unique role in European security. Nevertheless, NATO's overwhelming institutional power, encompassing many security-related issues and promoting a European security order firmly based in liberal values and norms, was perceived by Russia as marginalising it; at the same time, the Alliance's enlargements to the east were interpreted by Moscow as the actions of a powerful military organisation exploiting Russia's weakened position in regional security [Webber et al 2004].

Even though NATO-Russia relations appeared to be moving towards partnership, for European elites the Alliance remained 'the organisation of reassurance should conditions deteriorate in the Balkans ... or tensions heighten with Russia'; Russia inherited 'the status of NATO's great power opposite' and 'continued to contest the notion that NATO in any way represents the legitimate expression of a pan-European international society' [Webber 2011, pp. 146, 155]. Then president Dmitrii Medvedev's proposals for a European Security Treaty - focused on the principles of inter-state relations, arms control regimes, confidence and security building

measures (CSBMs), conflict settlement and new security challenges - omitted any reference to the OSCE humanitarian 'basket' of relations [*The Draft of the European Security Treaty* 2009]; it was not regarded as a suitable basis for negotiations by European states and was relegated to the OSCE Corfu process, where no consensus was reached [see Evers 2011]. Moscow's challenge to Europe to find a formula for shared management of the European security order was thus explicit well before the Ukraine conflict. The perceived danger to Russia of a NATO presence in eastern Europe, and particularly the 'open-door' pledge to Ukraine and Georgia made at the 2008 Bucharest summit (despite the reservations of influential member states), continued to vex Moscow.

The EU too, as reflected in its 1999 Common Strategy on Russia and the 2003 European Security Strategy, had a clear strategic goal of promoting European stability and security through deeper partnership with a Russia undergoing 'far-reaching transformation', including in their shared neighbourhood. This included 'a permanent policy and security dialogue', conducted both bilaterally and within the OSCE, on *inter alia* conflict prevention and crisis management [*Common Strategy on Russia* 1999]. The launch at the May 2003 EU-Russia Summit of a 'common space on external security' – essentially a means of encouraging shared security governance rooted in common values - became part of the extensive institutional architecture of the relationship, bolstered by increasing bilateral links on trade, energy and internal security. However, the EU's vision of a transformative foreign policy, promoting democratic reform, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights in the neighbourhood, and its growing authority in key areas of security governance – suggesting a readiness to project power further afield [Richter 2016, p. 48; Webber 2007, p. 132] - began increasingly to unsettle Russia's security establishment. Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' in 2004 did much to trigger the shift in thinking in Russia's governing elite. Brussels' offer to Kiev in 2008 of an Association Agreement (AA) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) – which promised to bind Ukraine more closely into the EU's rules-based trade model and advance political and security cooperation - together with the subsequent launch of its Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative, raised fresh concerns in Russia that its own interests and integration projects in the post-Soviet space were being challenged [Gretskiy et al 2014, pp. 379-80]. A German-Russian initiative for joint EU-Russia conflict resolution, the Meseberg Memorandum, was scuppered by the EU; from 2011 there was no meeting of the Permanent Partnership Council, the main body for Russia-EU political co-operation at the ministerial level [House of Lords 2015, p. 27; Sakwa 2015b, p. 29].

The efforts of NATO and the EU to incorporate Russia as a partner in shaping a changing Europe, where the regulation of complex security issues would be inspired by the logic of building an inclusive regional community of states committed to a collective purpose, went far beyond the nascent security regime embodied in the CSCE. As Flynn and Farrell [1999, pp. 529-30] have argued, ‘the ordering process is not simply the consolidation of a larger Western sphere of influence in order to manage from a more advantageous position the balance of power with Russia... the new normative framework is clearly not simply a reflection of power relationships or the imposition by Western states of their security interests and notions of social organization on weaker states’. However, attempts by NATO and the EU to extend their form of order to the east – part of a broader vision of transformation in Europe – were perceived by Russia in terms of its own security logic: EU policy was ‘hatched by the Brussels supranational and unaccountable bureaucracy, which was carried away by temptations of grandeur and geopolitical self-assertion... Russia continued to be contained’ [Yakovenko 2014, p. 5]. In Moscow’s eyes, Brussels was effectively aiming to cement its own ‘sphere of influence’ [see Christou 2010, p. 425]. The OSCE was undergoing its own deepening systemic crisis stemming from Russia’s, and other former Soviet states’, resistance to the West’s supposed attempt to ‘dictate’ its values and norms [Lavrov 2013b; see also Webber 2007, p. 211].

It was thus already clear that the ‘strategic, even visionary attitude’ that characterized the ‘grand project to consolidate the political, economic and security condition of post-communist Europe’ was failing [Stivachtis/Webber 2011, pp. 103-4]. The Euromaidan – in actual fact a popular uprising against Yanukovich’s rapacious regime - was presented by Moscow as Europe ‘trying to compel Ukraine to make a painful choice between east and west, further aggravating internal differences’ [Lavrov 2014b, p. 28]. The NATO/EU transformative mission in the east – whether in the form of enlargement or deeper engagement through the EaP - has come up firmly against Moscow’s challenge to both the distributive and regulative components of the post-Cold War settlement [see Webber 2007, pp. 43-4, 141-2]: Russia’s intervention has produced a sharp shift in the logic of relations that challenges many of the assumptions on which European security governance has been built. Can Europe now rely on institutionalised, normatively constituted forms of governance in the face of Moscow’s different threat perceptions and adherence to sovereign national interests?

Russian debates on the Ukraine crisis

As highlighted in the previous section, the security governance literature focuses on how regulation is structured by discourse and norms and directed towards policy outcomes [Webber et al 2004, p. 4]. In this section we explore the discursive construction of security within Russia's domestic political environment, focusing in particular on Russia's behaviour in the Ukraine crisis, in order better to understand why its system of knowledge and beliefs clashes with European discourse and norms. Is there a structured set of ideas that Russia's governing elite draws on in its Ukraine policy and its interaction with other European security actors [see Christou et al 2010, pp. 345-6]? Here we draw on primary sources, together with analysis by the expert community, to examine the ideas which Russian elites have promoted in the Ukraine conflict.

The legal normative claims put forward by Moscow assert that Yanukovich's removal constituted an 'unconstitutional coup', endorsed by Western advocates of democracy promotion, by extremist nationalist forces which pose a serious threat to ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers. The intervention by Russian forces in eastern Ukraine – supposedly by invitation from Yanukovich as the 'legitimate' president, and initially denied but later admitted to by Moscow – was aimed at protecting and supporting the Russophone population. Crimea's secession was compared by foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to Kosovo's secession from Serbia; he defended it as being in line with international legal norms, invoking a 1970 UN General Assembly declaration on the right of peoples to self-determination, and declared that the principle of territorial integrity should be observed in the case of states which allow self-determination and do not attempt to restrict that right, arguing that the Ukraine 'coup' deprived Kiev of that authority [Lavrov 2015f; for a critical analysis see Allison 2014, pp. 1259-68]. Moscow also claimed that existing treaty arrangements with Ukraine over the strategic Black Sea Fleet base were invalidated by the unconstitutional coup, which meant previous commitments to respect Ukrainian sovereignty were unnecessary.

Moscow has launched a sustained information campaign, repudiating Western criticism in an often shrill diplomatic offensive, including scarcely veiled threats.³ The litany of Russian grievances runs as follows.

³ Vitalii Churkin, Russia's Ambassador to the UN, has warned that 'The representative of Ukraine would be well advised to choose his words more wisely... if that path [Georgia's attempt to enlist US support in its 2008 conflict with Russia] is chosen, while using colourful words about the role of Russia, this will end very sadly for Ukraine – even more sadly than the events we have seen over the past year' [*United Nations Security Council*

Europe backtracked on the agreement of 21 February 2014, brokered with Yanukovich and aimed at a political settlement with opposition groups to create a government of national unity, and has since been manipulated by the ‘illegitimate’ Kiev authorities, which are pursuing an ‘ultranationalist’ agenda and perpetuating weak governance. Kiev refuses to engage in direct dialogue with authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and is sabotaging the Minsk-2 Agreements – signed by Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany on 12 February 2015 and endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution [S/Res/2202, 2015] – which provide a framework to resolve the conflict with the involvement of the OSCE and the Trilateral Contact Group [Lavrov 2015a, 2015b]. Moscow claims it is being penalised by Western sanctions and a freeze in relations, which will remain in force until it fulfils its part of the Minsk-2 Agreements; it insists that reinstatement of full control of the state border by the Ukraine government and the withdrawal of all foreign armed forces can only happen after constitutional reform, negotiated together with the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, that includes decentralisation, an amnesty for separatists and a special status for the latter [Lavrov 2015c]. Putin himself has repeatedly justified Russia’s intervention in terms of both international law and ‘truth and justice’ [Putin 2014b, 2014c], deploring the longer-term damage to relations from what it perceives as a concerted attempt by the Poroshenko government to revise the history of World War II and rehabilitate fascist sympathisers, and to play down historical cultural and linguistic ties between Ukraine and Russia [see Putin 2014e].

Russia’s pursuit of its normative and political goals, if necessary at the expense of Ukraine’s sovereignty, thus rests on its rejection of the legitimacy of the post-Yanukovich constitutional order. However, Russian statements have also gone beyond legal normative arguments to encompass political, economic and humanitarian dimensions of a broader confrontation between Russia and the West that traces its roots to well before the Euromaidan. Motivated by the belief of conservative elites that liberal reform under Yeltsin left the country hostage to Western interests, Putin has asserted that Ukraine is only a pretext for attempts to contain Russia and undermine its sovereignty: ‘Either we remain a sovereign nation, or we dissolve without a trace and lose our identity... They would gladly let Russia follow the Yugoslav scenario of disintegration and dismemberment’ [Putin 2014a]. Lavrov has stated that he has ‘serious grounds to suppose’ that sanctions are an attempt at destabilisation and regime change in Russia (Lavrov 2014a). Russia’s Security Council also highlighted the

2015b]. The ongoing dispute at the OSCE between Russia’s representatives on the one hand and the US and Ukraine, largely backed up by the EU, on the other can be followed in documents from the plenary meetings of the OSCE Permanent Council at <http://www.osce.org/resources/documents/decision-making-bodies>.

likely use of ‘the technology of “colour revolutions” against Russia [*Russian Federation Security Council* 2015]. Moscow has repeatedly underscored Russia’s refusal to accept the West’s ‘domination’ of world affairs and its ‘zero-sum’ attempt to enlarge its ‘geopolitical space’ in Europe and spread Western civilisational models and norms; it argues that the diffusion of global power and influence favours a UN-centred ‘polycentric’ international system, with the collective management of global affairs based on the core principles of sovereign equality of states, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity [Lavrov 2015c, 2015g]. Russia’s new military doctrine reflects Moscow’s perception of the dangers it faces in a hostile external environment, in which military contacts with the West are downgraded to Cold War levels, so that ‘a watershed has been passed’ [Trenin 2014; see *Voennaya doktrina* 2014].

Russian statements are not averse to misrepresentation. They play down the intervention of Russian forces in support of anti-government groups in eastern Ukraine, the factor that Western governments see as the main source of continuing instability. Moscow’s defence of the annexation of Crimea was rejected in the UN General Assembly majority vote deeming the March 2014 referendum in Crimea and Sevastopol invalid and recognising Ukraine’s territorial integrity (despite 11 votes against and a large number of abstentions) [*United Nations General Assembly* 2014; Kaminski 2014; Yost 2015, p. 537]. Rather than fomenting regime change, the West’s response to the Euromaidan was in fact quite passive, and the EU in particular hoped that the 21 February agreement would produce a settlement; nor is there any evidence that Brussels coerced Kiev into signing the AA [Dragneva and Wolczuk 2015, pp. 30-2, 96-7]. A UN report has concluded that Russian minorities in Ukraine - though concerned that the Euromaidan movement would diminish the status of Russian language and culture - experienced no sense of political discrimination or exclusion, contrary to Moscow’s claims that the local populations needed protection; tensions were escalated by extremist elements on both sides of a conflict marked by a deficit of good governance [*Report of the Special Rapporteur* 2015, pp. 1-2, 8-11].

The point we make here is that Moscow’s arguments, borrowing selectively from narratives of national cultural identity, international legal norms and domestic political order [see Zevelev 2014], are used instrumentally to promote Moscow’s normative counter-offensive – what Allison [2014, p. 1290] calls the ‘colour counter-revolution’. With Russia’s policy in Ukraine frustrated by the Euromaidan, the Putin regime is forced to turn to ‘geopolitical’ arguments and forceful promotion of conservative Russian values to claim legitimacy and discredit Western accounts. Putin’s use of both normative and historical arguments to justify the annexation of

Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine, with his promise to protect the rights and interests of Russians abroad [Putin 2014c], has also raised the suspicion – particularly among elites in eastern Europe - that Moscow is ready to carve out a larger sphere of foreign policy influence in its neighbourhood. One scholar argues that Russian narratives are now ‘aimed at sustaining a broad domestic support base among political and security elites, bolstered by popular approval... The view of a right of acquisition over parts of the former Soviet state... has been rhetorically justified in Putin’s current discourse over Crimea and Ukraine by appeals to historic justice and historic rights, which is in essence a form of revanchism, even irredentism’ [Allison 2014, pp. 1282, 1285-6]. Put simply, this represents a fundamental political challenge to Europe’s rules-based order.

At the same time, Moscow has sought to portray a constructive approach that avoids confrontation or isolation. Lavrov has underlined Russia’s attempts, through the Normandy quartet of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany, to find a balanced resolution to the conflict: Russia will not ‘shut itself away in its own “little world”’ [Lavrov 2015g; Lavrov 2015d]. During the conflict Putin himself has periodically revived the narrative of interdependence and positive relations with Europe, albeit on the basis of equality [Putin 2014b, 2014d]. This ambivalence has been a feature of Russian foreign policy for a decade or more. In 2007 Putin followed his notoriously hard-line speech at the Munich security conference [Putin 2007b] only weeks later with an article (also addressing a European audience) emphasising Russia’s European choice: ‘Our country is spiritually and culturally an integral part of European civilization ... in building a sovereign democratic state, we fully share the basic values and principles that form the world view of an overwhelming majority of Europeans’ [Putin 2007a]. In a leading Western academic journal published shortly before the Euromaidan, Lavrov similarly presented a more constructive Russian vision of a common economic and humanitarian space between the EU and Russia. In the same article, however, he highlighted how Moscow’s perception of the changing global environment has reshaped Russian assumptions: a shifting global balance of power, aggravated by destabilising trends, means that ‘Europe will no longer play a central role’ in an international system in which the factors of ‘civilizational identity’ and ‘the plurality of development models’ are becoming prominent: ‘one should not take the traditional system of international alliances for granted. It is obvious that history will make us reconsider a lot of things’ [Lavrov 2013a, p. 9; see also Ambrosio and Vandrovec 2013, pp. 439-40, 447-51]. Moscow’s resistance to a hegemonic European project is thus depicted not in terms of its own hegemony but as vital for survival of the Russian nation and state, the ‘Russian world’ [Lavrov 2015h]. This may not preclude relations with Europe and the West; however, the core narrative is that external sources of political legitimacy, in the shape of Western

norms and values, are no longer seen by Russia as a reference point. A process of self-reidentification is taking place in which Russia acts according to a different 'logic of appropriateness' as a source of 'social power' [Williams and Neumann 2000, pp. 363-4].

These official narratives frame the range of proposed policy options. But do they reflect a national consensus that ensures coherence between the policy process and the dominant ideas in Russia? In fact there have been fervent debates which exhibit a substantial plurality of opinion within the political class. Sergei Glaz'ev, a conservative economist and leading Putin advisor, merges economic and political arguments against the EaP – in his words, a geopolitical tool which 'deprives partners of their foreign economic sovereignty', with 'clearly expressed imperial features' that provoke colour revolutions and entrench civilisational divisions [Glaz'ev 2013, p. 42] – with a rejection of Western institutions and liberal values in favour of a social model based on conservative-nationalist values [Glaz'ev 2014; see also Rodkiewicz and Rogoza 2015; Chebankova 2015, p. 263]. Other prominent Russian experts are also broadly in support of government views, arguing that "limited systemic confrontation" between Russia and the West 'is set to be 'a crucial factor in determining the future international order which will replace the protracted post-Cold War transition' [Suslov 2014; see also Bazhanov 2013]. One academic avers that, by promoting regime change in Kiev 'through violent and unconstitutional means', the EU has damaged its reputation as a responsible actor and aligned its foreign policy with US interests, while NATO has gained 'new momentum on the current anti-Russian wave' [Gromyko 2014]. The veteran commentator Sergei Karaganov [2014] writes that, in demanding change in the rules and norms of security, Russia 'speaks for the entire Non-West'; the liberal democracies' response to this new global competition is 'a new round of a policy of containment or rollback'. In short, the Ukraine crisis is symptomatic of the 'new normality' in which 'the current level of confrontation is not an aberration but a new norm in life' [Gromyko 2015].

There are sharply dissenting voices, however, which offer a different conception of Russian national interests. A number of experts argue that the main objective of foreign policy - creating a favourable external environment for domestic development – has been undermined by rejecting the 'European choice' of political, economic and social modernisation [Arbatov 2014]. The territorial gains for Russia in eastern Ukraine and Crimea may serve to bolster support for Putin but are outweighed by a drain on Russia's resources and the loss of Ukraine from its regional integration initiatives. Leading specialists on Europe point to the ignorance in Russia's political

establishment of social processes that are shaping a revival of national identity in Ukraine and criticise Moscow's reliance on the concept of 'limited sovereignty', which emphasises national interests and historical justice rather than accepted legal and normative rules [Institute of Europe RAS 2014, pp. 14-16]. A survey on Russian identity compiled by younger Russians and published by the government-sponsored Valdai Club is bold in its main assumptions: 'Modern Russia needs peacetime heroes, and not constant preparation for war with a real or imagined foe... Enough threats and fortress mentality... the individual and his personal dignity takes precedence over the state, its dogmas and national ambitions' [Valdai 2014, p. 8].

The discursive shift towards a more conservative-nationalist paradigm at odds with the West is thus far from monolithic within Russia's political establishment: it still contends with a body of progressive opinion which differs in its assessment of Russia's core interests. While critical of the West for its refusal to negotiate collective security arrangements and its approach to the Ukraine crisis, moderate elites argue that Russia should re-engage with Europe in order to modernise a stagnating system and remedy xenophobic complexes, thereby creating a viable polity which can take its place in the international system. One Russian scholar sums up the diversity of ideological trends: 'it is a mistake to understand Russian civil society in liberal or traditionalist terms only... it is composed of both... and their dialogue and struggle for ideological hegemony determine the evolution of civil society in this country' [Chebankova p. 251; see also Ambrosio and Vandrovec 2013, p. 451].

Western analysis has focused more on the impact of Russia's undemocratic and authoritarian political culture on policy-making and much less on this ideational plurality. We emphasise here that the reality is much more complex: there are contending ideas that influence Russian foreign policy, resulting from a singular interplay between domestic political debates and elites' perceptions of the external environment. However, influential elements in the governing elite have succeeded in shaping narratives that marginalise more liberal policy preferences. This has a crucial bearing on the resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and future relations between Russia and Europe. Whereas Moscow's rhetoric about sovereign autonomy has in the past masked a higher degree of normative and regulative commitment to shared security governance than was generally supposed, in which the legitimacy of European norms was partly accepted, this is now overshadowed by the governing elite's perception of Europe's weakness and lack of legitimacy and a consequent shift towards 'primitive' forms of multilateralism [see Averre 2010, p. 284]. We consider in the next section how NATO and the EU deal with Russia's self-exclusion from European security governance.

Europe's response to the Ukraine conflict

As suggested in our introduction, high-level Western statements in response to Russia's intervention in Ukraine have sought to develop a dominant narrative that discredits and marginalises Moscow's claims. We consider below how this informs the policies of NATO and the EU as the preeminent institutional actors in European security governance. We examine critically whether their response is informed by a clear and coherent purpose directed at feasible policy outcomes. We also assess the role of the OSCE and in particular the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM), and consider to what extent its monitoring of the conflict in Ukraine has contributed to managing the crisis and reviving a measure of cooperative security in line with the organisation's basic principles.

For many Western defence experts the lesson learned from Ukraine is that, given the non-transparent build-up of Russia's military capabilities near its western borders and 'a sufficient level of interest and perceived opportunity', Moscow is prepared to 'trigger a rapid escalation from the non-military to a military phase' [Johnson 2015, p. 9] in regional conflicts. NATO's implementation of its Readiness Action Plan (RAP) - which will effect 'a far-reaching adaptation of NATO military strategic posture' with a 'renewed emphasis on deterrence and collective defence capabilities' - centres on the 'spearhead' Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VHRJTF) within the NATO Response Force, which has quickly reached operational status and is capable of rapid deployment to the Baltic states, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania [*Statement by NATO Defence Ministers* 2015]. Member states thus receive 'assurance' under the article 5 collective defence guarantees. A further adaptation of overall NATO strategy is anticipated in the run-up to its July 2016 summit in Warsaw. A NATO White Paper has advocated 'a far-reaching transformation of the Alliance' to update its readiness 'by an order of magnitude, not just incrementally'; it explicitly refers to a Russia 'unconstrained by international law' posing a long-term threat to Allies and EU member states and recommends a 'strategic realignment' of the Alliance's core tasks to include a central role for deterrence, the pursuit of 'options for collective defence measures under the threshold of Article 5' in response to 'hybrid warfare' and 'factors beyond the traditional purview of NATO', and 'a more coherent strategy of engagement towards strategic neighbours in the East' [*NATO Transformation Seminar* 2015].

The driving assumption is of a long-term adversarial relationship with Russia that demands a return to collective defence. To what extent NATO's military preparedness is accompanied by an articulate political response is questionable, however. There is a considerable level of uncertainty over Moscow's intentions and a marked reluctance to slip back into direct confrontation and escalate tensions; even the White Paper talks of aspirations for a 'strategic partnership' with Russia. The US has committed additional forces to Europe but – given its numerous commitments elsewhere - has not effected a major shift in its strategic posture [Simon 2015, pp. 974-5]. Germany has taken the lead in Europe's response to the Ukraine crisis but Berlin has been reticent about the military response and ruled out a permanent NATO deployment to the east as a violation of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, thereby upsetting its eastern neighbours, who argue that it constitutes a weak deterrent capability which may embolden Moscow to test the Alliance further [Speck 2015; see also Forsberg 2016]. The VHRJTF itself may be a 'powerful Allied symbol' but constitutes a relatively modest force; it has an uncertain political-military rationale and may face logistical problems which makes it unsuited for the potential challenges presented by Russia's 'hybrid warfare' [Zapfe 2015, pp. 9-10]. The Defence Investment Pledge launched at the Wales summit, probably the minimum necessary to allow NATO to effect a reorientation to collective defence postures while retaining expeditionary capabilities, may not be realised by most member states unless serious escalation occurs; this would widen the transatlantic divide over security in Europe and exacerbate the differing threat perceptions among NATO member states.

Nor is it clear how NATO's response affects security governance with respect to Ukraine itself. Despite the Poroshenko government's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration, Ukraine - still beset by domestic difficulties - is offered only 'strategic consultations' outside of the article 5 provisions and cooperation on defence education, security sector governance, defence capacity-building and crisis management cooperation [Yost 2015, pp. 519-23], rather than robust military assistance. Political support to 'enhance Ukraine's ability to provide for its own security, and further improve the interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO Forces' appears to add up to little more than what was provided for in the 1997 'Distinctive Partnership' [*Joint Statement* 2015].

NATO's emphasis on collective defence and deterrence does not address the central problem of the institutional decay in the NATO-Russia relationship and the vacuum in security governance in the neighbourhood. Indeed, it

risks a return to a 'security dilemma' that may become a structural factor in the security politics of the wider Europe [see Heisbourg 2015, p. 41]. Moscow has, predictably, accused NATO of displaying 'the behavioural instincts of the Cold War years' and escalating tensions along its northwestern border in contravention of its commitments under the Founding Act [Grushko 2015], citing justification for its own large-scale military exercises due to concerns over NATO's ballistic missile defence (BMD) posture and the US's space-based weapons and Prompt Global Strike capabilities. Even while accentuating its readiness to restore a partnership with Moscow, the Alliance's capacity-building efforts - heralded as 'containment' and 'deterrence' but without a clear political strategy that might motivate Moscow to initiate a fresh dialogue – does not resolve the conundrum of how to deal with Russia without provoking a Cold War-type confrontation that would threaten any shared approach to security governance.

A coherent foundation for security governance in the wider Europe is possibly even less in evidence when we consider the EU's policy (for a critical analysis see Haukkala's article in this issue). All conceptions for its relationship with Russia – common spaces, strategic partnership and even partnership for modernisation – have failed to establish shared understandings over security. The EU is not involved in the Normandy format in support of the Minsk Agreements, in which Moscow deals with France and Germany (while at the same time demanding that the EU must put pressure on Kiev to resolve the conflict in the Donbass). The only Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) instrument is the civilian EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), tasked with supporting revised security policies and the rapid implementation of reforms in Ukraine. Russia's Ambassador to the EU has stated that Crimea is off the table in EU-Russia political dialogue other than with respect to talks on sanctions [Chizhov 2015]. Brussels is locked into these sanctions and trade restrictions that narrow the basis for the relationship with Russia and may well be provoking a more *dirigiste* system of political economy [Connolly 2015] and a concerted attempt to diversify trade relations away from the EU (see Romanova's article in this issue). Consultations between the EU and Russia on the AA and (following a delay in its implementation) the DCFTA, and negotiations over energy and other key trade issues, have kept contacts open. However, Russia's longer-term goal of a meaningful agreement between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) – possible only with compatible regulatory systems - appears unrealistic, particularly when EU and Russia have not even been able to negotiate a successor to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the legal basis of the relationship. The promise of maintaining stability and prosperity as the basis for security in a benign neighbourhood appears precarious.

Yet Russia remains a strategic priority for many EU member states. The High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (HR CFSP) Federica Mogherini has harked back to the Common Strategy and spoken of restoring 'shared influence' by bringing Russia back to be a 'responsible power' [Mogherini 2015]. She attracted criticism for an 'Issues Paper' from the EU Foreign Affairs Council which - while calling for strengthening the EU's and its neighbours' resilience to 'future Russian pressure, intimidation and manipulation' and maintaining sanctions as a response to 'violations of the rules-based international order' - spoke of interest-driven 'trade-offs' in a process of 'selective and gradual reengagement', including between the EU and the EEU [*Issues paper on relations with Russia* 2015]. Any settlement that allows Russia to influence bilateral EU-Ukraine dialogue would reduce Ukraine 'to a mere subject of discussion [and] entail enormous adverse consequences for the country's internal stability and geopolitical consequences for the EU... [it would be] a strategic abdication made by the European Union in the East' [Eberhardt 2014, pp. 3-4]. The Common Strategy is now wholly unacceptable to some European elites as a realistic intellectual framework for dealing with Moscow's challenge to European security governance.

The lack of an EU strategic framework, in terms of a set of core assumptions about how first-order security challenges should be dealt with, is evident. If Ukraine's sovereignty and independence is a crucial marker for the future of the European order, simply providing through the AA/DCFTA a credible alternative to economic dependence on Russia is insufficient. Yet the CSDP – designed to 'protect [the EU's] interests and project its values by contributing to international security, helping to prevent and resolve crises and including through projecting power' - was barely invoked as an appropriate policy instrument in the Ukraine conflict and there has been no discernible effort to coordinate the CSDP and the ENP or EaP; a lack of leadership, deriving from the overlapping competences among its institutions, weakens coordination among heads of state and governments over power projection and precludes effective strategic vision [Howorth 2014, pp. 134-40; see also Richter 2016, pp. 57-9]. The EU and its member states have been involved in some form in all of the frozen conflicts in the former USSR countries but have been unable to force a resolution [Zagorski 2011, pp 55-7]. The CSDP, predicated on autonomy from NATO so that Europeans would provide for their own security, has not led to the crafting of a European strategic doctrine and has generated limited autonomous military capacity. Rethinking institutional arrangements between the CSDP and NATO post-Ukraine in order to establish a 'single regional capacity' for stabilising the wider European neighbourhood, with greater NATO-EU defence cooperation - as

advocated in the NATO White Paper- would mean Europe reaching consensus over core security threats, committing resources and finding the political will to project power for conflict resolution in the east [see Tardy 2015].

One commentator raises an important question: ‘After Crimea and MH-17 [the Malaysian airliner disaster], how many red lines have to be crossed before the EU is able to overcome its cowardice and effectively counter such disdain for international law and the lives of innocent civilians in a conflict on its borders?’ [Blockmans 2014]. As it stands the EU, still riven by divisions among its member states and struggling to define its key strategic interests, is undermined as an effective security governance actor. The sanctions regime has largely held so far – not least in Germany, despite its substantial trade and continuing interest in energy cooperation through Nord Stream 2 [see Forsberg 2016] – but there is little sign of Moscow’s adopting a more constructive approach to security governance. Mogherini has been tasked with ‘continu[ing] the process of strategic reflection with a view to preparing an EU global strategy on foreign and security policy... to be submitted to the European Council by June 2016’ [*European Council Meeting conclusions* 2015]. However, the EU is yet to set credible objectives with respect to Ukraine that can employ Brussels’ extensive range of instruments and work within other multilateral mechanisms, including resolving the thorny issue of cooperation with NATO [Tocci 2014; Biscop 2015]. In a situation where security governance in its vicinity is unravelling, in both the east and the south, there are calls for the ENP to be recalibrated into a pragmatic foreign policy able to give ‘thicker substance to its proclaimed positive-sum, values-oriented version of geopolitics’ in its dealings with Russia and with other neighbourhood states to guide the EU’s external action [Youngs and Pishchikova 2013, pp. 3, 5; see also Kostanyan 2015]. Yet the 2015 Review of the ENP emphasises ‘stabilisation as its main political priority’, makes no real commitments in terms of CSDP activity and makes only cursory references to Russia [*Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy* 2015]. The Joint Staff Working Document (2015) that accompanied the Review is similarly circumspect and pragmatic, stating that ‘constructive cooperation with Russia could potentially be beneficial in terms of addressing the common challenges [and] would need to be consistent with EU’s overall policy and relations with Russia and take due account of the state of relations between the ENP partners and Russia’ [*Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy* 2015; emphasis added]. The EU’s normative concerns in Ukraine demand deeper engagement with Kiev but clash with a policy - proper to a ‘strategic actor’ - of reengagement with Russia.

NATO and the EU have made little headway in reestablishing rules-based governance in the east of the continent. What does the OSCE offer? The Ukraine conflict is an important test for the latter's capacity for crisis management, as it became the principal multilateral platform on which cooperative measures to defuse the Ukraine conflict were adopted. It has carried out much of the work on the ground in Ukraine, acting as a party in the Trilateral Contact Group along with Russia and Ukraine and mandated through the SMM to monitor the movement of forces and exchange of prisoners, facilitate dialogue, aid civil society in conflict resolution and report on the humanitarian, social and economic situation to help guide political negotiations. Although excluded from Crimea, it has achieved some successes in mitigating the worst of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and supporting civil society's engagement in conflict resolution and reform [*OSCE Thematic Report 2015*]. It has formed an important link with wider international activities through the EUAM, UN HR monitoring mission and other international organisations. A powerful speech by foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in advance of Germany taking over chairmanship of the OSCE in 2016, affirmed Berlin's aim of returning the OSCE to its basic principles and seeking a resolution of the Ukraine conflict, with a particular emphasis on the human dimension [Steinmeier 2015]. An authoritative report calls for greater political support for the organisation from its member states, greater autonomy for its institutions, a long-term strategy for protracted conflicts and a permanent dialogue between Russia and the West to revitalise arms control and CSBMs; it also appeals for adherence to the full package of its founding norms and for 'quiet diplomacy', backed up by an effective monitoring instrument, to impel all member states to observe human rights commitments [Tiilikainen 2015].

However, the OSCE has become an arena for political 'mud-slinging' over Ukraine rather than a credible forum for constructive political negotiations on security governance rooted in the traditional OSCE concept of comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible security to increase trust and transparency [Sammot and D'Urso 2015]. The US and Ukraine accuse Russia of committing troops, arming rebels and supporting violations of ceasefires and restricting access of monitors, while Moscow in turn criticises Washington and Kiev for interfering with the SMM and preventing balanced reporting by OSCE observers [Lukashevich 2015]. Moscow is accused of using the OSCE as a 'fig-leaf', appearing to agree to common endeavours but blocking reform of the organisation and manipulating the SMM and the border mission [see Dehez and Rieck 2015]. For its part, Moscow has decided not to participate in consultations on unusual military activities, complaining that confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) under the OSCE Vienna document have been used

instrumentally for purposes other than confidence-building. The SMM is hindered by a lack of cooperation between the belligerent parties and by the fact that there is no undisputed factual basis on which opposing accounts of events can be effectively assessed. The divergence between Western and Russian interpretations of the conflict is reflected in a report by eminent persons which concluded that the SMM and Trilateral Group have crucially lacked political support, with only modest progress made in implementing the Minsk Agreements [OSCE, *Lessons Learned* 2015]. With the sovereignty of Ukraine still to be effectively recognised by Moscow, the two sides are yet to find a common language that may allow the OSCE to take on responsibility for peaceful conflict resolution. The prospects for Russia, Ukraine and Europe agreeing on an implementable framework for a political settlement – designed to balance Ukraine’s integration into Europe with a mutually acceptable partnership with Russia – appear remote.

Rethinking Russia’s place in European security

We have outlined above the fundamental problems inherent in managing the changing environment of contemporary European security governance. Russia’s policies point to an increasing institutional and normative separation from Europe. Moscow’s apparent readiness to disregard the ‘costs and consequences’ of non-compliance with the Western-led normative order to pursue its own vital strategic interests in Ukraine goes hand in hand with its criticism of the West’s own disregard of international norms, impelled by the perceived triumph of liberal values after the end of the Cold War. Moscow’s perceptions are of an anarchic and unstable international system in which Russia’s domestic legitimacy is continually questioned by the West and its leading role in the European order is challenged by the EU’s promotion of its domestic norms and values in its foreign policy – unambiguously enshrined as a ‘moral duty’ in the Lisbon Treaty [Biscop 2015, p. 4]. What are the broader strategic implications, for both Europe and Russia, arising from the latter’s exclusion or self-exclusion from this order, and for rules-based security governance in the neighbourhood?

Michael Smith has argued that the securitisation of new areas of international life poses a critical challenge to Europe: that of managing the ‘new geopolitics... in which the rising powers have taken a major role’. The EU’s bilateral approach to institutionalising links with the emerging powers has been patchy and has not addressed major security concerns, diminishing expectations of it as a potential ‘strategic’ partner [Smith 2013, pp. 660,

665]. Other experts agree that the EU's reliance on the legal constraints of treaties and permanent institutions, and on convergence with European legislation to integrate the wider Europe, has fallen short in terms of providing a comprehensive political vision that can enforce and maintain a regional order [see Vimont 2015]. The EU is unprepared for a major policy recalibration: 'In the context of a resurgent Russia and increasing enlargement fatigue within and outside the EU, the power of conditionality seems even more limited than was previously the case... [in a] new regional context [of] dislocation and instability' [Juncos and Whitman 2015, p. 213]. As for NATO, while some experts suggest that the Ukraine conflict has consolidated Alliance members behind a new policy towards Russia [Freedman 2014, p. 25], others argue that this does not constitute a genuine strategic approach due to differing views on Russia between the US and Europe and among European states [Dempsey 2014]. The US, distracted by issues further afield, wants Europe to bear more of the burden of security in its eastern neighbourhood but will be forced to lead on 'traditional' security issues, with the CFE Treaty effectively defunct, reciprocal accusations over breaches of the INF treaty and NATO's US-designed BMD system forcing Moscow to review its nuclear posture [see Arbatov 2015; Kamp 2015]. The political and diplomatic resources needed to tackle the challenges of arms control – not to mention 'hybrid' warfare - are considerable. Meanwhile Europe's leaders have to contend with financial and economic problems, the rise of Islamic State and the migrant and refugee crisis.

Transforming the post-Cold War European order is giving way to the priority task of containing the challenges to collective security governance. The West now faces the fundamental problem of preserving a liberal governance framework in its approach to Ukraine and the neighbourhood countries, complicated by 'domestic power struggles and entrenched illiberalism' there [Youngs and Pishchikova 2013] and Moscow's competing approach to politics and trade. The European focus on a rules-based order, closely bound up with the notion of an international *society* underpinned by shared values and common understandings, must deal with a Russia that insists on 'more flexible, non-bloc mechanisms of multilateral interaction' [Lavrov 2011] and respect for the 'national, cultural and historical peculiarities of each *state*' [Lavrov 2012; emphasis added]. The Normandy format has had no conspicuous success to date in implementing the Minsk Agreements, with the Donbass effectively becoming a 'frozen' conflict. Russia wants to deal with the major European states at the expense of EU solidarity [see Lavrov 2015j]. Sanctions and containment measures aside, the EU's and NATO's professed belief in the possibility of reengaging with Russia – despite the political and security challenges posed by Moscow's policies – may ultimately encourage the partial defection of European countries where common

interests with Russia predominate. As pointed out earlier, the vacuum of security governance is complicated by uncertainty over whether Russia will press further claims in the east of the continent.

There is also uncertainty over how resilient Russia will prove to be in terms of sustaining the costs of marginalisation in Europe. Sanctions and the slump in oil and commodities prices are depressing its economy. The Putin regime's attempt to narrow relations with the EU to the transactional level and rely on the EEU and the other BRICS states – which depend heavily on technology and trade links with the West and are facing economic problems of their own - undercut the imperatives of modernisation. The resources it can draw on to maintain its great power role and status as a legitimate regional actor – in terms of its political institutions, economic and social models and a clear normative commitment to contemporary international law [Urnov 2014, p. 306; see also Freedman 2014, p. 14] – have suffered as a result of its actions in Ukraine. Its strategic edifice, both in the regional and global contexts, is being built on preserving rather than transforming the international order, privileging authoritarian and/or corrupt regimes in states barely able to sustain sovereignty and in some cases not *de jure* recognised internationally. The preoccupation of the Putin regime with the maintenance of state order in Russia means that, beyond a search for great-power status and rhetorical appeals for partnerships with other leading powers, Moscow struggles to articulate progressive initiatives in the face of global political and social change and the break-up of the established order. There is only limited evidence, as suggested earlier, that officially-inspired conservative values are becoming the basis for Russia's social model or in any real way influencing its neighbours. Russia lacks a vision to sustain its influence in a rapidly evolving world; it risks regime delegitimation if the economy fails and threatens stability.

Putin's use of nationalist support for domestic legitimation of his political strategy, placing Ukraine at the heart of Russian identity, also faces problems. The regime has been criticised in the nationalist media over its reluctance to follow up the Crimea annexation by recognising the Novorossiia referendum. Moscow has distanced itself from calls for further expansion in Ukraine and the Donetsk and Luhansk republics have not been recognised. Despite its assertive rhetoric, Moscow appears not to want to aggravate differences with the West and bear the burden of supporting the Donbass. Continuing attempts to justify intervention mask a reactive policy that stems from the absence of checks and balances in the decision-making *vertikal*. Russia's foreign policy ideology, based in a traditionalist political culture and historical ideas of a strong multinational state, is currently mediated by a regime which jealously monopolises political and information resources and tries to

‘nationalise’ the elites [Rodkiewicz and Rogoza, p. 17]. However, it is fearful of change and – as argued earlier in this paper - prey to divided opinions within these elites, some of which recognise the benefits of European political, economic and social models. Foreign policy is a function of domestic political contest in which diplomacy is captured by nationalist-conservative narratives and tends to generate disproportionate expectations of Russia’s influence. Churkin’s call for the ‘normalization’ of Ukraine [United Nations Security Council 2015a] attests Moscow’s ambition to restore something like the corrupt and ineffective pre-Euromaidan status quo; however, it offers no real normative content that can be convincingly defended intellectually and morally in terms that the West would understand.

There is thus a considerable degree of uncertainty about the future complexion of security governance in the wider Europe. Realist notions of a ‘bipolar’ Europe, with Ukraine as a neutral ‘buffer’, are inadequate to conceptualise the emerging situation. A less well-defined picture may be emerging in which a broader array of international actors create multiple and fluid sets of relations which are interest- rather than norms- and values-based, in an environment of ‘ad hoc concert diplomacy’ [Heisbourg 2015, p. 36]. The Western-led rules-based order may be giving way to ‘a multi-hub structure... in which a growing number of states can and do play issue-specific leadership roles in a far more flexible and fluid legal system’ [Burke-White 2014, p. 66; see also Missiroli 2015]. Wohlforth’s [2014] idea referred to earlier, of a ‘thickly institutionalized’ system constraining revisionist challengers, may underestimate the impact on security governance of Russia’s challenge to this system. With some European elites recognising that Russian views over developments in the neighbourhood must be heeded, ‘the [Eastern] partnership looks set to resemble a framework of negotiated order, within which Russia has a *de facto* if not a formal voice. The dynamics of assertively extending EU rules and norms are in retreat’ [de Waal and Youngs 2015]. Within this ‘negotiated order’ Russia resists incorporation into European security governance to reassert itself as the hub of an alternative legal-normative system within which it pursues its regional preferences; Crimea and the Donbass, like South Ossetia and Abkhazia – which recently signed a treaty with Russia on alliance and strategic partnership, establishing a ‘common space’ in areas of defence, security, social policy, economy and culture [Falkowski 2014] - claim their *own* sources of legitimacy despite their non-recognition by most of the international community. This alternative system is underpinned by an information space in which ‘alternative narratives... which act as a force multiplier in the conflict’ are constructed [Seselgyte 2014], further reinforcing the governance divide in Europe.

Conclusions

Ukraine has highlighted the deep divisions in thinking between Russian and European political elites over fundamental principles of regional security governance. Russia's challenge to NATO and the EU – in particular their promotion of liberal norms in the eastern neighbourhood - has completed a paradigm shift debated for some time in the security governance literature. The current governing elite's view is that Russia must assert itself, in an unstable and inhospitable security environment, against the structural challenge presented by NATO and systemic challenges to the legitimacy of its domestic political model by the EU. These two organisations are unable to fill the governance vacuum that generates instability in the eastern neighbourhood. Moscow even contests shared norms in the OSCE due to the latter's perceived bias against Russia and other eastern member states. The Ukraine crisis has provoked the Putin regime to reject liberal interdependence in favour of illiberal sovereign statism as a guarantee of power and influence in the international system. The evidence appears to point to a 'negotiated order' in which Moscow can pursue its sovereign interests, characterised by divergent values and political outlooks, to the detriment of a common normative and institutional framework for security governance.

However, this paper raises an important caveat in relation to the above conclusion. There is uncertainty over to what extent 'the ideational influences of Russian nationalists marked by pronounced hostility to western powers and rather Manichean world-view' [Allison 2014, p. 1288] are likely to endure. These influences have always been present in post-Cold War Russian political thinking, driven by a great power complex and a 'realist' view of an anarchic global environment. As Renee DeNevers recognised early in the post-Soviet period, in the absence of agreement in Russia over national identity and national interests, "the debate over foreign and security policy became a deeper one over the nature of the state itself" [cited in Williams and Neumann 2000, p. 377]. We argue that Russian foreign policy is marked by a complex interplay between an attachment to sovereign autonomy on the one hand and interdependent approaches to regional and global security problems on the other. Domestic politics in Russia is influenced by moderate elites who are critical of the tendency to mark the country off in political and civilisational terms from Europe. Moscow's emphasis on cultural and civilisational pluralism in normative disputes stem more from a belief that the current institutional order is failing to meet the challenges of post-Cold War governance rather than a fundamental shift in national identity.

Its desire to avoid isolation and calls for what amounts to co-management of the European security order – in Putin’s words, ‘a clear system of mutual commitments and agreements’ [Putin 2014b] - suggest a reluctance to return to a détente-like co-existence of two hostile orders. Despite the overblown rhetoric often employed, the recognition that Russia’s interests are closely bound up with Europe reflects an understanding of the limitations of its influence in regional affairs.

The evidence suggest that any resolution of the discord in European security governance is a long-term affair. A ‘grand bargain’ - ‘a durable compromise between liberal values and power politics’ [Rynning 2015, p. 551], whereby NATO and the EU accede to demands for co-management of the European security order and accept *de facto* a Russian ‘sphere of privileged interests - would not address the root cause of the governance problem. An uneasy compromise between a commitment by Kiev to real devolution in the east, Moscow’s acceptance of Ukraine’s control over its borders, Ukraine’s agreement not to seek NATO membership and some kind of formula for Crimea would set a damaging precedent for Europe-Russia relations. Russia’s continuing military involvement in the Donbass, as well as the use of political and economic levers against Ukraine (and elsewhere in the post-Soviet space), can not be accommodated within any shared rules-based governance in the wider Europe. NATO’s rhetorically robust response is limited to assurance for the eastern European member states; striking a balance between a policy of deterrence and revitalising security dialogue with Russia – uncomfortably reminiscent of the debate surrounding the Cold War-era Harmel Report [see Kuehn 2015; Webber 2007, p. 83] - leaves the question of stable security governance in the eastern neighbourhood open and NATO-Russia relations hostage to unforeseen events. The EU also faces squaring a stubborn circle: how to exert a transformative influence in the neighbourhood while rebuilding a functional and stable, if not fully strategic, relationship with Russia. Its response to Ukraine will be an important marker of its foreign and security policy ambitions. Important though the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement is to Kiev, the EU’s commitment is confined to partnership and (most likely limited) economic integration for the foreseeable future. Enlargement is no longer an option and even association for Ukraine and other EaP countries prompts divided opinions among EU member states. Russia itself puts forward no transformative concepts apart from poorly worked-out proposals for a European security treaty and the notion of an ‘integration of integrations’ between the EU and EEU, without any clear idea of its legal and regulatory basis. Indeed, Lavrov – implicitly recognising that a legal agreement is no longer possible - has called for ‘open, *unformalised* dialogue on ways to form a single economic

and humanitarian space from Lisbon to Vladivostok relying on the principles of equal and indivisible security’ [Lavrov 2015i; emphasis added].

The present impasse may resolve itself in one of two ways. In the first, NATO and the EU face a semi-autarkic Russia that rejects engagement with Europe, with the possibility of further attempts to revise rules-based governance in the east of the continent. This means the emergence of a weakly-institutionalised Russia/Eurasia hub, with ad hoc informal or issue-specific contacts and transactional trade relations between Russia and Europe, and with the OSCE restricted to a crisis monitoring role complicated by Russia’s ambivalent commitment to observing the Helsinki principles. In this negative-sum scenario Europe may once again increasingly rely on US military power at the expense of a coherent political approach. It already faces a new ‘security dilemma’, in many respects more complex than during the Cold War: to sustain its investment in reform and capacity-building in Ukraine as a prerequisite to deeper partnership and integration while devising a genuine strategy to face down the tensions and risks that may well arise with Russia. In other words, this would involve a long-term neo-containment approach, with none of the trust and acceptance of common goals and norms characteristic of security governance. In other words, managing insecurity.

A second, positive-sum scenario is to devise a long-term approach to manage interdependence. The inclusion of Russia into a Western-led system of security governance based on trust is a remote prospect. Both Russia and the West accept there is no early return to ‘business as usual’. Moscow is not at present ready to accept normative constraints and reform its domestic political and economic order. However, as Flynn and Farrell [1999, p. 531] argue, states focus on recalibrating normative frameworks when the conditions and assumptions on which the previous structure of relations was based are in disarray. Russia can only be properly reengaged if norms are collectively legitimised and universally applied. It can not be ruled out that its longer-term interests - the need for modernisation and for stability and prosperity on its Western flank – will induce Moscow ultimately to retreat from self-exclusion. Russian elites, some of them sympathetic to Europe, have over two decades of experience of working with European institutions; in several EU member states there are political and economic elites more favourably disposed towards Russia. Existing platforms for dialogue on broader governance may underpin a resumption of state-level negotiations, with support from track-2 initiatives. The OSCE has an important role to play in cooperation on crisis management and as a forum for re-legitimising the core principles of shared security governance on a pan-European basis. Sequencing a retreat from the current estrangement – a

cooperative effort to broker and guarantee a constitutional settlement in Ukraine, easing sanctions and reviving trade and political-military links – demands a considerable investment of political will: Europe and Russia would have to address the cause, not the symptoms, of previous failures through negotiation over core principles and norms, and recalibrating security regimes and institutional arrangements, instead of relying on ad hoc agreements. There is a rich agenda here for scholars of security governance and Russia. The contours of a longer-term partnership are hard to discern but a sustained focus on positive-sum outcomes has a recent intellectual history, and support from some elites in Moscow, which Europe’s policy-makers may draw on.

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