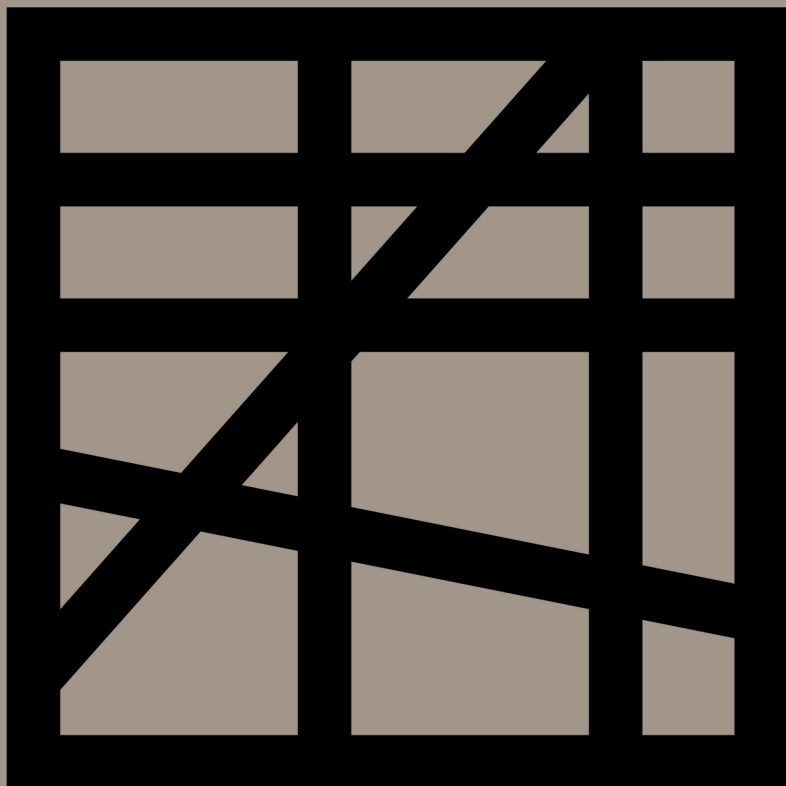


**KULTURA  
LIBERALNA**

# Cracking borders, rising walls

**THE CRISIS OF THE  
EUROPEAN ORDER**

**EDITED BY  
KACPER SZULECKI**





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**The Crisis of the European Order**

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Edited by Kacper Szulecki

With an introduction by Jarosław Kuisz

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## INTRODUCTION

JAROSŁAW KUISZ

### **European crises – a system of communicating vessels**

The mood among Europeans is rather somber at present. A quarter of a century after the waves of democratic transformations which were meant to connect the eastern and western halves of the Old Continent there is little sign of the previous enthusiasm. Political leaders have stopped demanding “more Europe”, while the citizens of Great Britain are considering leaving the EU. When Bosnia and Herzegovina filed an application in Brussels to join the EU, Federica Mogherini, the boss of its diplomatic corps, expressed a telling sentiment: “As some forces across our continent are questioning the very existence of our Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s application shows that the need of a united European continent is still strong among our peoples”.

It is worth remembering that the Euromaidan revolution was meant to bring “Europeanisation” to Ukraine, in the spirit of freedom and democracy. On the 21st of November 2013, as a result of president Viktor Yanukovich deciding to postpone the signing of a unification treaty with the EU, the first demonstrations took place. Dreams about joining the common European family paradoxically

led to the biggest international crisis since the end of the Cold War. On the 20th of February 2014, 75 people were killed in Kyiv, and several hundred were left wounded. Next, Russia entered the fray. President Vladimir Putin did not hesitate to breach fundamental rules of international order and peace. Respect for international borders was cast aside, along with any peaceful strategies for resolving conflicts or the respect for human rights. As a result of the war in Donbas, several thousand people are now dead. The European Union, which so many Ukrainians aspired to join, is not pleased to see the developments in the East. And yet this is not the only crisis which recent events have visited up the countries of the Old Continent.

On the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 – the fundamental document on which European peace is based, and one which helped bring about peaceful changes in our part of the world – we would like to consider the pillars of our freedom and security. There can be no question that supporters of liberal democracies must take a critical look at changes which are dominating the political landscape in the second decade of the 21st century. We need a diagnosis which arises out of reflections on the experiences of both the East as well as the West. It is also worth considering the future of human rights legislation, which in times of peace and prosperity has become trivialized, and yet which the residents of Ukraine are now reminding us is so very important.

Our book is meant to serve this purpose, its contents being the record of our conference “Cracking Borders, Rising Walls – The Crisis of the European Order”, with guests which included politicians, academics, diplomats, intellectuals and journalists from places such as Ukraine,

Germany, the US, France, Norway, Great Britain and of course Poland. The conference took place on the 8th of September 2015 in the Chamber Hall of the Arnold Szyfman Polish Theatre in Warsaw, organized by Liberal Culture/Kultura Liberalna in association with the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, Allianz Kulturstiftung and Fischer Stiftung. The event was supported by the Arnold Szyfman Polish Theatre in Warsaw, with overall patronage from the President of the City of Warsaw, Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz.

Those taking part included intellectuals such as Robert Cooper (European Commission), Adam Garfinkle (“The American Interest”), Josef Joffe (“Die Zeit”), Sylvie Kauffmann (“Le Monde”), Viola von Cramon (Alliance ‘90/The Greens), Katya Gortchinskaya (“Kyiv Post”), Ulrike Guérot (European Democracy Lab), Yaroslav Hrytsak (Ukrainian Catholic University), Roman Kuźniar (University of Warsaw), Jarosław Pietras (Council of the European Union), Adam Daniel Rotfeld (University of Warsaw), Aleksander Smolar (Stefan Batory Foundation) and Asle Toje (Norwegian Nobel Institute).

The book opens with an essay by Kacper Szulecki, in which he asks whether it is possible to have a 21st century liberal geopolitics based on the experience of struggles over liberty in Eastern Europe. The first part of the book then goes on to include texts from experts which cover the topic of changes to the international situation since the start of the conflict in Ukraine. Part two is devoted to the problem which has taken EU residents by total surprise, that is the direct impact the conflict in the Middle East has had on the foundations of the European order. Reducing this crisis to the simple question of

refugee quotas only conceals a much deeper dimension. In a paradoxical fashion, it shows that the problem of the civil war in Syria is also connected to the conflict in Ukraine. In part three, we consider ways out of the current series of crises.

Positive narratives should also be developed in our part of the continent. And however far we might be from taming the waves of current problems, this does not mean we are free to surrender and give up trying to overcome them. This book, produced by the Liberal Culture team, is intended to help achieve this common goal.

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KACPER SZULECKI

## **Towards a liberal geopolitics**

**Why has it become so fashionable in Europe to think in terms of “geopolitics”? Why is this tendency dangerous, and how do we defy it? As we face the disintegration of the European system built on the Helsinki Accords and the specter of a new Cold War, it is worth reexamining the forgotten legacy of Central European dissents who presented a brilliant critique of geopolitical thinking. Their heretical, unorthodox approach to international affairs could today be described as liberal geopolitics.**

### **SPACES OF IDEAS, IDEAS OF SPACES**

When, in the course of a few months in 1989, the order established in Europe as a consequence of the Yalta conference collapsed and what had once seemed impossible became reality, politicians were faced with the task of formulating new visions for a European order. Following this unquestionable triumph of spirit over matter, ideas over barbed wire, liberty over authoritarianism, a return to clichéd modes of thinking about international politics

was perhaps the least expected scenario.<sup>1</sup> What is more, as many commentators have observed, political discourse after the fall of the USSR became dominated by its most “thickheaded” variety – classical Geopolitics. Long marginalized as a false and ideologically foreign concept in the countries of “real existing socialism,” and associated with interbellum totalitarianism (particularly Nazism) in the West after 1945, Classical Geopolitics became a new religion to many analysts following the upheavals of ‘89.

As Stefano Guzzini – the editor of a collection of essays on this puzzling ideological reversal – observes, not only does this tendency remain visible in “Eastern Europe”, it continues to be present in the West.<sup>2</sup> While it was expected that participants of the international system after 1989 would see it as evolving from the Cold-War, Lockean culture to a new, more democratic and peaceful Kantian culture, Guzzini explains that, in the case of some countries, it subsequently began to take the form of an aggressive Hobbesian culture. Guzzini blames this process on the resurgence of Geopolitics: “if taken seriously on both the national and the international levels,

- <sup>1</sup> I intentionally differentiate between political *realism* and *Realism* as a theory of international relations by capitalizing the latter. Similarly, I differentiate between geopolitics as a way of thinking about politics (and power) in spatial terms, and Geopolitics, or “Classical Geopolitics,” derived from the work of such authors as Rudolf Kjellén, Friedrich Ratzel, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Halford Mackinder and (later) Zbigniew Brzeziński.
- <sup>2</sup> S. Guzzini (ed.), *The Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crises*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

its dynamics of essentialising physical and cultural geography would produce an environment more akin to a Hobbesian culture.”<sup>3</sup> One would be hard-pressed to find a country in which Geopolitics has achieved a higher status than in Poland.

### LITVINOV’S SPECTACLES, GOMUŁKA’S GLASSES

The word “geopolitics” is frequently overused in Poland, where it is applied as a catch-all term for revealed truths in international politics. The adjective “geopolitical” is often employed simply as a synonym of the adjective “international.” Geopolitics has become a higher level of mastery which allows one to harness the chaos of politics, while Realism has become its only legitimate conceptualization. In such a narrow scope of debate, opinions voiced by the marginal US think tank Stratfor, or by Zbigniew Brzeziński, whose formative years go back to the early days of the Cold War, are uniquely resonant. In Poland, Geopolitics is thus not understood as the spatialization of politics (which it in fact is), but rather almost as a hard science that deals with how geography – allegedly – determines politics. According to Jacek Czaputowicz, Geopolitics has all but replaced the theory of international politics in Polish academia and political discourse.<sup>4</sup> There are two modes of thought within Geopolitics thus defined: the first is closely related to geography, while the other is tied to cultural

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> J. Czaputowicz, “Theory or practice? The state of international relations in Poland,” *European Political Science*, 11 (2012), pp. 196–212.

determinism. Advocates of the former would have us believe that physical spaces inevitably shape relationships between people and between nations and states, making them rivals or relegating them to an irrelevant backdrop (from the Realist perspective, only rivals have any relevance). The latter, which has the notion of “Fortress Europe” being besieged by Muslim refugees as its most recent manifestation, ascribes inalienable characteristics to states, nations, groups and individuals.

Schoolchildren are told stories about the eternal struggle against Western and Eastern powers and are taught that the struggle is inevitable due to either geographic or cultural circumstances. Our geopolitical imagination is black and white and thoroughly steeped in a 19th century. Any nation-centric way of thinking that sees the early medieval tribe of the Polans as direct ancestors of contemporary Poland also inevitably typecasts geopolitical Others by referring to a perennial model. I intentionally use the term nation-centric thinking, rather than nationalism, because it is by no means the sole domain of the Right; elements of this way of thinking also dominate many debates in the centre and on the Left. Such is our way of thinking about a world built out nations and states, and such is our “common sense.” Włodzimierz Anioł, a political scientist who could hardly be described as nationalistic, expressed this very notion when he wrote that “for more than a millennium” Germans (of course!) have occupied a particular place in Poland’s relationship with the West. This story is familiar to all of us, and we more or less consciously link “Germany’s allegedly eternal *Drang nach Osten*”, “invasions by the Teutonic Knights”, the Polish partitions which were organized “for



the profit of Prussia”, along with the cruelty of World War II and the Holocaust.<sup>5</sup> It is fascinating that in this teleological, or perhaps “presentist,” narrative, the entire history of “Poland” and “Germany” inevitably leads or refers to Adolf Hitler.

Is this narrative not complicated by the fact that Polish kings – Augustus II the Strong and his son, Augustus III, along with their Saxon homeland, the haven of 19th-century Polish emigrants – were just as German as the Teutonic Knights and Joseph Goebbels? Just as German, meaning they had equal claim to the title, though the very category of “Germanness” turns out to be inherently unstable, volatile and full of contradicting content. But nuance is the enemy of Geopolitics. In a black-and-white world split between Russia and Germany, a conservative Polish politician can admonish German MEPs for the crimes of the Third Reich, or even (why not?) for chaining children to siege engines during the siege of Głogów in 1109.

The other half of these eternal geopolitical pincers is Russia, which, as Jarosław Kuisz noted in one of his articles, Poles view through “Litvinov’s spectacles” (a reference to a quote by Juliusz Mierosławski). This Soviet-era diplomat “looked at Poland the way Poles look at Russia: from a vantage point of historical determinism.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> W. Anioł, T. A. Byrnes, and E. A. Iankova, “Poland. Returning to Europe,” in: P. Katzenstein (ed.) *Mittleuropa. Between Europe and Germany*, Oxford: Berghen Books, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> J. Kuisz, “Litvinov’s Spectacles and Polish soft power – on the crisis in the East (at the start of 2015)”, *Kultura Liberalna*, 2015 (<http://goo.gl/QsQzm2>).

When, on the one hand, we look to the East, we don the wire-rimmed spectacles of Maxim Litvinov; on the other, when we look at Germany, we see it through the thick-rimmed plastic glasses of Władysław Gomułka.<sup>7</sup> They share one common feature: both warp reality. More can be seen without them than with them: much of the world remains outside the field of view. Such is the curse of Geopolitics, which is treated in Poland as a fundamental approach to international politics.

In order to air out the stuffy cell in which we have been imprisoned by misconceived geopolitics, we must consider its critical alternative: liberal geopolitics. Liberalism, above all else, emphasizes liberty: the freedom of the individual within the state and *vis-à-vis* the state. If we aspire to freedom in society, why would we not extend that aspiration to the area of international politics? All of this has logical consequences that find their expression in the gestures one must make and attitudes that one must assume when observing and commenting on international affairs. The stance I call liberal geopolitics is not a novel concept. Rather, it is an attempt to refresh a certain intellectual project that, for various reasons, collapsed at the turn of the 1980s and 90s.

### **THE 1980S: AN INCOMPLETE CHAPTER**

It is fascinating to discover those moments in history in which different people in different places begin to think

<sup>7</sup> Władysław Gomułka, head of the Polish Communist Party from 1956 to 1970, was infamous for his blending of communism and nationalism in official propaganda, as well as in the way he used post-War anti-German phobias for political purposes.

alike and come up with similar ideas.<sup>8</sup> In the mid 1980s, members of the democratic opposition in Eastern Bloc countries began to analyze – independently of one another, at first – a new and previously overlooked aspect of politics, namely, international relations. Growing interest in the topic was a direct result of the rise of the mass peace movement in Western Europe in the early 1980s. But the brunt of the criticism fell not on Soviet armaments, but on NATO, while the movement itself emerged in response to a growing sense of civic powerlessness rather than as a reaction to human rights violations in the East. Its participants were labeled “pacifists” in our part of Europe, and the movement became a favorite propaganda pet and a thorn in the side of the opposition. These circumstances persuaded the democratic opposition to become involved in politics at the international level. But in order to win over at least some of the groups associated with the movement, it was first necessary to question their appraisal of the international situation, to invalidate the Cold War theory on which it was built and, finally, to contest and reverse the entire geopolitical way of thinking that was founded on the Yalta order.

The older dissidents, who by that time were prominent and well known, were not entirely comfortable speaking

<sup>8</sup> For a deeper historical analysis of the process sketched out in this section, see: K. Szulecki, “Freedom and peace are indivisible”: On the Czechoslovak and Polish dissident input to the European peace movement 1985–89,” in: Brier, R. (ed.), *Entangled Protest: Transnational Perspectives on the History of Dissent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Osnabrück: Fibre, 2013, pp. 199–229; K. Szulecki, “Heretical geopolitics of Central Europe. Dissidents intellectuals and an alternative European order,” *Georum*, 65, 2015, pp. 25–36.

out on this unfamiliar topic. This posed an opportunity for younger, lesser-known activists and intellectuals to join the debate. Among the leading figures of that discussion were Jarosław Śabata and Jiří Dienstbier, both members of Charter 77, as well as circles associated with the Polish underground publications “KOS”, “Czas Przyszły” and “Vacat”, whose ranks included such names as Czaputowicz, mentioned above, as well as many other authors who breathed fresh air into the milieu, including Konstanty Gebert (*nom de plume* – Dawid Warszawski) and Piotr Ikonowicz (*nom de plume* – Igor Lewy), alongside several peace initiatives such as Dialog in Hungary, the Independent Peace Association in Czechoslovakia, and the Polish Freedom and Peace Movement, the largest such organization in the Eastern Bloc.

Among the widely-recognized dissidents contributing to supranational debates on peace were Jacek Kuroń, Václav Havel and, most significantly, György Konrád. The latter was best-known for his (somewhat forgotten) book-length essay *Antipolitics*, which is today interpreted more from the perspective of actual political practice of the dissident movement, or else confused with Havel’s idea of apolitical politics. *Antipolitics* was, in reality, a collection of musings on the nature of the Yalta agreements. Kuroń and Havel’s writings on geopolitics were practically unnoticed in Poland at the time, and it took over twenty years for them to be given their proper place in opposition historiography. That might not be very surprising in the case of the former. Kuroń’s comments on the peace movement (both that operating in the West and its fledgling counterpart in Poland) today read as if thinking in terms of an international system was too abstract for him and perhaps

at odds with his nature as an “eternal activist”, focused on the individual. He was also respected by the peace movements for his uncompromising animosity towards the military, which he considered to be a totalitarian institution. Antimilitarism, to a much greater degree than “pacifism”, were the foundations of Eastern European peace initiatives. Undoubtedly, Kuroń’s very name lent credibility to the entire milieu. Hável similarly assumed the role of spokesman rather than ideologue. His essay “Anatomy of a Reticence” presents a persuasive and literarily convincing discussion of a document that was fundamental to dissident geopolitics: the Prague Appeal published in 1985 by Charter 77.

#### **DEFYING YALTA**

The Prague Appeal (*Pražská výzva*) was, in a sense, a revolution. Never before had such a prominent group of Eastern European dissidents spoken out so unanimously and cohesively on the subject of peace, disarmament and relations between political blocs. Similar documents published up until then either parroted what Western “pacifists” themselves said or what they wanted to hear from the East – as is apparent in the writings of the East German opposition – or, alternatively, lambasted the peace movement for their perceived “naïveté” and insufficient interest in the suffering of nations under totalitarian rule (an argument that was particularly popular among Poles). Not only did the Prague Appeal refrain from lambasting anyone, but it was actually a source of inspiration. It was so bold and visionary that the founding statement of the Western peace movement, the European Nuclear Disarmament Appeal (END), seemed quite conservative

by comparison. The Western document, which called for a “nuclear-free Europe from Poland to Portugal,” unconsciously assumed a Cold War perspective. It spoke of fear spreading equally “through both halves of Europe,” and called upon activists (rather curiously) “to be loyal, not to ‘East’ or ‘West,’ but to each other” (as if the former were an attractive idea to anyone in the Eastern European opposition).

Though the language and postulates of the peace movement may have sounded radical, they only did so when considered within the confines of the order established at Yalta. The Prague Appeal was the first proposal for a complete overhaul of the system, a proposal whose resonance was amplified by the fact that it was published by “powerless” and persecuted Eastern European dissidents. It gave rise to geopolitical notions that were downright heretical. It opposed both the program of the old Left (including the conciliatory SPD in Germany, which blindly pursued official rapprochement via the policy of *Ostpolitik*) as well as the new Left (represented by the Greens, among others). The Appeal postulated solutions that conservatives approved of (e.g., a clear emphasis on human rights in Eastern Europe and speaking of communist totalitarianism) and ones that were completely unimaginable to them (the unification of Germany as a prerequisite for peace in Europe: the first such proposal in a document of this type). In hindsight, it is difficult to really appreciate the revolutionary nature of that last postulate, which violated a Yalta taboo and was unappealing to both Communists and right-wing Realists, as well as to the proponents of Geopolitics. The Appeal thus applied the anti-political logic of dissidence to politics at the international level.

The authors of the Appeal – including Jaroslav Šabata, one of Charter 77’s leading spokespersons – postulated the necessity of the dissolution of both military blocs (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) in exchange for a new system founded on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Contrary to the opinions of many of their colleagues and a large portion of the Western peace movements, the authors had enough imagination to appreciate the role of the CSCE. What they proposed, however, was to balance “top-down cooperation” with a civic movement that would be a kind of “grassroots Helsinki.” It was precisely the liberal idea of human rights that constituted the core of the program, though its authors (Šabata, Dienstbier and Jiří Hájek) had a left-wing background (Václav Havel, the leader of Charter 77’s liberal wing, played only a secondary role).

#### **CENTRAL EUROPE: A REGION OF GRAND HERESY**

The final element of this dissident, heretical approach to geopolitics was a definite shift in the Cold War imagination. This required the application of the cultural project known as Central Europe, reactivated not two years earlier by the novelist Milan Kundera.<sup>9</sup> The Central European project combined everything that is the subject of this essay: critical geopolitical thought, political liberalism and the awareness of the role of culture in shaping our geopolitical imaginaries. We have grown accustomed to discussing and thinking about Central Europe in terms

<sup>9</sup> M. Kundera, ‘«Un occident kidnappé» ou la tragédie de l’Europe centrale’, *Le Débat*, 5 n°27, 1983, pp. 3–23.

of identity. It must be remembered, however, that Central Europe is, above all else, a geopolitical project, albeit one designed by artists and intellectuals. Kundera's primary goal was to break down the binary nature of Cold War geopolitics, and a third element was required, a hint of color in this otherwise black-and-white image, to shatter the image of Europe as a continent cut in two by concrete and barbed wire.

But like every geopolitical project, Central Europe had the power to unite and delineate. On the one hand, the project was about the integration of countries located between the USSR and the Iron Curtain, and on the other about their attitude towards Russia. Kundera's Central Europe, understood as the "kidnapped West" (as in title of his famous essay), was clearly set against Russia. In Kundera's view, as well as in the opinion of the Hungarian Mihály Vajda, Central Europe was a part of the West. It thus naturally aspired to integrate with it and, at the same time, to cut itself off from all associations with the East. This gesture thus merely marked a slight eastward shift of the boundary of Eastern Europe as plotted during the Enlightenment. This notion of Central Europe was essentially compatible with the notion of Europe "from Poland to Portugal" proposed by the Western peace movement, excluding both the USSR and the US from the European system. As Ole Wæver, a peace activist turned security theoretician, has observed, "Central" Europe was supposed to be "central to Europe," though Kundera and his imitators emphasized that the region had been "kidnapped" and removed from Europe, and subsequently incorporated into territory controlled by



“Asiatic Russia.”<sup>10</sup> This way of thinking later becomes critical to the “return to Europe” discourse, the chorus of the Visegrád Group’s foreign policy throughout the 1990s.

In order to grasp the difference between the two disparate visions of “Central” Europe, it is necessary to look two decades into the past and examine another geopolitical project that was subsequently distorted. Repeated like a mantra, the three letters ULB (Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus) were seen as a beacon for Polish foreign policy. And yet Polish diplomacy, in its discourse and practice, was a contradiction or dilution – rather than the realization – of the vision put forward by Juliusz Mieroszewski and Jerzy Giedroyc, editors of the Paris-based exilic periodical “Kultura”. Implemented in a post-Cold War paradigm, it resembled Poland’s imperial Jagiellonian policy and Józef Piłsudski’s federalist project (i.e., the creation of a buffer separating Poland from Russia) more than it did the ideas proposed by the “Kultura” writers. Timothy Snyder astutely identifies the difference between this imperialist-tinged Jagiellonian-Piłsudski vision and the innovation of ULB.<sup>11</sup>

As early as 1962, Mieroszewski wrote: “The traditional notion of the Polish ‘bulwark’ shielding the West from the East must be abandoned and replaced with the

<sup>10</sup> Compare O. Wæver, “Conflicts of Vision: Visions of Conflict,” in: O. Wæver, P. Lemaitre and E. Tromer (ed.), *European Polyphony. Perspectives Beyond East-West Confrontation*, New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> T. Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations. Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569–1999*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

notion of the ‘bridge’.”<sup>12</sup> Mieroszewski depicts the “middle-ness” of Kundera’s *Mitteleuropa* as centering on Poland, but the implications of the “Kultura” columnist’s writing and attitude is completely different, resembling more the visions espoused by the authors of the Prague Appeal. The Czechoslovak dissidents postulated a rapprochement against Russia and the country’s vigorous integration with – rather than isolation from – Europe. The late Jaroslav Šabata once mentioned to me that he differed in this regard from Adam Michnik, who did not see a place for Russia in Europe. Similarly, the polemic between the Slovak philosopher Milan Šimečka, Kundera and Vajda was widely discussed in the West. Šimečka agreed that freedom was a fundamental European value. He did not agree, however, that by upholding freedom as an ideal to which Europe aspires it should also exclude Russia from this aspiration, on the grounds of its current and actual politics. Šimečka rejected the notion that Russia was a “different civilization,” and asked whether Europe (including Central Europe) could truly afford to constantly hold such a manufactured adversary at bay.

It is a paradox that the Polish opposition, along with its Czech and Hungarian counterparts, as fascinated as they once were with Russian culture and the moral fortitude of the country’s dissidents, were so quick to replace considered perspectives with stereotypes. It should be stated clearly that such an interpretation of Central Europe – one that turned out to be alluring and victorious in the 1990s – was neither the only nor the most widespread

<sup>12</sup> J. Mieroszewski, “Na ruinach ‘przedmurza’”, *Kultura*, 5, 1962.

interpretation in the original dissident project. Of course, the Soviet Union was by no means a democratic country, but neither were its satellite states. To envision a democratic Poland and Czechoslovakia at the time required just as vivid an imagination as it did to envision a democratic Russia. But idealism is not synonymous with fantasy. Miroszewski grasped these challenges as early as the 1960s, when he sketched his vision of the world after the fall of the USSR, yet he was not discouraged.

Geopolitical heretics were following a completely different logic. The enemy could not be defeated once and for all. Security is relative and fluid. If actual peace were to be achieved, a comprehensive approach would be necessary. Firstly, peace is indivisible and cannot exist without liberty. Peace between countries is of the utmost importance, but lack of war by itself is not enough if, at the same time, parts of Europe lack internal peace and authoritarian governments wage war against their societies. Once again, the question of human rights is revealed to be a key issue. Secondly, true international peace does not happen when neighboring countries stockpile arms and prepare for war, but when we dismantle the notion of the enemy altogether and build relationships based on mutual trust rather than on intimidation. At the intranational level, this cannot occur without democratization. Dissidents believed (up to a point) that the democratization of internal relations can and should be reflected at the international level. They also assumed the hypothesis of “democratic peace,” which was rooted in Kantian philosophy and espoused the belief that democratic states form a community of liberty and do not wage war against each other. This, again, ran contrary to the notion that the internal system of a country was

irrelevant and that capitalism bred imperialism – an idea popular among Western progressives, whose views in this regard were more in line with those of Lenin. The incompatibility and incompleteness of these world views posed a significant obstacle to the flow of ideas between Eastern “dissidents” and Western “pacifists.” Where the Western peace movement saw capitalism and a non-capitalist alternative, the dissidents saw democracy and authoritarianism.

The year 1989 brought revolutionary change and, along with it, an unexpected opportunity to implement the heretical project of reorganizing Europe. By the turn of the decade, the concept of Central Europe was already firmly lodged in the consciousness of Western elites and societies, while some former dissidents’ rise to power in their own countries created a real opportunity for them to carry out their plans.<sup>13</sup> This, however, never occurred. As early as 1993, Václav Havel – who confounded the US Congress when, shortly after taking office, he proposed that both the Warsaw Pact and NATO be dismantled – began to be increasingly vocal about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as the sole guarantor of security and peace.

### **THE HERESY AFTER CRIMEA AND DONBAS**

Are there any lessons to be learned from this historical experience? In the face of constant tensions with Russia,

<sup>13</sup> Havel became president of Czechoslovakia, Dienstbier was appointed foreign minister, and Šabata took over as chairman of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, while Jan Kavan, a proponent of “heretical geopolitics” in the eyes of the Western public opinion, led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before becoming President of the UN General Assembly.

especially in the context of the proposed American missile defense system in Central Europe, history has, to a certain extent, gone full circle. At first glance, the circumstances are similar to those of the 1980s. There is once again talk of a new Cold War and missiles, yet the political context is clearly different. For a quarter century the European Union has been at the avant-garde of what Robert Cooper calls the “postmodern world”: a Kantian island of democratic peace, where national sovereignty is ceasing to be the greatest value and is being replaced by cooperation and the openness of intersocial relations.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the Kremlin is not ruled by Mikhail Gorbachev, who was prepared to interrupt a mad arms race, but by Vladimir Putin, who represents the “modern” world in its worst incarnation. Despite this, the stance of geopolitical criticism has remained relevant, as have more concrete goals.

Perhaps, contrary to simplistic assessments, the Cold War never really ended? Though this claim might sound less controversial than it did just a few years ago, it should require more substantial evidence. Though, in light of Russia’s attack on Georgia in 2008 and its later annexation of Crimea and the “hybrid” invasion of Ukraine in 2014, such a statement could be rejected as the claim of an incorrigible Russophile, it remains true that the Cold War has yet to end due to the actions of Western countries. This should not be interpreted as an expression of support for Putin’s Russia, or even a criticism of NATO expansion from a Realist

<sup>14</sup> R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century*, New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003.

perspective in the vein of John Mearsheimer.<sup>15</sup> I consider both lines of reasoning to be misguided and dangerous. The former fails to grasp the nature of Putin's authoritarian regime, while the latter completely ignores the sovereignty and will of such nations as Ukraine. The crux of the matter lies elsewhere: namely, the triumphalism of Western and Central European elites following 1989, which – as predicted by some dissidents and part of the peace movement – is an expression of the conviction that the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union did not mark the liberation of Europe, but the victory of NATO (at least in the minds of its leaders). Where there is a victor, there is also a loser, and that breeds resentment. Furthermore, shifting the borders of the West from the Elbe to the Bug River did not abolish the “us” versus “them” opposition – it merely changed the makeup of both sides. From this perspective, Putin is not the diabolical cause of all the current problems of European security, but rather the effect of inconsistency and the lack of a positive, long-term strategy, like the one outlined by Šabata – to pull Russia into Europe.

It is an unquestionable fact that Russia is now violating international law. Unfortunately, the moral superiority (rightly) claimed by Central European dissidents in the 1980s vanished along with support for the highly questionable actions perpetrated by the West in Yugoslavia in 1999 and Iraq in 2003. Russian diplomats frequently cite these events, and, unfortunately, there is much truth to

<sup>15</sup> J. J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault. The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2014.

their accusations, just as many former dissidents, among them Havel and Michnik (as well as the author of this essay), have much to be ashamed of.

In February 2010, Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski sparked a major uproar when he stated that he believed that “the process of the Alliance’s enlargement – from which Russia should not be *a priori* excluded – offers an opportunity for the extension of the zone of stability and security in places where until recently they have been in short supply.” Though Sikorski was very distant from the heretic dissidents in the 1980s, in this case he reached what is essentially the only reasonable conclusion, as postulated by Šimečka. Two months later, the Smolensk catastrophe and the role played by Russia in Poland’s mounting internal conflict rendered Sikorski’s idea even more controversial, while the events of 2014 pushed it beyond the pale of conceivability.

Today, representatives of many milieus are still discussing the necessity of a rapprochement with Russia, but few of their arguments hold water. German social-democrats continue to claim, like a broken record, that the only true path is one that follows the policies espoused by Willy Brandt in the 1970s, and that Russia is essentially the only relevant political entity in the East. Though they do not agree with the nature of Putin’s regime, they continue to believe in a theory of development that holds that economic cooperation engenders trust and prosperity, which in turn lead to increased security and democratization. Perhaps. It is this line of reasoning that led to the creation of the first Nord Stream pipeline: it is believed that interdependence and multilateral economic cooperation will make a potential conflict with the West

too costly. Though this approach appears reasonable from the perspective of the “old EU,” it is apparent that the costs of this policy are borne by former Soviet countries and Russian society, because appeals for human rights in Russia have also become too costly. Another category of politicians calling for the “deescalation” of the conflict is the radical left and conservative right, including Viktor Orbán. The motivation in this case is different. Rather than aspiring to change Russia, these politicians seek to replicate its model of government and imitate its style of foreign policy, which is regarded as highly effective.

Both of these approaches remain at odds with the liberal stance, which, though it may operate at the level of geopolitical abstraction, must always take as its point of reference individual and human rights, and thus emphasize points which the above strategies pass over in silence: the space “in between” and the Russians’ aspiration for freedom. At an absolute minimum, it must take example from the dissident tradition and discern between Russia and Putin’s kleptocratic regime. The goal is to not turn our backs on the Russians and to constantly remain ready to engage in dialog with, and lend assistance to, independent groups within Russia and among the Russian diaspora. Such efforts, as crucial as they were to the Eastern European opposition during the Cold War, are very difficult to carry out today, as Putin has done his homework on the “power of the powerless” and the need to “disarm” them.

Political and economic relations at the state level pose a greater challenge. If we were to take at face value the heretical geopolitics of the dissidents, European policy *vis-à-vis* Russia would have to be an open-door policy, although the door would have to be manned by a host,



who would politely yet firmly remind the guest that he could forget about stepping across the threshold in his condition. That is a difficult stance to assume in diplomacy, but the European Union, as a laboratory of the “postmodern world,” demands extravagance. It cannot, however, repeat mistakes that have already been made. The door must be open, but it is not enough to post a “welcome” sign on it. This has long been the case with Turkey, which the EU has enticed with distant visions of accession while keeping it at arm’s length. In fact, the European Union must now contend with the Recep Erdoğan regime, a near carbon copy of Putin’s Russia.

However, it must also be understood that to turn away from Russia, to forgo dialog (particularly via back channels), would cause the Russians to turn their backs on Europe in an identical manner. This is apparent in the return to Geopolitics discussed by Guzzini, which is happening in Russia just as extensively and vigorously as in Poland, and which is most vividly associated with the figure of Alexandr Dugin. The problem with Geopolitics – both in Russia and in Poland – is that, by its nature, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is because once the integration of the geopolitical and security imaginaries occurs (and these go hand in hand, particularly in Poland), and “once the essentialization of the security imaginary begins to affect foreign policy behavior, it will also affect foreign policy interaction, both directly and indirectly. For that interaction will increasingly be interpreted in a certain light. Hence, the essentialization affects not only the action-reaction chain, but also the agents’ understanding of that chain.

That, in turn, will affect behavior again.”<sup>16</sup> Thus every criticism raised by Germany, for instance, or nearly every gesture on the part of Russia becomes inscribed into a historical chain of geopolitical evil and our response, in keeping with that interpretation, provokes a reaction that is even more in line with stereotypical expectations. Back in 2006, Radosław Sikorski, Poland’s former minister of defense, compared the first Nord Stream pipeline project to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Ten years later, it is apparent that this claim was highly exaggerated, and yet the mechanism of “political neurosis” described by Mieroszewski still applies in this case.<sup>17</sup>

Let’s be honest: we hold little sway over the policies of our neighbors. We must thus turn the blade of geopolitical criticism on our own democratic government and media. In order to break out of this vicious circle, three quarters of the work must be done in our own backyard; bolstering relations and building trust with the Others only makes up the remaining twenty-five percent.

### **THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND A CONFUSION OF TERMS**

In Poland, cultural varieties of Geopolitics are no less popular than geographic ones, while Samuel Huntington’s famous thesis about the “clash of civilizations” (a common refrain of many debates, including among liberals, and a phrase repeated like a mantra in this country), finds

<sup>16</sup> S. Guzzini, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>17</sup> J. Mieroszewski, *Polityczne neurozy*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo, 1984, p. 8.

additional support in the local conservative tradition of Feliks Koneczny. The deep entrenchment of cultural Geopolitics – or even simple racism – in our public debate was only made apparent in the wake of the rise of “political Islam” and fundamentalist terrorism after September 11, and, more recently, in response to the migrant crisis and the war in Syria. While our ineffectual diplomacy with Russia and Germany inevitably leads to the self-fulfilling prophecies of geopolitical sages, the thesis about the “clash of civilizations” is reiterated daily by thousands of Internet users ready to fight the “Islamization” of Europe.

Poland’s Eastern policy, particularly as it was conducted by Lech Kaczyński, is sometimes accused of being anti-Russian. In the prevailing outlook on Russia, both perspectives on Geopolitics – geography and culture – have merged into one. This Eastern policy built on Jagiellonian traditions and propagated by right-wing columnists is not synonymous with the goals of the ULB project, as discussed above, and has even less in common with the geopolitical heresy of the dissidents. Mieroszewski clearly emphasized the equality of the aspirations of all Central and Eastern European nations and the harmfulness of upholding the image of Polish culture as somehow superior, be it in openly imperial forms or with Poland as the *primus inter pares* in the favorite Jagiellonian project of the geopolitical right: the “Intermarium.” This “Jagiellonian” mode of thinking, however, is irreversibly tainted with megalomania. When Andrzej Nowak talks about Ukraine and the historical role Polish culture in the region, he also describes Ukraine in the period of the “Orange Revolution” as “what was

once the Commonwealth.”<sup>18</sup> Though the enemy in this Jagiellonian project is authoritarian Russia, perceived as civilizationally distinct from Poland, Kaczyński had no qualms about seeking out anti-Russian alliances with authoritarian regimes in such countries as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. This abandonment of the primacy of human rights, a key issue from the liberal observer’s point of view, undermines the whole conservative idea of “Neo-Prometheism.”

### **TOWARDS A LIBERAL-CULTURAL GEOPOLITICS**

In that case, what should this alternative liberal geopolitics look like? To reiterate: just like (classical) Geopolitics, it is a way of looking at and analyzing international politics, rather than a user’s manual for the state. It is founded on a certain stance, rather than on any specific program. The goals of the critical, independent intelligentsia may change, but its role remains unchanged.

It must be critical, meaning that it must avoid falling into tired intellectual clichés, it must challenge assumptions and constantly pose difficult questions. Such geopolitical imagination would be capable of subverting existing truths and orthodoxies. Only in this manner can we break the vicious circle of self-fulfilling Geopolitical prophecies. These truths, laws, and the “natural” – and, by extension, indisputable – “state of affairs” are rooted in the nation’s public discourse. The alternative must be built from the

<sup>18</sup> A. Nowak, “Europa Wschodnia – polskie pytania o Europę i jej Wschód (po 10 kwietnia 2010 roku)” in: J. Kłoczowski, (ed.) *Polska w grze międzynarodowej. Geopolityka i sprawy wewnętrzne*, Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2010, p. 21.

ground up, while at once dealing with Poland's still firmly entrenched variety of patriotism that centers around the military and martyrdom, and in which war, rather than peace, is perceived as a sign of greater devotion to society.

The awareness of the role played by culture in shaping social attitudes towards international affairs makes this geopolitics a cultural alternative. "National interests" don't exist in the objective sense, but are mere constructs built on cultural foundations. To change cultural interpretations is to change political attitudes. For this reason, the field of activity is memory and the debate on the history of Poland and the region, while the key adversary of liberal geopolitics in the cultural sphere is the right-wing program of the "politics of memory," understood as the manipulation of historiography in a manner subservient to the interests of the state, with the purpose of shutting down critical discussions on the past and replacing them with a strong, positive, yet selective narrative. The politics of memory is nothing more than Geopolitics applied to the debate on history and to pop-culture.

An alternative approach to geopolitics must be involved and aware in its striving to achieve certain political goals. It must be built on the foundation of human rights. This is precisely what makes alternative geopolitics liberal. We, the inhabitants of this part of Europe, understand well the power that lies in the idea of human rights and the incompleteness of life in circumstances of limited societal freedom. Today, many young, left-leaning Western Europeans have trouble stomaching the speeches of Angela Merkel and Joachim Gauck, and look upon former dissidents with pity. This disparity in historical experience, this difference in collective memories and,

in a sense, systems of values should not be the source of hang-ups, but rather a store of valuable resources – even if this reiterating of the inseparability of peace and freedom sounds, to some ears, like a broken record. The systemic transformation of the 1990s saw the disappearance of ideas built upon the dissident experience, such as Jaroslav Šabata’s neo-democracy (*novodemokracie*), which was intended to borrow from two main strands of mature European politics: social democracy and Christian democracy, layered over the liberal foundation of human rights. It was thus a project for a centrist consensus. Unfortunately, a large part of the new European Left (on both sides of the former Iron Curtain) continues to succumb to the old fallacy of “economic reductionism.” Their programs and manifestos revolve around the criticism of capitalism and parliamentary democracy, treating issues such as freedom and human rights as anachronistic or relegating them to the background. They fail to transcend the postulates of participatory democracy and raise the idea that “another geopolitics is possible.”

An obvious consequence of the involved nature of this alternative approach to geopolitics is its idealistic stance. This should not be confused with “naïveté”, as Snyder observes in his description of Mieroszewski’s idealist realism and the ultimate truth of his ideas.<sup>19</sup> It is at once sad and terrifying that, in the Polish public debate, calculation is confused for wisdom, deception for intelligence, and cynicism is regarded as realism. All of this is anchored in “common sense.” This club of Machiavellians is just asking

<sup>19</sup> T. Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

to be confronted with a bit of intellectual hooliganism. There are two movements that have significantly subverted the logic of big politics: the German Greens and Central European dissidents. Both were nearly identical in their stance, though at times distant in ideological terms. Their attempts to overturn the *status quo* demonstrates that idealism should be carried into salons like mud on boots. Perhaps one day it will finally become contagious and obvious, or at least a realistic alternative. On the contemporary German political scene, the Greens are a liberal party and are perhaps the most visible heirs to the heretical tradition of “grassroots Helsinki,” as demonstrated by their unwavering stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine (and by Green MEP Rebecca Harms’ *persona non grata* status in Russia).

My purpose is not to provide a comprehensive solution, but rather to legitimize an essential stance. What I have described as liberal geopolitics is characterized by critical thinking, political involvement and idealism; it is a perspective rooted in history and philosophy, one that is in very short supply in the Polish debate on foreign policy. Independent intellectuals will certainly find this stance more palatable than politicians and diplomats. Yet the relative ease with which outsiders can criticize this approach does nothing to discredit it. On the contrary: whoever understands that foreign policy is shaped by the ideas and discourses present in the debate also grasps the importance of pluralism therein. An alternative cultural and liberal geopolitical perspective is indispensable. Geopolitics as a fetish – the most common way in which it is perceived in Poland today – is leading us down a dead-end road.

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PART I  
AFTER CRIMEA: EUROPE,  
UKRAINE, RUSSIA

ROBERT COOPER

**Two paths to security**

**There are two ways of being secure as a country. The traditional way is through strength and through geography, the other is through good political relations with one's neighbors.**

This is the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, signed in 1975. We are separated from that moment by four decades, but let us consider for a moment what the world was like 40 years before Helsinki, in 1935. There are many differences between the world as it was in '35, '75 and today. Yet, in spite of the multitude of recent crises, I actually think that we are living in a world which is better, although the world of 1975 was certainly an improvement on the world of 1935. When things get worse, the change is usually dramatic, and things then get better slowly through people solving problems, bit by bit, along the way.

Thinking of 1935, I reflect upon the Spanish Civil War and the quotation from George Orwell's "Homage to Catalonia", in which he describes his experiences of that war. At the end of the book, he describes his arrival back home:

“And then England, Southern England. Probably the sleekest landscape in the world. It is difficult when you pass that way [...] to believe that anything is really happening anywhere. Earthquakes in Japan, famines in China, revolutions in Mexico. Don’t worry, the milk will be on your doorstep tomorrow morning, the *New Statesman* will come out on Friday. [...] All sleeping the deep, deep sleep of England from which I sometimes fear that we should never wake till we are jerked out of it by the roar of bombs”.

Well, I don’t think that we are on verge of that situation today, but I must say that I feel more anxious about the world now than I have for long time. It seems to be much more unpredictable and I’m thinking really of the European security situation. This brings me back to Helsinki and to what I think of as the fundamentals of security.

There are two ways of being secure as a country. The traditional way is through strength and through geography, having a strong army, having geographical strategic depth, maybe a *cordon sanitaire*, something like that. That has been the approach to security of Russia through the ages and in a way it is understandable, because Russia has been invaded several times and you can see why they may feel need to protect themselves on this large plain they live on. But that’s not the only way to being secure.

So, I come to the other way of being secure, not through strength but through good political relations with one’s neighbors. We in Britain live next to a country we fought for approximately thousand years. Actually, British coins until early in the 19th century used to say our kings were also kings of France, because we still had the territorial claims on France. And France is after all a nuclear power,

has traditionally had a bigger army than Britain and at least theoretically is capable of destroying us. Yet nobody in London worries for one second about this possibility. That's the security of good relations, of good political relations.

That security doesn't happen by accident, it doesn't happen unilaterally. That security has come about through several different things. One of them is because of NATO, but the other is because of the practice of cooperation. The Helsinki Final Act established an organization called "Conference for *Security and Cooperation in Europe*". To my mind, security and cooperation go together. You do not cooperate with people because you are friends with them. You become friends with people because you cooperate with them.

Maybe these two versions of security correspond to the difference between interest and values. Maybe the first security is a kind of security based on interest, maybe the second security is a kind of security based on common values grown out of cooperation? I'm not sure if that's really the right way to explain it, but I believe that the best security comes from good political relations, and good political relations come from active cooperation. But until you get to that, the alternative is no community of values, but a community of interests instead. What Helsinki was founded on initially was a common interest in avoiding World War III. And we are, after all, at a real risk of this.

The Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975 and at that time we had already experienced a number of crises – such as the Cuban missile crisis or the Berlin crisis. I think this scared people and although the Soviet Union and USA had very little in common they did share a fear of nuclear war.

And out of that common interest came the idea that there was common security, along with the organization of common security. There were ten Helsinki principles, but actually the treaty was based fundamentally on one principle which was the non-violation of territory. It was basically a territorial settlement, not a very good territorial settlement in a way for this country, but it at least produced stability. That's why what happened last year with Crimea, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. That's why this is the most fundamental breach of security that we have seen since 1945, maybe.

The fundamental principle of security, of stability, is the principle of territorial integrity, non-violation of other people's territory. That is the source of all other principles. Security everywhere is based on security under law, which is essentially territorial. That is why what happened in Ukraine is fundamental. I haven't told you what the answer to this crisis is and I don't have an answer, I only know that what happened is fundamental break between the past and where we are now in the present. It's a fundamental problem and we can't feel secure until it is in some way resolved, though it's a long way from resolution at the moment.

**ROBERT COOPER**

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ŁUKASZ JASINA

## **Ukraine – the beginning of the end of the world order?**

**The current military and political crisis in Ukraine will soon enter its third year, and it doesn't seem like it will end anytime soon.**

The most optimistic scenario the world's analysts can come up with is that the conflict is “frozen”, meaning it is reduced to sporadic clashes and the region has come to a sort of an international relations stasis. Of course, analysts can't accurately predict what will happen next – just as they did not predict the crisis itself.

Even though we can't predict the future, we know that events in Ukraine will have an influence what happens in Europe in the next few months or even years. We might also be able to gauge how the Ukrainian crisis affected the European spirit in 2015.

### **THE BIGGEST CRISIS IN EUROPE?**

The revolution in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas – are these the biggest challenges to European and geopolitical order? It's possible that they were seen as such a year ago, but now they are being

overshadowed by the actions of the so-called Islamic State in the Middle East, the atrocities committed there and the dangers related to them. Meanwhile, the European Union is weakening as its supposedly key values are proving to be increasingly illusory. Regardless of whether our European world will collapse, it's clear that we already have to start redefining it anew. Unfortunately, many European politicians don't share this clarity of vision. And Ukraine has completely disappeared over the horizon.

Meanwhile, it is precisely this crisis, and not the EU's internal problems or new arrivals of refugees on European shores, which was first to so vividly showcase the Union's weaknesses.

The Ukrainian crisis dispelled the myth about the Union's ability to conduct a common foreign and security policy in the spirit of European solidarity. The EU acted very slowly (as evidenced by sanctions, imposed well after the fact) or else ceded responsibility to individual countries. Because what are the Geneva or Normandy formats, if not a return to the classical paradigm of international relations, i.e. the Concert of Europe? The European Union was supposed to be the antithesis of this sort of arrangement. 2014 showed us that it is not.

Many countries which are geographically distant from the Donbas theatre of war have shown a lack of interest in or understanding for nations such as Poland or Russia. That's when internal solidarity collapsed. And even though that inaction was wrong, it has now given a pretext to those who remain unaffected by the other big Union crisis – the influx of refugees. We must face facts and admit to ourselves that national “egoisms” are beginning to triumph over communal spirits. I'm scared to think

what will happen when other crisis symptoms appear – especially in several years, after structural funds run out.

### **UKRAINE FROM THE UKRAINIANS' POINT OF VIEW**

Of course, the past two years haven't been a complete defeat for Ukraine. Despite the bloodshed and the deaths of many people, the country has achieved some success. Ukrainian society and media have changed, its profile in Europe has risen. Several attempts at reform have been made, but most of them have been suspended due to the hostilities.

Ukraine of September 2015 is a mangled country, engaged in war in its eastern provinces. Despite the Minsk agreement, guaranteed by France and Germany (without the other EU countries), the peace in Donbas is a fiction. What's more, the two most important nations of the European Union actually agreed to the severing of that region from Ukraine's territory in Minsk. Meanwhile, the USA and Great Britain broke the promises they made to Ukraine in Budapest in 1994. The *de facto* acknowledgment of the annexation of Crimea has also already happened.

“Membership” of Europe is a distant perspective for Ukraine, and the North Atlantic is hardly visible at all. We don't know if next year's NATO summit in Warsaw will change that in any way. But seeing as Germany is objecting to the setting up of NATO bases in Poland, we can almost be certain that a further expansion of the alliance won't be a popular idea.

The political future of Ukraine looks pretty bleak. Its economic outlook is no different. The snail pace of reforms, declining living standards and lack of perspectives

for improvement could spell more social upheaval. The democratically elected parliament resembles the Polish Sejm from the early 1990s – except that Poland didn't have a war on its border, and she was receiving substantial support from the West.

The collapse of the “Democratic Ukraine Project” which could soon come to pass will further humiliate the European Union. And what's even worse, it doesn't look like we'll be able to avert it.

**ŁUKASZ JASINA**

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RICHARD PIPES IN CONVERSATION WITH  
JAROSŁAW KUISZ AND ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI

## **Ukraine is like Mexico**

**Jarosław Kuisz:** During the last UN session, somewhere in between Barack Obama's and Vladimir Putin's speeches, the Polish president Andrzej Duda took the stage. Polish media gave his speech a lot of attention. But looking at it from your American perspective is this an effective way to conduct Polish foreign policy?

**Richard Pipes:** I don't think Poland can exert a lot of influence.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Your opinion might come as a shock to many Polish journalists.

This is a conflict between the great powers, primarily between the U.S. and Russia – and to some extent Europe as a whole. Individual European countries, however, cannot shape events very much.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Does it mean we can only stand on the side and watch the big countries play their game?

Poland should speak up in order to shape public opinion, yet I don't believe you can have a direct influence on Russian and American foreign policy.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: Is Russian engagement in Syria good news for the Central European states, because it will distract Moscow from Ukraine, or is it bad news?**

I think it's bad news for everybody, because Russia is supporting a tyrant – Bashar al-Assad who controls only a small part of the country. He should be removed and Syria should become a democracy.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: What about Russia itself? Some say it was a masterstroke by Mr. Putin who was elevated to the global stage yet again. Others claim it's a very dangerous gamble which may get Russia embroiled in a costly war it cannot possibly win.**

Russia's involvement in global foreign policy is very popular among its population because they want their country to be what they call “велика держава”, a great power. It is not, however, good for the country itself. Russia is not a great power, it has terrible domestic problems, particularly of an economic nature, and should concentrate on internal not foreign policy. Its economy is in a very bad shape – mainly due to the fall of petroleum prices and the exchange rate of the ruble – and may collapse in the not too distant future.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: What do you think is president Putin's line of thinking? What is he trying to gain by engaging in Syria?**

That he might be able to save Assad, who is his ally, and by virtue of that once more become a major player in the world politics. But again, it's not what Russia needs.

**Jarosław Kuisz: What does it need then?**

Major domestic reforms, both political and economic, which would lead to the weakening of presidential power, decentralization and democratization.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: But when you ask Russians about such reforms they tend say that they have already experimented with liberal democracy in 1990s, during Boris Yeltsin's presidency, with terrible results. They remember it as a time of humiliation on the world stage and total chaos in the country. That is why they prefer a strong and stable – even if undemocratic – political leadership.**

You are right – this is the tragedy of Russia, that its citizens are very uneducated politically and hardly interested in politics. If that sentiment remains strong, the future of Russia is pretty bleak.

**Jarosław Kuisz: There are some voices saying that Putin is purely the product of Russian culture. Is he the kind of politician that had to appear in modern Russia?**

Unfortunately yes. Russians want very strong leaders who do what they believe is necessary for the country, do not listen to public opinion and do not follow lawful procedures. I've been studying Russia for 70 years and I'm very disappointed it is that way. I would like Russia to move – as Eastern Europe did – towards lawful democracy, but it does not have that tradition.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: What do you think is the best-case scenario for Russia that could take place under the current circumstances?**

To have a president who realizes that Russia needs a political culture it lacks now and to that goal it needs to develop democratic institutions over a period of some 20 to 30 years.

**Jarosław Kuisz: Could you name anyone on the Russian political scene who could take the place of such dissidents as Andrei Sakharov or Andrei Amalrik?**

There are some dissidents, but I do not know anybody who would be capable of achieving such a goal in the immediate future. Unfortunately, most Russians are not interested in politics and are perfectly willing to let somebody else rule.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: How do you judge American foreign policy against Russia over the last six years? Barack Obama's speech at the United Nations was very militant and clearly directed against Mr. Putin. Do you think it indicates a change in Russian-American relations and if so what kind of change would that be?**

The change began after the annexation of the Crimea and then interference in Eastern Ukraine. I believe that sanctions are the right policy and they may eventually force Russia to take a different approach.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: But back in 2011, in an interview for the Wall Street Journal, you spoke favorably about the reset policy introduced by the Obama administration at the beginning of his presidency.**

I think the idea of the reset was right at the time. Unfortunately, events have taken a different course. Since 2011, Russia became very aggressive towards the states

of the former Soviet Union and in the Middle East, so the change of policy was also necessary.

**Łukasz Pawłowski:** How do you see the role of NATO in the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria? For many years you were against Poland joining it and at some point you said the Treaty itself was no longer needed.

I did not support the dissolution of NATO. Where did you find it?

**Łukasz Pawłowski:** In the aforementioned interview from 2011 you stated that “NATO was created specifically against the Russian threat. The Russian threat does not exist... So I think the time has come to consider dissolving it.”

If I said that, I regret it now, because NATO is necessary.

**Łukasz Pawłowski:** What actions then should it take in Syria and Ukraine?

It cannot do much in Ukraine, but I think the policy of sanctions and the criticism of Russia is justified. In Syria, Russia is simply going to fail, because Assad is already going down and I think they are making a mistake supporting him.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Do you think Ukraine could stay an independent country in the long run?

I think it can, but I would tell the Ukrainians not to dream of joining NATO or becoming part of other Western structures. In dealing with Moscow one has to take Russian mentality into account. And for them, Ukraine is the cradle of the Russian state. So while they should

be independent, they should not manifestly try to be a part of the West.

**Jarosław Kuisz: Do you really believe that Ukraine can be some kind of Switzerland between the East and the West?**

No, that is impossible. It is historically and territorially very connected to Russia.

**Jarosław Kuisz: So it cannot really be independent...**

It is independent, but its relations with Russia can be compared to the relations between the US and Mexico. If Mexico in the 1960s, 70s or 80s became a part of the Soviet Bloc, we would not tolerate it because of its proximity. The same applies to Ukraine – it needs to be careful about not antagonizing Russia.

**Jarosław Kuisz: If you look at it from this perspective, maybe it would be better to compare the current situation with the Cuban Crisis of 1962?**

To some extent yes. We would not allow Cuba, which is next door to us, to become a base for Russian missiles and were ready to start a war over it. Russia would do the same with Ukraine.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: This is the same reason why, for a long time, you were against Poland joining NATO – you said it might antagonize Russia. Is your opinion different now?**

I was afraid that Russians would become very aggressive towards Poland, but this is now history – Poland is part of NATO and that is it. Russia cannot do anything about it.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: Cannot Ukraine follow the same path?**

Ukraine joining NATO?

**Łukasz Pawłowski: Yes.**

No chance – if Ukraine tried to join NATO, Russia would invade it. I think Russia would not object Ukraine having close economic connections with the West. But they would not tolerate any form of political, let alone military cooperation.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: But the question is: what should the government in Kiev do right now? Should it allow the east of the country to remain under the control of Russian separatists or should it try to get those territories back?**

They should fight to get these regions back, because it is intolerable that Russians are trying to detach a part of another country and take it for Russia.

**Łukasz Pawłowski: Yet we know that president Obama objects to sending military support to Ukraine. Do you think he is right in making this decision?**

No, in this regard he is wrong. He should provide military support.

**Jarosław Kuisz: But that could lead to a regular war. Or do you hope this could discourage Russians?**

I think the Ukrainians need more military help to reclaim those regions.

**Jarosław Kuisz: Who therefore should be the role model for president's Obama foreign policy – president Kennedy who dealt with the Cuban crisis?**

I worked for Reagan and I believe Reagan was right.

**RICHARD PIPES**

historian and expert on Soviet Russia, Baird Professor Emeritus of History at Harvard University. In 1981 and 1982, he served as a member of the National Security Council, holding the post of Director of East European and Soviet Affairs under President Ronald Reagan.

**JAROSŁAW KUISZ**

state and legal historian, political analyst, chief editor of “Kultura Liberalna”. He lectures at the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Warsaw and chercheur associé étranger at the Institut d'histoire du temps.

**ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**

columnist and managing editor at “Kultura Liberalna”.



ADAM GARFINKLE IN CONVERSATION WITH  
JAROSŁAW KUISZ

## **Piles of rubble around Russia**

**“Putin’s aim is to turn Russia’s neighbors into piles of rubble, fallen states, unattractive for Western investments – both economic and political”, claims the American journalist.**

**Jarosław Kuisz: President Vladimir Putin likes to repeat that the Russian intervention in the Crimea, and subsequent hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, are “merely” a response to the West’s previous provocations. The American Interest even mused whether we provoked Russia, and if we shouldn’t be apologizing for our political shortsightedness. What is your opinion?**

**Adam Garfinkle:** The West has certainly made mistakes which have led to the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, but there’s no question of provoking the Russians. The conflict in that country was created mostly by Moscow. Naturally, Russians claim that they’re only defending themselves, but that’s what villains have been saying throughout history. It was Russia who violated the Budapest memorandum which guaranteed the territorial integrity of Ukraine, in addition to international norms and laws...

**What does Washington think Russia intends to do?** Putin's aim is to turn Russia's neighbors into piles of rubble, fallen states, unattractive for Western investments – both economic and political. This is how Russia wants to stop the spread of liberal ideas emanating from the West. After all, a functioning liberal democracy in Ukraine is the last thing Putin needs. We should note here that the European Union's decision to make the Ukrainian government choose between the West and Russia was definitely a mistake. But the Moscow regime is threatened by the mere popularity of liberal ideas.

**There's no shortage of daring interpretations of the events in Ukraine. One of the most interesting ones comes from Professor Timothy Snyder, a historian who claims that today's crisis in Ukraine should be seen in conjunction with Putin's material support for radical left- and right-wing parties in Europe – such as the National Front in France. Do you think Russia truly has a long-term plan of using these types of groups to damage European democracies from within? And to erode European unity?**

Russians have long been using every opportunity to weaken the youngest NATO member states and to sow antagonisms between the Eastern and Western wings of the Alliance. It's the same thing they did during the Soviet era, with sporadic success. But Russia as a state is much weaker than USSR was, she can't afford an open conflict with NATO, which is why she is trying to undermine Western institutions and Western unity using other means. And sometimes she succeeds.

**In that case you do admit that the goals of Russian foreign policy extend far beyond subjugating Russia's neighbors and turning them into "piles of rubble".** Putin's foreign policy goals can be imagined as three concentric circles. The first, most conservative one, is not allowing a pro-Western government – one which would have good relations with the European Union and NATO – to keep operating in Kiev. The second circle is driving a wedge between the old NATO members and the new ones, and between the European NATO members and USA. The Russian President may want to demonstrate in this way that American power is limited. The third circle, the most ambitious goal, is to threaten the territorial integrity of one of the members of NATO. Many people think it could be one of the Baltic states, like Lithuania or Latvia. This way Russia could test NATO's reactions in an hour of dire need. Lack of decisive action in defense of a member state would spell the end of the Alliance, i.e. the organization which was seen as the main enemy of USSR, and now Russia.

### **Will Putin manage to achieve these goals?**

Right now we're on stage one. He hasn't had much success on the second tier – and he's still far away from reaching the third one.

### **Will the United States play a bigger role in the Ukrainian crisis? Right now, only France and Germany have been involved in negotiations with Russia.**

The Minsk process is proof that American leadership was transferred to Germany. The interesting thing is that Berlin doesn't like that, because it doesn't actually have the

power to successfully stand up to Russia. Putin sees this as another opportunity to drive a wedge between NATO members.

**But let us recall the time when, shortly after the fall of communism, American leadership was *de facto* transferred for a moment to the European Union, during the war in former Yugoslavia. That was a nightmare. Western Europe was unable to prevent an escalation of the conflict at the time, or to provide humanitarian aid – in other words, she was politically humiliated right on her doorstep. Until the Americans came in... That's right. Europeans want American leadership only when a serious crisis emerges. The rest of the time they claim that America is acting like a tyrant.**

**And since we do have a crisis to deal with, some European countries would once again expect more interest from the Americans. At least for our region.**

At this moment, the Obama administration, as its functionaries will attest, would rather lead from the back seat instead of forcing allies to adopt solutions imposed by the United States. There are six military bases in Eastern Europe, each manned by several dozen soldiers. The American administration sees this as a success, but if you consider the scope of a potential Russian threat realizes, it is a military response that... isn't even close to what you would reasonably expect. The same applies to sanctions. Which doesn't change the fact that they've been quite effective, though that only goes to show how weak Russian economy is. But the Obama administration has no interest in charging ahead, dragging its European allies behind it.

It actually looks a bit like what Bill Clinton's administration was doing in the first few months of the war in Yugoslavia.

### **Could Washington's policy change in the immediate future?**

That's really hard to say, especially since a presidential election will take place in the US next year. Barack Obama is guided by the conviction that if the United States withdraw from some areas, other nations – faced with a *fait accompli* – will step up to the plate. This will make American foreign policy cheaper, safer and equally effective in the long run.

### **Is this strategy working?**

So far – not really, because instead of allied, or at least neutral states, the vacuum left by the US is being filled by “revisionist” powers such as Russia, China or Iran. This is a source of anxiety for American allies, who feel that instead of an orderly change of guard, they are faced with chaos and that things are getting out of hand. I think the Obama administration is reading these signals and is trying to respond from time to time – the last example of such a response would be the decision to send F-22 planes to Europe. It's a sign that things went a bit too far and the United States need to do something to reclaim the reputation of a superpower capable of correctly assessing the situation.

### **Otherwise relations between Europe and Washington will grow even cooler.**

Great Powers mostly just protect other countries, which makes their relationship slightly resemble that between

business owners and... the mob. When we're unable to provide such protection, weaker countries have three options: firstly, they can look for protection elsewhere – though some nations, like Poland or Japan, don't have any other options, the United States are their only security guarantee; secondly, the threatened country may agree to the aggressor's terms; finally, the threatened countries may pool resources and cooperate to face the threat. Some forms of this cooperation are perfectly acceptable, others might prove to be very dangerous.

**What I take away from this conversation is that the United States are unlikely to involve themselves in Europe any further.**

That's hard to say. Of course, there are signs that could signal Washington has changed its course. One would be a decision to supply Ukraine with arms. Another such signal would be the deployment of significant military forces in Eastern Europe. But I don't think that will happen.

**And that's what we are afraid of in Eastern Europe. After all, since the Budapest memorandum of 1994 (a guarantee of Ukrainian territorial integrity in exchange for the transfer of its nuclear arsenal to Russia) turned out to be just words on a page, we have once again found ourselves in a state of political uncertainty. If this agreement was broken, what is to stop the breaking of other ones?**

We shouldn't go overboard with these anxieties or historical analogies. We're certainly not back in the 1930s, if only because today's Russia is much weaker than USSR was in that era, and I don't see that changing anytime

soon. Russian demographic, economic and institutional problems are too severe for that to happen, and unlike the USSR, Russia isn't self-sufficient, its well-being depends largely on the outside world. But what's even more important for Eastern Europe is that today's Germany is a completely different nation. Immigrants coming from the Middle East to Europe see Germany as a beacon of hope, and many Germans greet them as heroes, trying to help them. Would anyone believe Germans to be capable of such gestures mere 50–60 years ago? Eastern Europe was the stage of a diabolical clash between Russia and Germany. Today, the Old World is struggling with great challenges. And many other, completely new ones, may yet appear on your horizon.

**And still, many Eastern Europeans see the current situation as a sort of echo of past events. Once again, we have to explain to the West what is really going on in the East.**

But the United States' withdrawal doesn't play much of a part in this conflict, and is not the result of Washington not understanding the situation in Ukraine, but the reflection of a shift in how America sees its role in the world. In Barack Obama's opinion, Cold War-era pacts are an anachronism today, they reflect a bygone world order. That's the real revolution in American foreign policy. The system of alliances created after World War II, which all previous administrations treated as an indispensable asset, Obama sees as a liability. We are witnessing a radical redefinition of what is, and what isn't, in the United States' "vital interest".

## **What are currently the most vital interests of the United States?**

Besides the prevention of a military attack on the western hemisphere, this is the stopping of any large-scale terrorist attack and dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All other interests, which were deemed as vital over the last 70 years, the current administration sees as less important.

## **And yet there is no shortage of Washington voices calling for greater involvement in Eastern Ukraine, or even for arming the Ukrainian army. Maybe President Obama is making a mistake by not taking that step?**

It's a complex issue. I personally do not support supplying the Ukrainian army with arms. Not because I'm convinced that this would inevitably escalate the conflict – that we'll supply weapons, but Russians, who have much to lose in Ukraine, will always supply more. No, I don't buy that. But if the United States have learned anything from history, it's that the basis of a good foreign policy is stable and honest allies. And is there really an efficient and government-controlled Ukrainian army at this time? I have my doubts as to that. Therefore the question arises whether the American weapons would be properly used. Is the Ukrainian state really efficiently run enough to accept this sort of aid and make the decisions which would put it to good use?

## **What do you propose then?**

I'm a proponent of fostering the development of the Ukrainian state and giving it all the institutional support it needs. No weapons though.



**ADAM GARFINKLE**

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FYODOR LUKYANOV IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI

## **The West is overestimating Putin**

**Should Russia withdraw support for separatist leaders in eastern Ukraine and say “Sorry, that was a mistake”? Big powers don’t do such things, if they wish to remain big powers.**

**Łukasz Pawłowski: How do you assess the current situation in Ukraine, from both Russian and Western perspectives?**

**Fyodor Lukyanov:** Looking from the outside, it appears to be a deadlock, because no one has any clever ideas about how to settle this crisis beyond the so-called Minsk process. We see it’s almost impossible to agree what should be done in practice. Very soon, we will need a new round of very intense diplomatic work to specify and clarify Minsk commitments and to sign a new treaty.

**What’s so difficult about resolving this conflict? Russian soldiers should pull out of Ukraine and Russian authorities should stop supporting the rebels. That’s it. Why is it so difficult to achieve any lasting agreement?**

Because the so-called rebels and so-called Republics are a political reality and for Russia abandoning them would mean both political failure and actual defeat. Ukrainian leaders and European leaders understand that countries like Russia – even if it is in a pretty bad economic state – wouldn't agree terms, which would then be interpreted by everybody as a defeat.

**Do I understand correctly that supporting the rebels in eastern Ukraine was a mistake made by the Kremlin?**

I try not to be a journalist, not to decide whether it was good or bad decision. I see it as a chain of moves which were, partly or even mostly, not pre-planned. The situation developed step by step, from one reaction to the next. The consequence we see is not satisfactory at all, of course. We can't say that Russia has achieved any sort of major success. But it happened. Now, should we withdraw support for separatist leaders and say "Sorry, that was a mistake"? Big powers don't do such things, if they wish to remain big powers.

**What would be an ideal solution to the current situation from the Kremlin perspective?**

Ideally, it would be a transformed Ukrainian statehood, which would allow more autonomy at least for Donbas and some kind of a deal – maybe with Ukrainians, but rather with Americans – which would say that NATO membership for Ukraine is not on the agenda.

**Why do you think that the West should accept such solution? You said that withdrawing from Ukraine would be humiliating to Russia, but agreeing to a partitioning of**

**Ukraine would be humiliating to the West. The United States and Great Britain guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity in the Budapest Memorandum back in the 1990's.**

Of course, the current situation with Crimea *de facto* being Russian is a challenge to the reputation of the West, but unfortunately the only way to change it is war. If NATO was ready to fight for Crimea and Ukrainian integrity, then of course the situation would be completely different. But that's not the case. This means that, in one form or another, it should be settled. I don't think that the Crimea issue can be settled soon, because for the West (morally and politically) it would be impossible to just accept this change of borders. On the other hand, the incorporation of the Baltic states was never formally accepted by United States, but it didn't bar them from having diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Crimea is a long-lasting problem, which might be settled one beautiful day, but certainly not soon.

**Are you saying that Russian authorities would be ready to start a war over Crimea? Is its prestige so important for Russia?**

As long as Western pressure does not involve military force, I don't think that Russia will start a war. If, however, Ukraine with NATO or some other power tried to take Crimea by force, then of course Russia would fight for it. No doubt about it.

**What motivation then does Moscow have to settle this crisis? Why would they do it if maybe – as some commentators in the West say – destabilizing Ukraine in**

**the long run was the main goal behind them starting this conflict?**

Russia is not interested in taking this part of Ukraine. It's pretty obvious – if Russia wanted to continue the fragmentation of Ukraine, it had many chances to do it last year. Secondly, the situation in Donbas is very bad and Russia is ready to support these territories, but not indefinitely. And, due to its economic problems, it would be better for Moscow to find a solution, to at least share the burden and to reintegrate Donbas into Ukraine, but on different terms. Thirdly, the economic sanctions are having an impact and Moscow would like to stop them, but not at any cost.

**From what you are saying, it seems that the war in Donbas is some kind of accident, whereas in the West the major narrative says that it was deliberately started by Mr. Putin to create a land corridor from Russia to the Crimea.**

I'm afraid this interpretation is based on an overestimated assessment of Russian strategic thinking. Being here, my feeling is that a clear aim for policy vis-a-vis eastern Ukraine never existed. There were different ideas, starting with non-intervention and ending with a full-scale military invasion back in the spring 2014. You can see the difference: in the case of Crimea – whatever you think of it – a clear decision was made and rapidly executed. As a result, Crimea is *de facto* a part of Russia. In eastern Ukraine no clear decision was made, no clear strategy developed and implemented. And we can see the result – no-one knows what will happen next.

**Are you saying that a crisis that may destabilize the whole Europe was not a deliberate decision, but a result of a chain of events nobody is actually controlling?**

A chain of events which no-one is in full control of. It started even before the Maidan protests, during the struggle between Russia and the EU as to which camp Ukraine should belong to.

**When commenting on Vladimir Putin's annual public press conference, you wrote that "Putin repeated all of his standard phrases and ideas, but without the passion and tension seen in many of his public appearances in recent years. His comments revealed no desire for an escalation of the current conflict". On the other hand, some recent decisions taken by the Kremlin – such as sentencing Oleg Sentsov to 20 years of imprisonment or the proposition to build an air base in Belarus – seem to prove exactly the opposite. Would you still say that president Putin is not interested in escalating the conflict?**

We should make a distinction – there is a very particular conflict in eastern Ukraine and this is what I meant it when I wrote about the lack of will to escalate it. I believe Russian elites are tired of it and would like to at least freeze it, or find a solution, but not at any cost.

As to what you have said, you need to remember that this is a bilateral process of mutual provocations. Russia has the right to build an air-base in Belarus, as the two countries are allies. NATO is constantly discussing strengthening its capacity in the Baltic states and Eastern Europe. This is a typical quasi-cold war type of exchange,

yet during the Cold War it was much more regulated, because everybody knew the rules of engagement.

**You say that Russia will not benefit from escalating the conflict, but it might be beneficial personally to Mr. Putin as a way of distracting public attention from Russia's domestic troubles.**

It's not beneficial for Russia or for others. I think Hans Morgenthau once said that the driving force behind international relations is the fight for power and prestige the various players are involved in. These notions might be understood differently in different cases, but it's the key for all international relations. After all that has happened in Ukraine, we need a solution which would allow both sides to compromise mutually.

**But is it a fight for Russian prestige or the personal prestige Mr. Putin needs in order to allow him to remain in power?**

I think the role of Putin is seriously overestimated in the West.

**What do you mean?**

Putin is demonized as a genius or a devil. But if you look at the Russian opinion polls now you'll see that the public believe Russia should be a strong and proud power. You can obviously blame Russian propaganda for this, but Soviet propaganda of the 1970s and 1980s was much more widespread than it is now and it still did not work. Now, people believe, which suggests current propaganda is touching sentiments which are there even without it.



**One of the leitmotifs when discussing Russian politics in Western media is the position of Vladimir Putin. Only recently there was an article by Paul Gregory published in “Forbes” in which the author claimed there is a “slow putsch” going on against the president. We hear such predictions quite often, but so far none of them have proven to be true. Is there any way we can assess Putin’s current position in the Kremlin and if he’s really in danger of losing power?**

I’m sure we have no methodology to do it. And all those articles are interesting to read, but nothing more.

**How then would you reply to the question: is Vladimir Putin going to lose his power soon?**

No way. I see no reasons why you would expect things to develop this way in the foreseeable future. But the crisis of the Russian model of development is obvious. It was obvious even before the Ukrainian collision. Already, when Putin returned to power in 2012, he was aware that something needed to be done to reinvigorate the development of Russian society, economy and political system. He tried to find something, but unfortunately he failed. In this regard, the Ukrainian crisis served as an escape, because it changed the situation completely and boosted patriotic feelings. Yet it did not solve the initial problem – what is the basis for Russian development in the future? Now, we see a lot of signs that this question is becoming more and more acute, though it has no direct link to the personal position of the president.

**Even if the economic situation deteriorates further this will not have any political consequences for the Russian authorities?**

At least I cannot see it now.

**Due to the difficulties in relations between the West and Russia, is there any plan in Moscow to approach other allies? Do the BRICS countries offer an alternative for Russia or are they too diverse to create a lasting union?**

BRICS is not an alternative way of economic development. It is not a consolidated and unified entity. It is an interesting framework for developing non-Western approaches to international problems. It is not anti-Western – in fact Russia is the most anti-Western of all of the countries, others are not interested in confrontation with the West.

As for the alternatives for Russia, the inevitable direction is Asia, although I don't think it will be a replacement for the relations with Europe. But even without the Ukrainian crisis that would be an inevitable part of Russian development, because Asia is playing a more and more important role in international relations and economic development. And, let me remind you, the figure even we in Russia tend to forget –  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Russian territory lies in Asia. In these circumstances, it would be strange not to have active Asian policy, which in fact Russia never had before.

But there are at least two problems with Russian relations with the biggest Asian country, China. Firstly, Russia is now a junior partner in relations with China, and secondly there's a danger the eastern part of Russian territory may be annexed by the overflowing Chinese population.

We have been hearing about Chinese annexing eastern parts of Russia since 1990s, but this is not happening and that's a problem. And I mean it is a problem, because for a more or less balanced economic development we really need Chinese investment, Chinese technologies and its people. Yet they don't seem to be interested in coming forward.

As for being a junior partner, economically there's no comparison between the two countries, with China way ahead. Politically, however, it is slightly different. We still see that China has difficulty in behaving like a great power. Unlike Europe and Russia, they don't know how to behave in a situation when they play a really big role at the international stage. The Chinese body, so to say, is much bigger than Chinese brain. That is one of the advantages Russia has over China.

The other is that China now seems to be under a lot of pressure from the United States. Frankly, I do not understand American foreign policy when they simultaneously put pressure on Russia and China, pushing them closer together. Kissinger and Nixon knew very well that first of one needs to separate China and the Soviet Union. But now Obama's administration seems to be doing the exact opposite. China is concerned about relations with the U.S. and thus wants to have Russia as a loyal and reliable partner. I'm not saying this relationship is unproblematic, but it is absolutely inevitable that Russia and China will be closer to each other. Russia will need to make a pivot to Asia just as the U.S. is trying to do.

**Recently, an international poll was published by the Pew Research Center. In the summary we read that “outside**

**its borders, neither Russia nor its president Vladimir Putin receive much support or respect. A median of only 30 percent see Russia favorably in the nations outside Russia”. Does this deteriorating image have any influence on Russian politics? Is it even noticed?** It does not have much impact, because the psychology of the Russian people and their political establishment unfortunately leads them to look at the outside world as hostile. This is very much rooted in historical experience. And if you have such a view of the outside world, you don't expect the outside world to have any warm feelings towards you. Hostility is then seen as normal.

**FYODOR LUKYANOV**

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**ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**

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## DISCUSSION

### **The old order is dead. Do we have a replacement?**

Have the recent decades of a completely new European order taught us anything? How tense are the political relationships in Europe and what can be done in order to raise the level of security, without increasing the risk of new dangers? These are some of the questions tackled by politicians, historians, political scientists and journalists during the discussion which accompanied our conference “Cracking borders, rising walls”. The event was chaired by Łukasz Jasina and Kacper Szulecki.

#### HELSINKI – FORTY YEARS ON

**Kacper Szulecki:** The main inspiration for our meeting today was the 40th anniversary of the Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe signed in Helsinki. At Kultura Liberalna, we cherish the twofold Helsinki legacy. In terms of high politics, which can be referred to as “Helsinki from above”, the Final Act was the cornerstone of our European order, based on sovereignty and non-intervention. The other dimension we might call “Helsinki from below”, a term coined in the 1980s by the

dissident movements from Central Europe. There the emphasis was on the priority of human rights in international politics. What might be the foundation of a new European order after 2014, after the one established in Helsinki was challenged?

**Asle Toje:** Can the Helsinki Act provide inspiration for European order? If that order were to include Russia, at the moment I think the answer would have to be “no”. The reason is that the discourses we have in Europe are not the only discourses around. In Russia, the narrative that the Helsinki Accords were a Trojan horse has taken hold and has been actively encouraged by European scholars, such as Jeffrey Edwards. This means that the Americans were able to play the civil rights problem card, they could trick the Soviet Union into the Helsinki Act and that ate the regime up from the inside, like cancer. This is a narrative that has really taken hold in Russia.

The Helsinki Final Act still provides a very important inspiration, but the differences between the Western block and the Soviet bloc in terms of values were deeper during the 1970s than they are currently. It is sad to see that we are able to have a dialogue, even about important things, such as the value of respecting international orders which Russia has violated frequently when it comes to Ukraine. Also, when it comes to the human rights discourse, the West got trapped in a corner with positive rights and negative rights all mixed up. It seems that the Russians are now attempting to turn the entire discourse around. I think that this would be a good place to try and re-engage with them, without compromising the most fundamental principles of the Helsinki Act that both sides at that time signed up to.

**Robert Cooper:** I associate Helsinki with a comprehensive definition of security. But were the “three baskets” equal? To be honest my answer is “no”, because the condition of anything is security. If you are in the middle of a war then you can forget about human rights and you can forget about economic freedom. Without success in the first basket there is very little possibility of the other two baskets ever being fruitful. That is why the Ukraine conflict has to be solved before one can look elsewhere. You cannot speak of freedom if there is a war going on.

Personally, I think that as far as human rights were concerned, the situation hardly changed in the East after Helsinki. Maybe there were a few more dissidents, but they were still being put in prison. We complained about them more, but it didn’t make any difference. The thing that did change was more economic exchange and the resulting massive debt build up in countries like Poland and Hungary which, curiously, produced a lot of leverage and a lot of nervousness in the East. Solidarity owes its success, first of all, to the courage of the people who organized the union on the ground, but the debt and the trade links actually gave western supporters of Solidarity more leverage. What was also important was the atmosphere of *détente*, the idea that you could talk to each other sensibly, that you could work with each other. This, in the long term, paved the way for Gorbachev. I think if you take Helsinki in this very broad sense as an early experiment in cooperative security, I do not think it was a bad experiment. I think, in the end, it actually produced more freedom and more human rights.

I’m afraid I’m going to say something politically incorrect in that I think there is a kind of hierarchy of progress

that can be made. The first thing is you have to have is security, then on the basis of that you have to try improving economic exchange and with a bit of luck, if you get that, that will create the conditions in which freedom becomes possible.

**Lukasz Pawłowski:** If security is a precondition of economic development then economic development is a precondition for developing political liberties. How would you then judge the Ukrainian revolution which somehow disregarded the geopolitical status of the country and started from political rights? What would you say the Ukrainians can do at this point? Would you recommend a Chinese model, where one starts with strong political power, then moves towards economic development and only then, maybe, at some point, develops political liberty? I am asking because that revolution went exactly the opposite way than your statement.

**Robert Cooper:** Actually, security is the foundation of everything. If you are at war, it is very difficult to have either economic exchange or human rights. The second part is more problematic, but I still think of economic contracts as being very important in real life. I think that economic freedom is quite important, I think that property rights are very important. I'm a follower of John Locke, who sees property rights as the foundation of human rights. What is also true is that having private property, property safeguarded by the law, safeguards the independence of people. When the government can take away your property then they can also take away your life. However, I wouldn't want to make an absolute rule out of this and I also wouldn't want to tell Ukraine what to do, because you have to be Ukrainian to answer



this question. I don't think there is any magic recipe for anybody, but a well-organized society, based on contracts, based on people keeping their agreements... that's not a bad place to start developing human rights.

**Viola von Cramon:** Well, we did have pretty a secure situation for some years. What we all didn't sanction and what we failed to demand from countries like Azerbaijan or Southern Asian countries, from Russia or from Turkey, were human rights standards. I was a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and every resolution against, for example, the situation of political prisoners in Azerbaijan, in Turkey, in Russia, didn't go through. Those countries – authoritarian countries – were better organized, they knew what they were doing, they bought the parliamentarians, and they really let the whole human rights agenda erode.

It is really difficult to build up new principles again if the majority of the countries concerned, the successors of the Soviet Union, who once signed up to the Helsinki Act, no longer feel committed to its basic principles. By the late 1990s the spirit was gone; the willingness to fight for the human rights basket was completely lost. Concerning economic relations – there was never any pan-European, institutional driving factor behind this. It is either the World Trade Organization or bilateral agreements, but the OECD was never a driving force there.

**Aleksander Smolar:** There is a lot of mythology about Helsinki. I think Helsinki has played a very limited role in the transformation process, while indeed the economic factor played a very important role. When the Act was signed, many in the West saw it as treason. I remember a conversation with Zbigniew Brzezinski where he said

that there was a gloomy, Spenglerian atmosphere in Washington after the Summit. The paradox is that the origin of Helsinki accords was the Soviet Union and its objective was the recognition, not even on state borders, but on block borders. The consequences were much deeper than what was expected.

**Kacper Szulecki:** So the situation now is exactly the opposite. The Soviet Union was the *status quo* power, while the West in some way “revisionist”, trying to reverse certain elements of the system. Today Russia is certainly the revisionist power. So whom does this framework serve? Is there any chance of having a pan-European cooperative security system framework in those circumstances or are we back to the times of balance of terror and containment?

**Jarosław Pietras:** In the minds of the people, Helsinki has been quite visible. However, we are not talking about Helsinki, but about achieving balance. The problem now is that in Russia, for example, there is a rhetoric of aggression, a kind of fortress that Russia needs to be, that there, supposedly, is a willingness in the West to invade Russia with ideas, with standards, with values and also with money. The Soviet Union had a kind of influence by ideology, it was a model for a number of intellectuals in many countries that said: “We need an alternative”. The problem is that Russia is not a model for anyone in terms of organization of society. It loses its influence because it doesn’t have followers that would say: “This model is better and it’s an alternative to that rotten capitalism”.

**Łukasz Jasina:** For the ideologists of the present regime in Russia economic norms are also discussable. That makes them much more *revisionist* than the totalitarian regimes of the past. For the Ukrainians, when they started

their revolution, the European Union was a space of trust, a place of international law. Now, two years since the revolution, do the Ukrainians believe in international law anymore? Do they trust Europe after the collapse of the Budapest Memorandum?

**Yaroslav Hrytsak:** I don't remember any recent reference to Helsinki in Ukraine, but certainly, before 1989, with the "third basket" the dissident movements had an impressive instrument for legitimizing its programs. Now we have a different reality. I am not saying we don't believe in any international agreements anymore. But Helsinki or Budapest? There is nothing more to discuss for Ukraine. Excuse me for saying this, but that is all very, very *irrelevant* at this stage.

**Aleksander Smolar:** Certainly, Helsinki has played the role of a symbol, legitimizing all the dissident movements in our part of Europe. It was important that the authorities gave up the 18th century doctrine of total sovereignty of the state, and allowed others to intervene in their internal affairs. Regarding this dialectic of aggressive, revisionist and conservative states: Fyodor Lukyanov, who is probably the only one in Russia writing about that issue, interprets the Helsinki Accords as an act constituting a sphere of influence. So the "first basket" was about delimiting spheres of influence and so Gorbachev committed a mistake giving up its assurances because he wanted to join the West. He never did join the West, but he abandoned the Soviet sphere of influence, a privilege that Russia was disposed of.

**Łukasz Jasina:** So the CSCE framework was for some, especially in the USSR, a way to conduct *Realpolitik*. Is there any danger now of a similar international agreement about borders between the blocks or between zones

of influence? That's very important, especially for the Ukrainians, because there is a danger that someone in Europe or in the United States will think one day: Oh! We don't need this problem anymore; let's give it away to the other side.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** I think any agreement like that would have to include Ukraine and Ukraine would probably disagree with it. It would be pretty naive to think that Helsinki ever trimmed *Realpolitik*. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs comments on Ukraine's internal affairs on a daily basis. At the same time, if you look at the West, they are just as guilty. You have discussions between Merkel, Hollande and Poroshenko about the Ukrainian constitution and our potential federalization. Ukraine expects the West to be, if not a party in the conflict, then at least to be strongly involved. So Ukraine also expects this continuous violation of one of the principles of the Helsinki Act: non-intervention in internal affairs. The Helsinki Agreement obviously views security issues as very narrow, understanding security as upholding state borders etc. Currently, we have a different understanding of security challenges and the Ukrainian-Russian war has highlighted that. A reformulation of the Helsinki Agreement should be along those lines, it should broaden the global understanding of what security arrangements should be like.

**Jacek Stawiski:** Henry Kissinger would say that Helsinki was a search for a balance of power in Europe and in the World. Helsinki was put into question already in 1990–1995. In 2015, when we are again in the search of a balance of power, major players that were the pillars of the international order that Helsinki created are now

playing different roles. The United States are not willing to uphold the international balance of power in the way they did in 1975 or in 1995. The United Kingdom, France and Germany are also trying to find their own definition of what their power means. Only Russia, unfortunately for us in Central and Eastern Europe, is following a classic definition of power.

**Kacper Szulecki:** Thank you for bringing in the United States, which we have not yet mentioned, alongside with Russia. What place is there for Russia in Europe? Is it still possible to have some sort of pan-European cooperative arrangement that includes Russia? Josef Joffe said he does not care about Russian domestic politics. Well, I care, because someday I would like to see Russia as part of a pan-European arrangement, because only then can truly cooperative security be achieved.

**Viola von Cramon:** I do not believe that we can deal with Russia as long as Putin is the president of that country and as long as he has just one thing on his mind: not to lose this power. It is impossible. He wants to reestablish the old empire. He wants to have his criminal elite in power. It is not an open war, but it is a hybrid war in many, many cases within the European Union and our neighboring countries. If we do not recognize that, if we continue to be naive, and think that we have to include Russia in our calculations, we will be completely disappointed, just as the Ukrainians are now with us. Because when we start a calculation and we input Russia into the formula, for me it simply becomes impossible. Obama is not interested in being a part of the solution and as long as the election campaign is going on we will not know what the US is actually planning to do.

## VALUES AND LANGUAGE

**Lukasz Jasina:** If we are talking about *Realpolitik*, even if we negotiate with someone who is a dictator, we need to trust them. Is this not the biggest problem between Europe, the United States and Vladimir Putin now?

**Jarosław Kuisz:** This comes back to that very basic question linked to the Helsinki and Budapest agreements, the question about the value of accords, the value of international deals. Apart from that, I am concerned to see the dismantling of our vocabulary, dismantling of language. We have a deep problem describing what is going on. We have a hybrid war which is one thing that could be a problem, but the annexation of Crimea is something tangible. And there are victims, there the people being killed. This confused language disables the moral pressure of the West. It disables the description of events, making it possible to play with our values. And that is precisely what Putin has mastered. We all remember his defense of the Russian minority, the “white convoy” of humanitarian aid and so on.

**Kacper Szulecki:** The question of language comes up in different cases across the table here. The Soviets were using the same language, but playing with the meaning of certain concepts. But then again what you just said, and Aleksander Smolar and Viola von Cramon have said before – we now have people that are openly challenging this common language that we thought we had. In Azerbaijan, or Russia, or Hungary, or Turkey.

**Robert Cooper:** It's not problem of language that there are people in prison and lies are not a linguistic problem, it's a problem of honesty, so these things should be challenged each and every time they come up, every time.

It needs time and patience to do this, but in the end you expose these things and you do this one by one in a battle of attrition. We should not tolerate lies, but I do think that the questions that have been asked, the important question is, and this is maybe a small bit of it, the first important question is: how do you deal with Russia now?

**Kacper Szulecki:** This reminds me of Vaclav Havel: living in truth and speaking truth to power, which used to be, at least in some circumstances, a good way to deal with authoritarian regimes. How do you deal with a regime that lies?

**Robert Cooper:** Someone who lies consistently, who built a whole system of lies around them? Well, it's very difficult. Actually, I think a person who does it well, to be honest, is Angela Merkel. She says: "Mr. Putin, I don't understand why you have locked up Mr. Kasparov. He was only planning a protest, what's wrong with that?" Putin immediately does the usual Russian thing and says: "How can you ask such a question? You have just locked ten people up for some planned action somewhere in Germany". And she says: "No, Mr. Putin, those people was locked up for planning a terrorist act. They were planning acts of violence, that's illegal in anybody's country, that's why we locked them up. Mr. Kasparov was planning a demonstration, that's legal in any country, I don't understand why you've locked him up". Putin then decides to talk about something else because he has lost that exchange. That's how you do it.

And actually Merkel does it quite well, because she is low key, she doesn't get excited, she doesn't get aggressive, yet she doesn't trust him at inch. I believe that if we live next to Russia, we have to find some way of dealing

with them, but the way we should deal with them is systematically on the basis of distrust and systematically on the basis of expecting them to lie. We should take nothing on trust and every single step should be absolutely to verify, to monitor every single breach of rules. We should go back and say: “No, we are not accepting this”. So the real question is not whether you should be dealing with Russia, because that’s inevitable, the question is: How? It’s a matter of style and being fair.

**Viola von Cramon:** I know from some people very close to Mrs. Merkel that she is completely frustrated. Even if she understands him, she has also hated him from the very beginning, she really tried to come close and she asked him again and again: “What do you want with Crimea? What do you want with the Donbas?” and he was always kind of evasive. The German foreign ministry is not on the same track as Merkel. This really is a fractured situation. I can understand Ukraine and other countries who see that if Merkel is gone the whole thing is gone. It is so dangerous to simply say: “There is Merkel and she understands Putin and that’s why we are negotiating in such a way”. No! We are very fragile, and we can be harmed by Putin in many, many aspects.

**Ulrike Guérot:** The truth is that there is nobody out there doing this. Not the French as you said, not German business, if you go below the surface of sanctions. You cannot believe how middle-sized German companies think, they would break the sanctions at the first moment they could. And certainly not the Ministry of Economics, not our dear Mr. Sigmar Gabriel. This is a problem of normative underpinning. We stand abused and we are not ready to fight.



**Łukasz Jasina:** That's also the problem of lack of competence in Europe about Russian policy and relations between Europe and Russia, when we've got only Angela Merkel. Maybe it's time to be a pessimist, because we still don't see anybody who can replace Merkel and show us that we have somebody we can trust. That's a big problem of Europe, not only when we talk about Russia and Eastern policy.

**Viola von Cramon:** That is easy to say, but then you listen to the everyday interviews given by our SPD, social-democratic politicians, and you think: "Why are you not aware of what's going on, why don't you recognize what's going on?" They are simply going back to the 1970s. If the prime minister in Lower Saxony or Sigmar Gabriel go on a trip to Russia, give an interview, they are not telling the truth in Russia, they are just being opportunistic. They want to be nice and friendly, they want to cooperate and do business with Russia, and they are not interested in telling the truth.

**Łukasz Pawłowski:** Eventually, it all comes down to institutions. You need to have institutions which react to the problems that we are discussing. It's not only the question of language, it's not only the question of calling one's bluff, but this is eventually the question of institutions that know who you should address to deal with the problem. It's not going to work, as you rightly said, that we are only relying on the German chancellor to deal with Mr. Putin. It all comes down to creating an even closer Union, to having institutions that work, no matter who is in charge in Germany, Russia or France. If it's not coordinated, Russia can play with the differences between European countries and that's what they have

been doing for many years. They don't deal with Europe, because Europe as a whole doesn't exist. They deal with separate countries, using a *divide et impera* strategy. That is the way they have been dealing with Europe practically since the 19th century, and it will continue unless we have a single voice. There is no person or no institution that is responsible for dealing with that, if you have a problem.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** I'm amazed how we in Ukraine follow the same track. It's not just a European problem – as soon as there is talk about engagement with Russia, it immediately gets personified and we see Russia as Putin. Actually, this is completely wrong. He has created a system of government which is operating on its own. Moreover, he has created a system in society where even the idea of an alternative type of leader is impossible, because there is no atmosphere, there is no ground that would be able to produce that type of a leader. Even worse, he has created a society based on hatred and based on chauvinism and opposing liberal values. If you imagine the situation where there are free elections in Russia and Putin should somehow disappear, vanish from the face of the Earth, what type of leader would that type of society produce? Exactly the same one. "Putin – take two". You still have to talk about engagement with Russia and this is a problem for years, if not decades, to come. Reversing the damage done to society is a huge, complex challenge and nobody has talked about any policies in the West that will be able to do that. I think that is very dangerous and this is where we lack policy. It's not just about communication with Putin, it's about the longer term plan on how we rehabilitate Russia.

**Karolina Wigura:** It's really not a linguistic problem. It is a problem of values. Like in Moliere, Tartuffe would

never be able to deceive Orgon if the latter wasn't ready to be deceived. Whenever we are focusing on Putin we are actually unable to grasp the true reality we should be dealing with here. In the culture of memory, where I perhaps know a little bit more, it is not a new thing that Russia is capable of producing notions that have completely new meanings or that have meanings that are completely strange to us in Europe. When you look at the evolution of the culture of memory and notions like "fascist", you will see that actually those notions have been confused for many many years, for many decades. Putin is of course playing on that, but I believe anybody could and this is exactly what you say, Katya, that if we didn't have Putin we would have someone else. How do we cope with this particular political culture or culture of memory, and not with Putin – that is the question.

**Jacek Stawiski:** Should we base our foreign policy on values? I don't believe in that kind of policy. I think power upholds policy. We have to go back to classic definitions. If we don't do that, if we don't define our position within Europe, there is no way we can be able to project any kind of power to our partners or adversaries, we will not be able to manage internal crises, which, for instance, we have been witnessing every day for the past few weeks. The management of power, definition of power, limits of power – those are the problems we should address nowadays as Europeans and go back to at least a classic vocabulary of foreign policy. Otherwise, we will lose and the world will not wait for us. Of course, we are all happy that Angela Merkel is leading a pacifistic, democratic, free prosperous Europe in a fight with the guy at the Kremlin, we are happy with that, but that doesn't give any kind

of answer as to what will happen after chancellor Merkel retires. The absence of power is actually sucking us into a void every day.

**Asle Toje:** Demonizing Putin is not policy, but the absence of policy. I agree with Robert Cooper that the right way to do this is to patiently confront lies told by the Russians and to embrace fundamental principles, and at the same time avoid defining ourselves as the only ones in the world who hold values and build up a mountain of values that only we are able to attain, thereby defining all other states that are somehow less moral than us. I think it's a dangerous and a stupid way of conducting policy, because by doing so we will necessitate the rise of a competing ideology or a competing moral view which Putin is constructing. I think that Putin's nationalist vision is very hard to support. It can only exist in Russia, with its unique history. I was also trying to point out that the Helsinki Final Act also indicates that it is possible to reach important agreements, on important issues, with people we disagree very strongly with and that is something that we shouldn't forget. We shouldn't fall into despair that all Russians are evil and crazy, that we can't deal with them. Let's engage them and calmly point out when they are lying every single time. It's a very boring way to do it, it's the boring side of diplomacy, but I think at this time it's the only option. Right now, Europe has very little spare policy attention to Russia because we are so engaged with the refugee crisis and before the refugee crisis we were completely absorbed with the Euro crisis and I'm sure there will be another crisis around the corner. So, what I'm saying is that perhaps we should scale down our ambitions and do something that might actually deliver the goods in the long term.

**Jarosław Pietras:** We started with Helsinki, looking whether it held something relevant and now whatever we touch we are talking about Putin and Russia. We are always saying that without Russia it would be much easier to have a new framework, but this would be irrelevant. It would not really be the answer. The question is, for me, that the EU or European countries should not define themselves and their policies only by Russia and therefore retain the values. You have to have policy which is based on values and then you could safely and strongly face discussion with Russia. Now, Russia is not in power in terms of global influence, it's a military power, but it doesn't mean it has got the power to influence the minds of the people elsewhere in such a strong manner as it could do before.

**Robert Cooper:** Another issue to consider though is how do we deal with the USA? The US has done a whole lot of stupid things and quite a lot of us have participated in them. Maybe that's because the US provides us with security and we depend on them and we want this to continue. But we've make some mistakes too. I think that Iraq was a big mistake. I never know whether the war in Kosovo started was a good thing or not, maybe we let the Americans get away with too much there. The Russians here again told a lot of lies, which we should reject. The stupidity of the American proposals on enlarging NATO in 2008, the Europeans did nothing about this. To make some proposals, without any consultation with Russia or anybody else, about including Ukraine and Georgia, this was stupid and yet all the Europeans went along with it, except for Germany. So we do not handle America very well either, we actually need to take all of this policy much more seriously, with Russia and with America.

## THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF PROPAGANDA

**Kacper Szulecki:** There was an article written by Anne Applebaum on the Crimean crisis about the popular notion that truth lies in the middle – or rather that it sometimes doesn't and you have to remember that at the moment when you accept that sort of relativism on certain issues you abdicate from your values.

**Gulliver Cragg:** We must not tolerate lies and the response to that must be very rigorous in pointing out all of Putin's lies, I completely agree with that as well. But in that context, it's less of a criticism of Ukraine and the Ukrainian government's policy. Clearly, it's a huge and inexcusable lie that Putin continues to say that Russian troops are not in Ukraine. The Ukrainians are also lying, they are lying about not sending missiles to the occupied areas, they are lying about how much control they have over some of the volunteer battalions and you hear very few voices criticizing the Ukrainian government. To have a rigorous response to Putin's lies, you need to say: "What you are saying is not true!". By not criticizing Ukraine on that issue we are just helping those in Russia, in Germany and in France who want to lift sanctions, and we would not give them arguments if we were more rigorous.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** You are just jumping into the trap that the Kremlin is preparing for you and this is very dangerous. I'm very much reluctant to do this. I know the danger, I've seen it many times, but I don't think this is a crucial problem in Ukraine. This is what the Kremlin wants us to debate.

**Gulliver Cragg:** "This is what the Kremlin wants us to debate..." – I've heard this argument so many times and I really don't want you to think that I'm thinking that

Ukrainian government is awful or that the far right is far bigger than it is etc. But I think that in those forums where people are on the side of Ukraine and against Russia, as I am, the fact that you don't hear anybody saying *at all* that there is anything wrong with the way the Ukrainians are conducting their war... I think it's dangerous that we don't hear any criticism of Ukraine from reasonable people, who aren't convinced by Russian propaganda.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** I disagree that the West does not point out Ukrainian government's mistakes. OECD's role is precisely that: to monitor violations on both sides and produce their reports. That is how you know that the government puts missiles on the territory where they are not supposed to etc. As a journalist, I agree that the Ukrainian government deserves criticism and that's what I do in my work on a daily basis, but at the same time the scale of the problems in Ukraine, including the problem with the rise of some elements of the far Right, is much smaller when compared to problem that Russia creates with its own propaganda machine and its own minds. We are talking about very different scales. This is why I think there is also an element of rationality in the fact that the West is so reluctant to criticize the Ukrainian government.

**Gulliver Cragg:** The essence of the hybrid war is that Russia is exploiting certain problems and fractures in Ukrainian society, amplifying them and exaggerating them. I don't think that the way to respond to that is to pretend that those problems don't exist at all, rather than putting them into the place and talking about them. Robert Cooper said that we can resist Russia by rigorously denouncing lies and countering them with truth. It is worth pointing out that it is not Ukraine's strategy at the moment. Ukraine's

strategy against Russian lies is more lies of their own. This may be counterproductive.

**Aleksander Smolar:** The elites in our countries should be faced with the problem of the lies they are accepting in order to have normal relations with Russia. There is a dialectical relationship between the power, the problem of economy and the problem of truth. Our soft power is extremely important in a fight against cynicism, but to uphold it we need to speak about lies in our countries.

**Robert Cooper:** In Britain, we abolished the death penalty and I think we should continue this policy. And yet, Britain has just targeted and killed somebody in Syria, because they thought he might commit a crime. That was a UK citizen and they seemed to think, just like Russia did with Litvinenko: Even though he is abroad, if you want to, you can kill him. I think this at least should be questioned. I think that we should question our own governments. I don't approve of what the British government did in Libya, for example. They had the UN Security Council's resolution which was about the defense of civilians. Hunting down Gaddafi and killing him does not qualify as protecting civilians. We all have to hold our own governments to the highest standards as well.

**Asle Toje:** I admire you, Gulliver, for being brave, it's a bold statement, but your argument runs the danger of creating some sort of parallelism between the aggressor and the victim and that will play very much into what Russian narrative is very much about. Russia has invaded a part of the neighboring county and they are waging an illegal war inside territory of the neighbor country and that is the big issue here. We mustn't fall into the trap that all things are good and we are completely blind



to the lies that we tell our populations and the lies we have told the Russians, because this is part of this vortex that dragged us into this diplomatic cul-de-sac that we are now. For instance, we told Medvedev, we lied to the Russians about Libya, about the UNSC Resolution 1973. Medvedev was totally dismayed by this, and so would I be. It is not only the Russians who lie, but let us keep in mind that the lies that Russians have told over Ukraine are far bigger than the many transgressions of the government in Kiev. We must keep a sense of proportion right here.

**Ulrike Guérot:** If you are going through German public opinion at large, they tend to believe that Putin is actually a really good guy. “Putinism” in Germany is unbelievable. There is also a very visible historical and political illiteracy. I don’t believe that anybody born after ‘89 knows what the Soviet Union was. This total illiteracy includes my own sons. It is basically a *tabula rasa* for everybody. Who determines what a lie is? It depends largely on which age club you are, whether are you left or right, in which knowledge, order and viewpoint you have been grown into. In that you add sort of this banalization course that Viola has been describing, from populist right to extreme left, basically having all these populist arguments around, which is an easy argument to solve in complex times.

**Kacper Szulecki:** The Czech journalist and former dissident Jakub Patočka recently pointed out how after ‘89 we thought that, after the people that have been brought up in this paradigm of freedom, a generation that erases the post-Soviet *homo sovieticus* would appear, and he said they are going to be the mature democratic types, but what we are seeing now, especially in the face of the refugee crisis, rather more than the Ukraine crisis,

is exactly the opposite. We have a new generation of moral zombies.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** I think that for many youngsters the vision of modern history is like a movie of Quentin Tarantino. Part of the EU construction and what is a part of last decades experience is that there is a value that is rarely mentioned, the value that is a problematic one, the value itself is dispersion of power. That became the value in Europe. The dispersion of power at home and abroad, within the countries, horizontal and vertical. It is not only the question on how to be a democrat and how to build civil society, because I remember there is an essay by German philosopher Odo Marquard, he is just happy with this kind of infinite separation of powers, but of course there is a limit of efficiency but point is that it became brilliant tool to escape from responsibility, especially in foreign politics. We could criticize on Merkel's foreign policy, but in fact a lot of European countries are simply happy that they could get rid of responsibility of the Ukrainian crisis.

**Karolina Wigura:** The question of hypocrisy that Gulliver brought up is one of the most important questions we have to answer when talking about European values and confronting Russia. It's not about convincing anybody that it is us who have the values that nobody else has. It is rather about being sure what our values are and where we break these values. That is perhaps the core thing. European criticism towards its own culture, its own politics, its own history is one of our greatest strengths, not weaknesses. I think once we are capable of saying this, that we also lie from time to time, we also break our promises etc. etc., then we become stronger, because this is actually built into our identity and culture. In liberal democracies there

is always public attention. Europe is perhaps not a liberal democracy as such, but a group of liberal democracies. There is this tension between a promise and reality, so values, democratic, liberal values and the practice. And disappointment comes from the fact that liberal democracies promise so much, but actually authoritarian regimes do not promise this, they do not promise the same values, so there is no disappointment actually.

**Aleksander Smolar:** It's not true that authoritarianisms are not disappointing. Authoritarianisms are based on "output legitimacy", they must provide services and goods. When they are not delivering, they are in danger. This is actually the problem with Chinese authorities; as well it was the problem of our countries, and so on. This is the problem of the interlinkage between the hard security of economics, the problem of delivery, and soft politics, the politics of values.

**Robert Cooper:** This critique will not stop us from winning. Europe has some virtues, one is that policy often ends up being quite sensible, because it's normally somewhere in the middle. Truth may not lie in the middle, but Aristotelian virtue often lies in the middle, in avoiding extremes. We often find that a common policy between what Britain wants (it's often ridiculous) and what Italy wants (which is often completely creepy) has a middle ground, that somewhere in between there is probably a "right" place. And the virtue that Europe has is its very persistence, because it finds it very difficult to reach agreements on some things, debating them for a very long time. And this is also a virtue. Europe disappoints everybody. The pro-Europeans are disappointed because of its quarrels. The anti-Europeans are disappointed because

in the end it always finds an agreement. But actually in the end it doesn't do too badly and in foreign policy that's sometimes good enough – if you keep doing “not too bad” for a long while, sometimes you can end up with a “rather good” result.

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## PART II THE MIDDLE EAST – IS THE FAULT OURS?

MICHAEL WALZER IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ADAM PUCHEJDA

### **War will not win democracy**

**Adam Puchejda:** The conflict in Syria has been going on for almost four years now and it does not seem to be close to a resolution. In fact, it is getting worse, as new players – like Russia – become embroiled. In your opinion, what can we do about Syria? Should we intervene? Or, on the contrary, back Russia, even though we know that Putin supports Assad? Or maybe it is too late to do any of these things and we can only – as you once put it – “watch and be shocked” as things carry on regardless?

**Michael Walzer:** This is a story which started long before today. From the outset, I did not believe and I do not believe today that our friends in Syria – liberal, democratic, secular Syrians – have the capacity to mobilize followers and win the conflict. I thought from the beginning, as in Egypt, that the people we think of as the “good guys” are very brave, but not very strong. Liberal democrats are not thick on the ground in Syria. The people we would like to support probably cannot win, even with our support, unless it took the form of what the Americans call “boots on the ground”. So the alternatives we face are all unattractive.

I wrote at one point that there are Americans, mostly on the right, accusing Obama of dithering over what to do, but it seemed to me that dithering was a rational response to the situation.

**But don't you think that the strategy of dithering, as you put it, has not worked out? The politics of the West toward Syria have been extremely hands-off for years and now the situation appears to be not only intolerable, but intractable and almost impossible to govern.** That is true, but it is not difficult to explain why in the US and possibly also in Europe there was great reluctance to engage. After all, we did not do well in either Afghanistan or Iraq, so we didn't have the stomach for another intervention. And what we did in Iraq was a catastrophe. Basically, we handed Baghdad to the Shiites and by doing that probably set off a civil war in the Islamic world that is going to go on for a long time and in which it is very difficult for us to intervene. And now, with Russian engagement, the most frightening thing is that they seem to have lined up with the Shiites – Iran, Assad, Hezbollah – and we seem to have lined up with the Sunnis. However, lining up with the Sunnis has this one embarrassing aspect – ISIS is a Sunni organization, whose intellectual background is in Saudi Arabia, which is supposedly one of our allies! So, for most Americans the unwillingness to go into Syria is because what we have created looks like one big mess, and nobody is ready to do anything like that again.

**I agree, but even Barack Obama, who moved out almost all of the American troops from Iraq, declared that there is a red line drawn in the Syrian conflict,**



**which is the use of chemical weapons. But when Assad used them, still nothing happened.**

Yes, that was a blunder. It wasn't wrong to say that there was a red line, but it was wrong not to enforce the red line. There should have been a strong military response. I do not know why Obama pulled back on that one, I do not know how his mind works, but this was a very big mistake. Again, I do not believe that even if there had been a strong response, the good guys would have been able to rally on the battlefield, where they were already losing people to Al-Nusra and different Muslim groups.

**It was possible to establish a no-fly zone.**

Establishing a no-fly zone was really a humanitarian argument, because it wouldn't affect the fighting going on in other zones unless we really went after the Syrian air force, which I suppose, we could have done.

**And again the West didn't do anything.**

Unfortunately, it didn't.

**But why? When people look for reasons they start to think that maybe Russians are right in their critique of the West? They confront the US and NATO by saying that even though the Americans and the Europeans are all-talk about human rights, they don't really care about the bloodshed in Syria, as long as they it cannot use it in their own political power games. So it is not about containing Russia, which has suddenly become an aggressor defending the legitimate Syrian government, they say, but about another imperial Western crusade.**

First of all, of course, there are no pure moral motives in politics, certainly not in international politics, and even in cases of humanitarian intervention there have always been mixed motives. So it is true that there were times that we have not intervened when we should have, as in the case of Rwanda, for example, perhaps because we had no significant interest there. I think that Kosovo was perhaps a rare case of actual humanitarian intervention without any hidden agenda. I believe that the inspiration for this intervention was what happened in Srebrenica, the humiliation, the sense of shame, which does not often figure in politics. There was a genuine sense that we could not sit and watch another massacre of that kind. But this was not well understood.

I was visiting the Gramsci Institute in Torino during the NATO bombing of Serbia. Now, this was a war supported by the center-Left, the Labour Party, the French Socialists, the German Social-Democrats and Greens, the Italian Party of the Democratic Left and others. It was the war of the near-Left opposed by the far-Left. The Refoundation Communists in the Gramsci Institute were very much opposed to the war and insisted that it was an imperialist war, but they had great difficulty figuring out what the imperial interest was and they came up with some very odd arguments. They thought that this was an approach to the Black Sea, that NATO wanted to take the Black Sea, or that maybe oil had been discovered in Macedonia, etc. So it was a similar argument to the one you are quoting.

Secondly, it is implied that if you decide to intervene, when it is the state, the regime that has created the humanitarian crisis, it is very likely to end in an overthrow of that regime. If we had gone to Rwanda, the only possible

way to end the killing would have been to overthrow the Hutu regime. And going back to our present situation in Syria or Libya, we need to understand that in the Arab world today if you overthrow a dictator, you are unlikely to get a liberal democracy, but instead create a civil war between Muslim groups. So you overthrow Saddam and you get what we see in Iraq today. You overthrow Gaddafi and you get rival militias which have a regional, but also a religious basis. And if you try to overthrow Assad, you will get anarchy.

**So maybe the Russians are right when they suggest that we should not overthrow tyrants, even the bloodiest ones?**

Maybe. Maybe we shouldn't try to overthrow tyrants, but once a civil war has begun, we can't support them. Maybe the biggest mistake for the US was to be too eager to say "Mubarak must go" or "Assad must go". Maybe the development of Arab democracy is a very long process. Maybe we could help in many ways by working within the civil society of these states, as far as there is space for a civil society, but we shouldn't be militarily engaged at all. The first thing I wrote when the Arab Spring began was a piece on the Dissent website, in which I said that the likely outcome of the Arab Spring in Egypt was a conflict between the army and the Muslim Brotherhood. So what do you do in a situation like that? We were too quick to welcome the Muslim Brotherhood, and now we are too quick to defend the military dictatorship.

**Do you mean to say that we were naive? Or maybe not only naive, but worse, reckless, because we have**

**inspired those movements with the values of the free world as we understand it – free speech, women rights, democracy?**

I am not sure how large the role of Western inspiration was, but yes, where else could it come from? It is true that the Facebook kids in Egypt, Libya, Syria, etc. were inspired by Western models of politics. The inspiration comes from what the West is. But these people in the Arab world have to understand that we cannot commit ourselves to military engagement on behalf of rebels until they prove their own capacity to fight and win.

There was a magazine published in the 1840s and 1850s in the US called *The Democratic Review*. They were Jacksonian democrats, calling themselves radical democrats, and they welcomed the revolutions of 1848 and debated about intervention. They said back then: Look, the American Revolution would have never succeeded without the help of the French navy, and maybe now we owe our democratic comrades in Europe the same thing? So this is a very old debate, but their model was the French intervention in the 1780s. Once George Washington had proved that he could sustain a military struggle for seven years, then the French help was legitimate, but until there is evidence of that sort, it doesn't make sense to intervene on behalf of people who cannot win unless your intervention is heavier and heavier. In Libya you could see what was happening, the rebel forces moving west along the coast, they literally could not advance a foot, an inch, unless we bombed and bombed right in front of them, and that's the way they moved westward – and that is not viable.

**But isn't this part of our responsibility? We so often say, you can have democracy, just overthrow your own dictator, but later we just watch the news. Syrians wanted to overthrow Assad, so they started marches, manifestations and the civil war broke out, but we didn't do anything to help them. If we are not going to act, maybe we should say right from the beginning that we are not going to do much.**

We should not be actively encouraging uprisings. The elder George Bush in Iraq, after the first Gulf War, actively encouraged Iraqis to rebel, and there were rebellions, the Shia Arabs and the Kurds, and we stood and watched the brutal repressions. We should have not done that. We promoted rebellions that we then failed to support, and that certainly is a crime. But I think what we have to be saying to liberal democrats in the Arab world is: this has to be your fight, and you have to create among your own people a social basis for this kind of politics. And if you can't do it, we can't do it for you. We should be saying that very, very clearly.

**In one of your articles you go even further by stating that countries like Syria and Libya should not be sovereign and independent, but on the contrary should be put under some kind of UN trusteeship.**

Once a state fails, as a number of African states have failed, once there is no longer a government that can defend the physical safety of its people, and there is an ongoing civil war, or worse than a civil war, because we usually think of the civil war (like the American Civil War) where there are two sides, but here you have civil wars, where you have 6 or 8 sides. It is more like anarchy. Once that

happens, the ideal solution would be the imposition of the UN regime, by force. You establish some kind of occupying power with a mandate that would first guarantee the physical safety of the people and then begin the process of political reconstruction with the goal of leaving the country as soon as there is an internal regime that has enough legitimacy to sustain itself.

**It can sometimes take 20, 30 years, or even more.**

The League of Nations trusteeships system was designed to be a long term thing. Of course, this was and remains a utopian solution. There is no capacity in the UN today to do this, but it seems to me that once you have the radical breakdown of a political system, whether it happens because of us or for other reasons entirely, then the first goal of the international community has to be to save lives. And the best way to save lives is to impose a cease-fire and then some kind of military occupation until you can hand over power to a local regime that has legitimacy. The accusation against the League of Nations system of trusteeships was that it was another version of colonial or imperial rule, but I do not think that it has to be that, at least in my utopian version. It isn't that, because there would be a guarantee that this is a temporary intervention, one that is probably costly rather than beneficial to the trustee.

**But probing your argument further, I am wondering whether at the heart of this idea there isn't some kind of negative politics, meaning that we want our freedoms to be protected, we want the world we live in to be safe, and if the countries outside our world are not**

**ready to live our way of life, we will create some kind of a shield over them and wait until they are ready. But this also means that there is no hope for these people. We are putting them behind a wall and trying to forget about their existence. The liberal secular world is not able to give them any promise of a better life. It is no wonder then that they fall into the hands of religious sectarian groups, which offer them instant salvation. This is another aspect of the decline of the West.**

**Some kind of liberalism of fear, but without the positive side of it. We do not have any message of hope and courage that we could offer to those people.**

Right. One of the things which was clearest in the Syrian conflict was that there was no readiness anywhere in the West to create an international brigade to go and fight for Syrian democracy, whereas in the Islamic world there was such an entity. In fact, ISIS is an international brigade, its fighters are recruited from 20–30 countries, much like the International Brigades that went to Spain in the 1930s. So we can't do that and they can do that. On the other hand, if you think about groups like Human Rights Watch or Doctors Without Borders, aid organizations or any of the NGOs that are working in places like Syria, you can see a liberal version, not a Leftist version, of the International Brigades for our times. Doctors Without Borders claims to be neutral, they take care of the wounded of every sort, but they are there in defense of life, which makes them often oppositional to the murderers. The same goes for groups like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which are actively working against tyrannical regimes. But they are not like the old communist or socialist parties;

they cannot mobilize large numbers of people and send them into a foreign military struggle.

**Do you want to say that the positive message that we have to offer, our ideology for a modern world, is some kind of Gandhi-esque politics of non-intervention? I am afraid that is not very reassuring.**

It's a message of human rights but without war, we do not go to war for human rights. We do everything short of war. I defended the no-fly zone over Kurdistan and I would have expanded it. This was the use of force just short of war. We were using force every week for ten years over Northern Iraq, which was the right thing to do; it made Kurdish democracy, or some near-democracy possible. But there were also Kurds on the ground ready to fight. So there are two wings – so to say – one is the new International Brigades like the *Médicines Sans Frontières* and Amnesty International, and the other is limited intervention when there is a need for it.

**This would be the new idea for resolving conflicts in the world?**

It may not be enough, but these are the two things that we ought to be supporting. Strong civil society response and a governmental response short of war, on behalf of rebels who have proven their readiness to fight and their capacity to fight. Now, at the UN I would work toward something much, much stronger, which would be some kind of a UN global police force, one which could intervene in a very strong way in places like Rwanda or Syria, and just say we're going to come and we're going to shoot anybody who is shooting. We want a cease-fire,



we declare a unilateral, UN sponsored cease-fire and we will fire at anybody who doesn't cease firing. But I would not support a unilateral American or NATO response of that sort, that has to come from a united, global community.

**I understand, but to create this kind of united force is almost impossible. Maybe it would be better for the world if the US were its policeman?**

If we did the right things in the right places, where we should have done them, I would support that. If we had done better in Afghanistan and won, then yes. If we, with allies from Europe, had intervened in Rwanda, the ideal force in Rwanda should have been the former imperial powers, not the US, then yes. If it had been done in Darfur, and not in Iraq, because in Iraq in 2003 there was no massacre going on and there was no internal rebellion, then yes. So I guess I would favor a role of that sort, if I could be sure we would always do it in the right way at the right time. But then you have the Russian critique, we don't do it in the right way at the right time, we do it sometimes, and not other times, or we do it badly. And it's not always us. Many Iraqis say that although the American occupation was brainless, the Americans gave the Iraqis a chance to create a decent political regime, and chiefly because of the leaders of the Shia, of the competing Shia groups, they failed miserably to do it, and the failure was theirs.

But the general rule has to be that it's not a good idea to support the overthrow of dictators by a set of "good guys" who do not have the long-term capacity to take control and rule a given country. I think we must not be drawn

into that kind of politics. You can stop a massacre, you can stop the use of poison gas, you can intervene decisively in moments like that, but you cannot be responsible for creating democratic polities in places where the social, cultural basis for democracy doesn't exist.

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EUGENIUSZ SMOLAR IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI

## **USA is no longer the guarantor of all security**

**Eugeniusz Smolar, an international policy analyst, talks about the new NATO-Russia balance of power, Ukraine and opportunities for Polish diplomacy.**

**Łukasz Pawłowski: Some commentators claim that Ukraine could paradoxically benefit from Russia's involvement in Syria. Moscow won't be able to shoulder two simultaneous conflicts, which will reduce her presence in Donbas.**

We're dealing with too much uncertainty here. First off, we don't know Russia's actual military potential. Secondly, maintaining her current level of involvement in Ukraine isn't particularly problematic – the situation is *de facto* static, even though people die every day.

### **Can Russia check the West on two fronts?**

We're dealing with two dramatic conflicts. We are directly affected by what's going on in Eastern Ukraine, but many European states see the danger to the south, in the so-called Greater Middle East, as far graver. Vladimir Putin, who doesn't have the political or military capacity to solve

the situation in Syria, is nonetheless capable of acting as a spoiler – someone who interferes and gets in the way.

**But what's left to spoil there? The conflict in Syria has been raging for years, the main powers are deadlocked, the country is being turned to ash, and people die or flee to the West by the thousands. It's an enormous problem for Europe, but one that Europe has been unable to solve.**

Russia is getting herself involved in a conflict in which she has no vested interest apart from keeping the al-Assad regime in power. She wants to assert herself as a superpower, even though she is unable to sustain that role economically or militarily. It's difficult to imagine how Putin could help within Syria itself, seeing as the conflict involves not only internal forces, but also many other countries in the region, such as the anti-Assad Saudi Arabia, pro-Assad Iran, Turkey intent on weakening the Kurds, and the Kurds, who are mostly just defending themselves. It's an unbelievably complex tangle of interests. One analyst claimed that we are witnessing the beginning of World War III – between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

**I'm assuming that Putin decided to use air strikes knowing his limits and the cost of this type of intervention. That means he is now awaiting a move from the West which will allow him to emerge from the conflict as a victor. What shouldn't the West do in this situation?**

That's the question on the minds of the best strategists in many of the countries engaged in this conflict. Russian actions in Syria are still limited in scope and can be easily

suspended. Moscow's intervention is meant to make Washington take Russian interests into account, and those interests are located mostly in the post-Soviet area. So we're back to Ukraine. Syria is a stepping stone to other, more immediate issues. Putin is acting a bit like Napoleon, who decided to go into Egypt with the attitude "Let's go in, and then we'll see".

The Russian president seems to be a good tactician, but there's no long-term strategy to his actions except for several general goals, the main one being an attempt to curtail Washington's global freedom of action and erode the Western alliance.

**Let me phrase it differently then – should the United States also ramp up its involvement in Syria in light of Russian air strikes?**

There aren't too many politicians in Washington willing to increase American military involvement, much less to send troops into Syria. But I don't think the United States, which was obviously surprised by Putin's action, saw it as particularly dangerous for overall Western interests in the region.

**So what will the West do – just wait?**

At this point, all options are on the table. Purely theoretically, should Russia achieve some limited success, she could be seen as a partner with a direct line to Assad, and one who might be able to persuade him to a compromise that would be acceptable to other Syrian players – except for the radical Islamists, of course. Some people are hoping for this scenario. I personally am far more skeptical.

**But how does one reconcile these hopes with what we heard during the UN summit, where Barack Obama made a strong speech directed against Russia, clearly stating that any peace talks are conditional upon the removal of the current Syrian regime. You don't believe president Obama will keep his word?**

The rhetoric used by world leaders should be treated as an element of foreign policy, meant to highlight certain goals which, should circumstances change, don't necessarily need to ever be actually achieved. I imagine Assad could follow in the footsteps of Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. Following an agreement with the opposition – signed thanks to the joint action of the Polish, German and French foreign ministers – Yanukovich was to govern for a couple of months, after which a presidential election was to be held and the agreed-upon transition to take place. In Syria's case such a solution would be palatable to the US – because Assad would leave – but also to Russia, because the current elite would be part of the future government. The problem is, this conflict involves a dozen other actors.

The crisis in Syria cannot be solved militarily. People are looking for a political solution, which is why I think that, despite Obama's rhetoric at the UN General Assembly, we shouldn't yet write off some sort of agreement struck in cooperation with Russia.

**It would be a different situation had Washington decided on a more decisive intervention, say two years ago, when it became clear that President Assad was using chemical weapons. Barack Obama declared that he would be taking action, but then reneged on that promise.**

After the experience of George W. Bush's military interventions, a significant portion of the Washington elite – mostly, but not only those with links to the Democratic Party – came to the conclusion that there are conflicts even the US won't be able to solve. It is clear that Obama sees Syria as one of these conflicts. The intervention in Libya is also very interesting, because the West made a mistake there that it swore never to repeat after Afghanistan: toppling Gaddafi, and then not committing enough to ensure stabilization and a controlled political transformation. Once again the old saying proved true: bayonets are easy to use, but difficult to sit on.

Obama is wrongly described as a pacifist, when in fact – despite having received the Nobel Peace Prize – he isn't always a peace-loving gentleman. However, he has a different outlook on America's ability to solve conflicts around the world than his predecessor. This is a new and incredibly dangerous situation for us, because until now it seemed that the United States are the ultimate guarantor of security – both regionally, in Europe, and globally. Today, it turns out that there's a type of conflict that Washington feels just as helpless at resolving as everyone else.

**Some claim that President Obama is pursuing a consistent policy of reducing the United States' presence in the region so that the European Union – and other actors – take more responsibility for their own security. Do you think this is a viable strategy?**

These things take time. For years, Europe has been taking advantage of the so-called peace dividend under America's nuclear umbrella, and she has grown accustomed to the thought that this would always be the case. Unfortunately,

it seems that the United States is struggling with its own difficulties, like modernizing infrastructure – roads, bridges, schools, etc. – and will have to slash military budgets in the future. Americans base their influence on a global network of relationships and alliances – from Japan and Australia, through Canada, to Europe – and rightly expect those allies who benefit from their nuclear guarantees to shoulder at least part of the responsibility for solving local crises.

**Will this strategy change after the presidential election, which is likely to be won by a politician with a more Euro-Atlantic orientation, such as Hilary Clinton or Jeb Bush? Or is America's withdrawal from Europe irreversible?**

I'd lean towards the latter hypothesis, were it not for the Russian attack on Ukraine. Regardless of how this situation will evolve, the West's relationship with Russia has changed for years to come. American and NATO strategies have been altered. At the same time, word from Washington seems to suggest that Obama is personally responsible for the decision to not supply the Ukrainian army with weapons. He made this call against advice from, among others, the Departments of Defense and State, and the opinion of the Congress majority. The US President plays a key role, but as far as the situation in the Middle East and attitudes towards European security are concerned, we should expect an emphasis on greater involvement of American allies, regardless of who moves into the White House after the elections.

**On October 2nd, Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine met in Paris to once again discuss the war in Donbas.**



**What attitude should the West adopt in negotiations with Russia?**

The main point should be Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty.

**What territorial integrity? Crimea has already been annexed and – according to, say, Fyodor Lukyanov – Russia certainly won't give it back.**

The Kiev government harbors no delusions that Crimea could be taken back from Russians using military means at this point. No one is interested in that war. But it's very important to maintain a principled stance towards the question of territorial integrity. The United States recognized the independence of the Baltic republics through the communist decades.

What happened in Crimea, and the military actions in Eastern Ukraine, is treated not only as a threat to Ukrainian statehood, but also to European security in general. The negotiations with Russia are twofold – there's a long-term component, but also one meant to defuse the current conflict, restore stability and ensure economic growth in the region, seeing as it is undergoing an economic, social and humanitarian collapse. The goal is to create a chance for Ukraine to implement positive political, military and economic changes.

**Aren't you anxious that the leaders of France and Germany will be more willing to compromise given their current situation? Angela Merkel's position seems to have been weakened in the wake of the refugee crisis. The French President's approval ratings are even worse. The European Union itself is struggling with many**

**other crises: aside from Syria and Ukraine, the specter of Brexit looms on the horizon, as does a potential next stage of the financial crisis in the Eurozone. Given all this, it could be tempting to get rid of at least one of the problems.**

We can't rule that out, but Angela Merkel – whose power remains unshaken in my opinion – and the embattled Hollande realize that allowing Putin to achieve his goals in Eastern Ukraine could upset the entire EU structure and the transatlantic alliance, because there are countries which would never consent to that, including USA and Poland. Furthermore, paradoxically, Russian involvement in Syria was met with outrage in France, which must have deepened mistrust towards Putin and his agenda. So chances for an extension of the sanctions have grown.

**How is Poland to position herself in this complex puzzle? President Andrzej Duda criticizes the government for breaking rank with the Visegrad Group on the issue of refugees. But as we know, when it comes to relations with Moscow, we're not on the same page with those countries either.**

The Visegrad Group is just one of many points of reference for Polish diplomacy. Regarding President Duda, it's difficult to say at this point what his policies will be. Let me remind you, that mere days before criticizing the government for the decision on refugees, he signed, along with many other presidents and heads of government, including the German President, an appeal calling for aid for the refugees! President Duda's foreign policy remains an open question, and the current decisions should be viewed in the context of upcoming elections.

Besides, when talking about European solutions, we should always also include the North Atlantic Alliance. And it just so happens that the same countries which are making pro-Russian noises within the UE for economic reasons – like Prime Minister Orbán, for example – vote with Poland and their other allies with it comes to security and the role of NATO.

### **So what can we do to improve Ukraine's position, and therefore also our own?**

Poland isn't a significant player in part because she refuses to invest in being one. To put it bluntly, one has to buy oneself a seat at the table. Meanwhile, our foreign aid expenditures are *per capita* much lower than those of the Czech Republic, not to mention the Western countries. If we're unable to supply palpable financial aid, we shouldn't expect the key players to allow us to take part in the negotiations just because of our geographic proximity to Ukraine. Russia opposes it, and Ukraine is counting mostly on Washington, Berlin and Paris.

### **What can we fight for then?**

The main goal of Polish diplomacy should be the preservation of EU and NATO unity on two issues – upholding sanctions against Russia, and providing effective aid for Ukraine. In this we can serve the strategic interests of Ukraine, Europe and Poland all at the same time.

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ASLE TOJE

## **What is Russia's endgame in Syria?**

**Towards the end of September, Vladimir Putin paid his first visit to the UN in a decade, and outshone everyone there, including the President of the United States.**

In his speech, the Russian leader warned against “playing games with terrorists” and stressed that the Islamists in Syria can only be dealt with using military means. We’ve heard many explanations as to why Moscow sent an expeditionary force into Syria. Even the most intellectually lacking of them revolved around the Syrian port city of Tartus – the only Russian naval base in the Mediterranean. However, Tartus isn’t as important as it might seem, seeing as Cyprus is ready and willing to provide an alternative.

Which means that something more important is at play. Syria is an opportunity for Moscow to reassert its global power status by extending its influence into territories far beyond Russian borders. There’s a very long history of Russian-Syrian contacts. The Arab world was one of the arenas in which the USSR built lasting partnerships during the Cold War – and to this day, Russians have a surprisingly good standing in the region.

Therefore, this intervention is probably something of a warning shot. Russia's position as the second largest weapons exporter in the world is being threatened. At the time of the writing of this article, Moscow has already sent out 28 Sukhoi fighter jets, a comparable number of helicopters and an unknown number of T-90 tanks. Over the past decade, the United States have had many opportunities to "showcase" their products in the Middle East – Russia, on the other hand, did not have a chance to do so.

The Russian arms contract with Bashar al-Assad's regime is worth about 4 billion dollars – however, most of it was given on credit. Assad's regime is on the verge of collapse, which could mean that it will be unable to pay up. This was the case with Iraq, where Moscow had to write off 8 billion worth of Saddam Hussein's debt. That's why Russians are intent on Assad, or at least his representatives, being present at the peace talks, should it ever come to them.

Russians have also begun the construction of military barracks which will be able to house additional forces, probably a brigade of marines. To what end would the Russians want to involve troops? There are three theories on this subject. The first, "predictable" one claims that Russia, spurred on by early successes resulting from her technological edge, will get dragged into ever more serious clashes, and eventually into an asymmetrical war she cannot win. Not likely? The United States decided to occupy Iraq despite the experience of Vietnam. The same Vietnam with which the Soviet Union was intimately familiar before it decided to invade Afghanistan and commit to a drawn-out conflict.

The next scenario, let's call it the "defensive" one, sees Russian involvement as a way to prevent the fall of Damascus,

which is currently quite likely. The NATO air forces do not want to be seen as supporting the Assad regime, for obvious reasons. Maybe that is why Russia is sending its jets, which are mostly equipped to combat other air units, after all. The only actors in the Syrian conflict able to intervene are the West and Russia.

The “offensive”, and therefore most “Putinesque” scenario, has Russia preparing a single push with a specific target in mind – Al-Raqqah, the Islamists’ capital in Syria. If that city falls, the Islamic State will lose its central hub, and rival militant groups will have a chance to defeat it. Should the West support Russia, engaging its own air forces to block the Islamists’ retreat, the Islamic State could very quickly become merely an “Islamist island”.

Russia is pursuing its own interests in trying to stabilize the situation in Syria. War-hardened jihadists are more of a threat to nearby Russia than they are to the United States. The Russians feel that the Assad regime has a bigger chance to stabilize the situation in the region than the Syrian opposition, which only appears to be more moderate.

Regardless of our assessment of the situation, it seems that Russia has become indispensable to the resolution of the Syrian conflict. By bolstering her presence in the region, Russia has “bought” herself a seat at the negotiating table. And since Assad’s forces are too exhausted to hold the areas conquered by his “patron”, Russia will probably use her successes in this regard to influence the negotiations.

The western countries have found themselves in the unusual position in which a settlement could be made without them playing a pivotal role at the negotiating table. However, this unpleasant fact might not be enough for the West to want to coordinate their actions with Moscow. In

order for that to happen, relations with the Kremlin would have to become somewhat normalized. And as we know, they've been frigid ever since Russia annexed Ukrainian Crimea.

However, Western sanctions have hurt Russia more than anticipated – mostly because they coincided with the drop in oil prices and the cooling of the global economy. Putin won't survive in permanent isolation, and yet he doesn't want to abandon his policies. The link between Russian activity in Syria and the situation in Ukraine is confirmed by reports about decreasing support for pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

A militarily strong, but economically and diplomatically weak international actor, such as Russia, can make full use of its advantages only if faced with an actor (or actors) who has similar diplomatic and economic power, but is militarily weak or unwilling to use its forces. Therefore, it's no wonder that Moscow has chosen this path of action.

It's a telling sign of how poorly the West is faring in solving the Syrian crisis that many of the heads of state gathered at the 70th anniversary of the United Nations seem to take Putin's words at face value and wish him success in Syria.

**ASLE TOJE**

norwegian academic and publicist, specializing in international relations. He received a doctorate in that field from the University of Cambridge. Lecturer at the Institute of Political Sciences of the Oslo University. Member of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, which assists the Norwegian Nobel Committee in selecting recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.



KATARZYNA GÓRAK-SOSNOWSKA

## **Syrian dogs in the manger**

**I do not claim that the Russian solution to the Syrian problem is realistic and optimal. But I do feel that the right to criticize is reserved for those who are actually doing something, instead of cheering from the sidelines.**

For several days now, a joke's been circulating on the Internet – a detailed agenda for Syrians living in Damascus: 8 a.m. American air strike, 8:54 a.m. Russian air strike, 9:30 a.m. French air strike, half an hour later – a British air strike. Then a morning coffee break, and at noon the bombings continue, this time in the shape of Syrian barrel bombs. Then lunch, and a press conference by the Syrian foreign minister, Walid al-Mu'allim, asserting that Syria is a sovereign nation. The agenda is repeated daily, and once per week there's a bonus air strike – this time by Israel.

The agenda described above could certainly be expanded to include more countries (for example the Persian Gulf – also known as Arab – states) and further pieces of the wartime puzzle: supplies of equipment – military or not, trainings, financial support, etc. Almost every big

league player has a horse in this race, except some support theirs officially, and others semi-officially, or even covertly. It seems that only China is staying away from the fray, as usual.

Of course we could delve into this tangle of interests, motivations and strategic goals, and try to figure out who is waging war against whom and for what reason. That is, if anyone still remembers in the first place. Yes, we know that everything began in 2011 after the wave of mass protests in the Arab countries known as the “Arab Spring”. Peaceful demonstrations by Syrians, who also believed that an opportunity had come for a regime change, were brutally suppressed. Soon, a civil war began, and it has been raging for the past four years. Though the term “civil war” isn’t entirely correct in this case, as it implies that the Syrians themselves have enough strength and resources to engage in this fratricidal conflict. It would be more apt to call it a proxy war, in which the strings are pulled, for the most part, by outside players.

Their level of involvement in the Syrian conflict is best described by the idiom “a dog in the manger”. On the one hand, they don’t engage enough resources to tip the scales in their favor, but on the other – they don’t back down, trying to maintain their standing in this game of attrition at all cost. How do we explain this willful neglect? Maybe no one wants to claim the mantle – and responsibility – of the victor, as this would entail having to establish order in the ruined and divided country? You don’t need to look far to see that it would be a very difficult task – the example of Libya tells us that it’s not enough to topple a dictator and hope for the best; Iraq also illustrates that democracy is like a cow in a henhouse – even if you cram

it in there, it still won't start laying eggs. Or maybe Syria just isn't valuable enough to anyone? Besides the Syrians themselves, obviously.

The dog in the manger mentality has resurfaced recently in reference to Russia's growing involvement in the Syrian conflict. So what if the international coalition, after over a year of air strikes, hasn't been able to tip the balance of power in Syria and Iraq in a meaningful way? So what if no one wants to involve land forces in the conflict (at least we have learned that much)? The important thing is that Russia, in cooperation with Iran and Bashar al-Assad's regime, joined the fray with a vengeance. For several days now, people have once again been talking about air strikes in Syria – this time Russian ones. We have conflicting information: Russians brag about using surgical maneuvers to neutralize strategic positions of the so-called Islamic State, while the West and Saudi Arabia warn that Russian rockets target opposition groups fighting the al-Assad regime much more often. When Turkey started suppressing Kurds upon joining the coalition against the self-styled Caliphate, voices of protest were much more subdued.

I do not claim that the Russian solution to the Syrian problem is realistic (i.e. that someone actually came up with a solution, and this move isn't merely about making waves and maintaining Russian standing in the region) and optimal (al-Assad's victory would spell disaster for the opposition groups). But I do feel that the right to criticize is reserved for those who are actually doing something, instead of cheering from the sidelines. There's still no solution to Syria. The manger's gone. Only the dogs remain.

**KATARZYNA GÓRAK-SOSNOWSKA**

economist, expert on Islam, lecturer at the Warsaw School of Economics' Collegium of Socio-Economics, member of the editorial board at "Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology" and "Bliski Wschód" magazines.

## SECOND CONFERENCE DISCUSSION PANEL

### **Refugees. This will be a long crisis.**

Panelists taking part in the debate “Cracking Borders, Rising Walls” talk about how European countries should handle the massive influx of refugees, and whether the European Union will crack under the weight of the challenges it will be facing in the coming years.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Will we soon return to screening the people crossing internal European Union borders? During a ceremonial press conference, the President of France, François Hollande, claimed that if the refugee quotas aren't accepted by the Eastern European members of the Union, it could result in the dissolution of the Schengen Zone. Maybe we should ask outright: are we willing, when faced with this current crisis, to relinquish the enormous achievement of unrestrained transit within the Old World?

**Adam Daniel Rotfeld:** Who are we referring to by “we”? We, Europeans? We, European leaders? We, representatives of Europe? Citizens of Europe certainly want to keep Schengen, and many other achievements of the European

Union, but they have no idea how to do it. At the end of August, Donald Tusk made an important speech at the Strategic Forum in Bled in Slovenia. Though I do take issue with his claim that we don't need any axiology. For him, axiology is pure theory, political philosophy, while Europe needs only to implement the solutions we already have. I'm afraid this is the dominant attitude among EU's leaders.

**Jarosław Kuisz: What could be the cause of it?**

**Adam Daniel Rotfeld:** I think there are many factors at play here. Firstly, often in international institutions – including the European Union – to the people deeply involved with their internal workings, the outside world seems unnecessary in a sense, or “problematic”. They believe that the organization should function in accordance with decisions, norms and procedures, which are logical, cohesive and elegant. But the thing is, we currently live in a very tumultuous world.

Secondly, they can't say whether we will be able to keep Schengen and other European institutions. That depends on the policies of all European nations. The Union isn't a federation, but an association of states. It's no coincidence that they key posts in common foreign and security policy, as well as many other important positions, go to people who are by definition unable to compete with ministers or prime ministers of great powers. They are usually competent, very well educated politicians, but they're not the ones who make the final calls. Often, they don't even aim to do so, because the final decisions are still made within the province of individual member states.

**Sylvie Kauffmann:** Isn't it a sign of the European Union's structural problems? The EU does tend to put the cart before the horse. We had a problem with the Euro, because the common currency was introduced without an underlying common economic policy. We created the Schengen Zone, but forgot about creating a unified asylum policy. In effect, we're now blindly grasping for solutions.

**Robert Cooper:** I don't know how serious President Hollande was, because I think the idea of abandoning Schengen...

**Sylvie Kauffmann:** He said that if the refugee assignment mechanism that France and Germany are proposing isn't implemented, the Schengen Zone could collapse.

**Robert Cooper:** Europe without Schengen would be a completely different place. Any decisions about introducing security checks at internal borders should be made very carefully. I see the President's words as more of a metaphor highlighting the gravity of the problem, or a criticism of the refusal to handle the problem on an European level, as it had been handled so far.

It is true what Adam Rotfeld said that the EU always seems like it is creating mighty institutions, and then taking great care not to let them work properly. But in the long run, all these institutions work. It's a commonality of law, and in the long run law prevails. This takes time, but our current experience tells us that institutional logic is a powerful thing.

**Sylvie Kauffmann:** But then there are also civil societies and their actions. We saw that in Germany, where society very actively supported the decision to welcome more refugees.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Angela Merkel was even being called the “moral leader of Europe”.

**Ulrike Guérot:** As a German, I can only say that it is astounding how quickly Germany went from being accused of staging a coup in Greece to assuming leadership in the refugee crisis. Maybe these two crises are related, and after the negotiations with the Greek government, for which Germany was often criticized, Berlin couldn't afford to soak up another crisis in such a short time.

And the fact that the refugees are already in Germany could have serious consequences for German foreign policy, and could force Germans to take more responsibility for international affairs. For example – Germany was not involved in the intervention in Libya, but there's an obvious link between that intervention and the migration crisis. German elites have reconciled themselves with the fact that Germany needs to be more active on the international stage, but public opinion still balks at the notion. The refugee crisis could change that.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** Asle Toje, you wrote a book in which you describe Europe as a “small power”. Can this “small power” handle the current crisis, whose magnitude surprised politicians in practically all European capitals?

**Asle Toje:** We have to see things from a different, in my opinion more realistic, perspective. There are about 60 million refugees in the world today, plus dozens of millions of people who have legitimate reasons to ask for asylum in Europe. We can't take them all in. So where do we draw the line? It's quite funny that we wax poetic about the reactions of some of the public who want to welcome the refugees, which is refreshing, but we should remember that



Europe as a whole is very skeptical of migration. A study conducted by the PEW research institute in 2014 shows that only 7% of Europeans living in the five biggest European countries wanted to welcome more refugees. I'm afraid that the positive attitude towards migrants will sour once people realize that their borders aren't protecting them anymore, and the mass stream of refugees shows no signs of weakening.

The problem is that, as my friend François Heisbourg claims, the crisis has separated European societies from their politicians, and politicians from institutions. European institutions seem more interested in securing for themselves as much power as they can, than in actually dealing with the refugee crisis. From Brussels' point of view, it seems like no number of refugees would be small enough. On the national level, attitudes are very clear and, what's more, very diverse – Sweden, for example, will take in many refugees, Poland – very few.

**Jarosław Kuisz: The agreements on asylum policy didn't serve their function...**

**Asle Toje:** They broke down, and now Schengen is in peril. EU institutions are currently engaged in a defensive battle, they're trying to preserve the integration we have managed to achieve thus far. But what about societies? Their moods are difficult to gauge. Up to this point, there's been a strong and constant feeling that Europeans don't want a larger number of migrants. According to Eurobarometer results published in May, migrants are the key issue for voters today.

I think we are facing a clash between European societies, nation states and European institutions. We don't know who will prevail and what will result from this

confrontation. Maybe it will propel us forward, through the crisis and into a more post-national Europe. But I think the more likely scenario is that member states engage in mutual accusations and squabbles. We also can't rule out the people of Europe revolting against the system that caused this crisis and was then unable to solve it. We're already seeing more activity on the far Left and far Right, and increasing agitation conducted outside the official political scene.

**Robert Cooper:** The most important European institution is without a doubt the European Council. When we watch the debates of member states, we see that almost all of them demand a pan-European solution to the refugee crisis. Of course, they don't mean the European Commission forcing one upon them. The problem needs to be solved collectively by the nations sitting on the Council. Only then, based on that agreement, can the Commission implement appropriate regulations. There's no clash of European institutions and member states. The Union is governed collectively by all of its members.

**Sylvie Kauffmann:** **Adam Garfinkle speaks today for the United States, a country founded by immigrants, which is also home to heated debates on the question of immigration and its resulting anxieties. The United States, like several European nations, have also built fences on some of their borders. What's your take on the European crisis from an American perspective?**

**Adam Garfinkle:** The American political class and European political elites don't really understand the average citizen and his anxieties. In Europe, due to its relative military weakness, we're also observing a tendency to hit moralist

notes and formulate noble principles, which sometimes don't quite fit with reality. Suddenly, we are seeing things beyond European control, caused by factors located outside of Europe, followed by a clash of abstract moral values with real convictions and anxieties.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** You mean to say that this clash of principles and reality is unavoidable?

**Adam Garfinkle:** When the economy grows, so does the pie we can share among ourselves, and so do chances of peacefully welcoming immigrants. But when things get more expensive, there is a violent reaction both within political parties and without. If another global economic crisis hits, an even bigger one than the one we faced in 2007–2008, many of those smiling, welcoming European faces will turn into scowls.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** The British weekly “The Economist” recently published an article on refugees titled “Let Them In And Let Them Earn”. Showing the transfer of migrants as economically beneficial in the long run is quite popular in Europe. Unfortunately, people don't seem to be convinced.

**Adam Garfinkle:** The European model was based on a very functional idea of a society in which man is presented as *homo economicus*. It is assumed that by creating the right mix of economic incentives and institutions, you can create social facts, followed by political facts. Causality runs in this case from the economy, through society, to politics. It looks great in theory, but unfortunately it's not true. Politics is the key element, not the economy. And so, the European idea works really well only until it crashes into a serious economic crisis, or until sovereignty is truly infringed upon. I think we have reached such a point, and we will soon learn that politics plays a much bigger role than the economy.

**Ulrike Guérot:** Long before we started debating on refugees, in the 6th century, Europe experienced a tremendous migration period. It's normal for people to look for a place where they can have a better life. They've been doing it for ages. I mention it now, because we are overlooking one of the essential challenges of the 21st century, namely creating a framework for this discussion. One of them will concern the distribution of wealth. If we look at this problem from a global perspective, we'll see that the West – i.e. USA and Europe – still has too much wealth. Many misfortunes happening everywhere from Ethiopia to Syria and Iraq are closely related to the actions taken by Western nations over the past century. We don't want to hear about it, but I think we should reframe our discussions on what is happening on our planet – and the global distribution of wealth might be a good starting point.

In his book “The Globalization Paradox”, Dani Rodrik writes that out of the three values – globalization, democratization, sovereignty – we can only pick two, and have to relinquish the third. If we agree that we can't relinquish globalization, because it eventually leads to greater prosperity for everyone, I propose that we relinquish sovereignty. As it is, we are relinquishing democracy.

**Asle Toje:** I really don't want to sound pessimistic, especially since I happen to believe that immigration is beneficial as it leads to the birth of new ideas and to innovation, but we have to face the fact that large scale migrations into areas affected by economic crises may have serious political repercussions. The idea to open our hearts and reframe the discussion is not the answer. It was calculated in Norway that one unskilled immigrant from

outside of Europe will cost the state 500.000 Euro over the course of his life, and that's already after deducting all the taxes he will pay once he finds work.

There is currently not a lot of demand for unqualified workers in European economies. The observation Adam Garfinkle made is on point. During economic growth, people are usually quite open towards immigrants. But opening ourselves to a large-scale migration, with no end in sight, will lead to far less positive scenes than those we recently saw, say, at the Munich train station.

**Ulrike Guérot:** First off, I don't agree to assessing the costs of human life and setting them against economic fluctuations. That is madness. Secondly, Norway has access to natural gas, which makes it a wealthy country, but on a global scale, wealth isn't distributed evenly, and that problem needs to be addressed. We're talking here about the actions of European institutions, but already today some philosophers – like Jürgen Habermas – speak of the necessity of creating global democratic institutions, a UN parliament for example.

**Sylvie Kauffmann:** I'd like to get back to the East-West division in terms of reactions to the influx of immigrants. Why do most post-communist countries react to the migration crisis differently than Western Europe, and how can we overcome these differences?

**Adam Daniel Rotfeld:** If we compare Poland to, say, Norway, we can say that Poland is now at the stage Norway was 70–80 years ago. At that point, it was one of the poorer Nordic countries, struggling with a mass emigration problem. To this day, more Norwegians live in the United States than do in Norway. Currently in Poland, the young

generation is also looking for a better life and better education abroad. What's more, we have to remember that after the second world war, Poland became ethnically and religiously a very homogenous country – over 95% of Poles identify not just as Christians, but as Catholics.

It is the first time that we are dealing in Poland with such a massive migration problem. Over the past several weeks, the perception of this issue has drastically shifted. Mere 2–3 weeks ago, the image of refugees was far worse than it is now. The Catholic Church, along with several nongovernmental organizations, played a big role in this shift. Actually, the Church was one of the first strong voices to advocate for welcoming the refugees. But we have to remember that Eastern European societies are still undergoing violent transformation, and are qualitatively in a different position than Norway or Finland.

**Adam Garfinkle:** I'd like to shift our perspective a bit and ask about the common sources of the refugee crisis and the crisis in Ukraine. We are currently observing a completely new phenomenon – the weakening of states all over the globe. It is the result of a number of factors, one of them being the new communications technologies, which lead to disintermediation.

A good example of that would be the work of companies such as Uber or Airbnb.

We currently have free access to a lot of information which allows service providers to engage directly with their clients. This undermines the position of many intermediary structures, both commercial and governmental. A big portion of governmental authority now has to contend with the danger posed by this new and rapidly growing phenomenon. The scope of executive power wielded by

governments is being questioned more and more successfully.

It is also being questioned by international criminal and terrorist organizations. What is happening in Iraq, Syria or Libya, is merely the disintegration of the Western state model imposed over societies whose historical experience doesn't exactly predispose them for it. We are currently seeing the weakest examples of the Western model nation state crashing down spectacularly.

Russia is also a much weaker state than the Soviet Union was. Waging war in Ukraine using "little green men" isn't a proof of Moscow's might. It is a sign of a weak regime which has to use intermediaries to do the job it is too feeble or incompetent to do itself. All these processes show that in the long run we'll witness the collapse of governmental power, because it won't be able to handle this dispersion.

**Jarosław Kuisz:** And what could happen then?

**Adam Garfinkle:** We have to develop supranational forms of government that would have authority in the areas which national governments are unable to handle on their own. At the same time, many decisions will have to be passed down onto local governments, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity. The biggest problem is, given how power is simultaneously moving upwards – onto the international level – and downwards – to local governments – how do we maintain some form of democratic accountability, and therefore legitimacy?

**Question from the audience: What could the differences in attitudes towards migrants between Eastern and Western Europe mean for the future of European integration?**

**Adam Daniel Rotfeld:** This problem appeared suddenly. No one has ever discussed it before, because we practically don't have migrants in Poland, and never have had them. The Polish reaction is similar to that of other countries when they were first faced with mass migration. Polish society is still one of the most enthusiastically disposed towards the European Union. People have to get accustomed to the new situation and understand that solidarity should be expressed not only by adopting EU norms and procedures, but also through action. That is our most important challenge right now.

**Robert Cooper:** I'm afraid this will be a long crisis, and this is just the beginning. There are over a billion people living in China, and one day they too may wake up and decide that life is better in Europe.

**ROBERT COOPER**

british diplomat, journalist and expert on international relations. During a long career in the British diplomatic service, he worked in Her Majesty's embassies in Tokyo and Bonn (among others) and was advisor to Tony Blair. Since 2002, he has worked for various EU institutions, first in Javier Solana's team, then as a special advisor to Catherine Ashton. He is a member of the European Council for Foreign Relations.



**ADAM GARFINKLE**

co-founder and editor in chief of “The American Interest”, an American bimonthly dealing with international relations and the economy. Previously, he was an editor at The National Interest and a professor at the John Hopkins University and the University of Pennsylvania, among others. He was a speechwriter for American Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice.

**ULRIKE GUÉROT**

co-founder and director of European Democracy Lab, a think tank dealing with the future of democracy in Europe. In 2007, she founded the Berlin office of the European Council of Foreign Relations, which she headed for the next 6 years. In 2013, together with Robert Menasse, she published the “Manifesto for a European Republic” in which she advocated for the creation of one.

**SYLVIE KAUFFMANN**

journalist for “Le Monde”, author of a weekly column on international affairs. She’s been working with the French weekly since 1987 and was a correspondent in Russia and the United States, among other countries. In 2010–2011, she was the first woman in history to act as its editor in chief.

**JAROSŁAW KUISZ**

historian of government and law, political analyst, editor in chief of “Kultura Liberalna”. Assistant professor at the Department of Law and Administration of the Warsaw University and chercheur associé étranger at Institut d’histoire du temps present in Paris.

**ADAM DANIEL ROTFELD**

former Polish minister of foreign affairs (2005), professor of the Warsaw University, member of its Artes Liberales Department. Specializes in the theory and practice of international security and conflict resolution, as well as arms control and disarmament. In 2008, he was appointed as co-chair of the Polish-Russian Group for Difficult Issues. In 2014, he was invited to participate in OSCE's Panel of Eminent Persons.

**ASLE TOJE**

norwegian academic and publicist, specializing in international relations. He received a doctorate in that field from the University of Cambridge. Lecturer at the Institute of Political Sciences of the Oslo University. Member of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, which assists the Norwegian Nobel Committee in selecting recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

## PART III

### EUROPEAN CRISES – AND WHAT NEXT?

JOHN GRAY IN CONVERSATION  
WITH TOMASZ SAWCZUK

#### **Europe is a series of crises**

**Tomasz Sawczuk:** After the Ukrainian and Greek crises, we now have the migrant crisis. Europe is becoming divided.

**John Gray:** The big crisis is not economic any more, it's about migration. And it can only get worse. The Syrian situation will probably deepen now, as an intended or unintended consequence of Russian intervention. But even when that's gone, the disparities of wealth between Europe, the Middle East and North Africa are so enormous that this has become a permanent thing. One criticism that I have of European leaderships is that they keep talking about it as if it's a temporary, year-long crisis. They say "Yes, we can absorb a million". Ok, easy. But what about the years after that?

#### **The same all around...**

Two million, three million? It's a very difficult and maybe not fully resolvable challenge for European countries. And what frightens me is that I think the people who say Europe should have an open door policy are forgetting a very fundamental fact – one of the things Europe is much

better at than it's been in the past is that pretty much all European states are democratic. And the last time we had open borders in Europe – unlike Russia – was before the First World War, when there was no welfare state, trade unions were weak and there was little democracy.

It's comparatively easy, or at least functionally possible, to have a world without borders if we don't also have democracy. But if you introduce democratic systems, then any change to the lives of a large number of people by large influxes of immigrants will produce a popular response. And that is not always a response of the liberal kind. People who believe that a liberal moral stance is enough are forgetting the fundamental fact that there is a great deal of tension between the world of open borders and democracy.

### **So what's Europe's response?**

First of all, the migrant crisis is not resolvable within the context of European institutions. There's no real possibility of securing Europe's external borders. It can't happen, because a continent is not a state. The former Soviet Union was a very big state, but it secured its borders almost too well – you could go in, but nobody could get out (*laughter*). In the EU, anyone who gets in into the Schengen zone – which is now being suspended and might be removed permanently – can get anywhere into Europe, into countries with very different levels of economic development and welfare provision, differing in terms of political circumstances and histories. Some of these countries – France, Belgium, Hungary – have far-Right factions.

**Do you expect politics to get more radical?**

Politics will be radicalized and polarized and the beneficiaries will be the political Right. What happened with the suspension of Schengen is that the authority and responsibility was devolved back to the nation-states with some building a wall, like Hungary, or being ready to leave, like Slovakia. I know that in Poland there was a discussion at one point about refugees being accepted in only as long as they are Christians.

**It was a narrative presented by some Right-wing politicians and a private foundation.**

How many do you have now?

**The government agreed to take in around 11,000.**

That is practically nothing.

**Then we've got the migrant crisis and the far-Right rising. How should we respond if the European institutions are too weak?**

When people ask me: "What can we do?", I reply there's no "we" in Europe anymore. Or there never really was, because the EU is not a democratic entity of a functioning kind.

**What is it then?**

A set of bureaucratic institutions with various different leaderships, which are themselves fragmented to some extent. They interact with important political leaderships of important European states.

**Angela Merkel reacted to this European inability to act by forcing through her own policy.**

She did, but then she reversed it, because it caused her some internal political problems. In a sense, this shows the strengths and weaknesses of her politics. She's a great stateswoman, in my opinion. I liked watching it for her very incrementalism. She does not normally take leaps in the dark, but instead takes things step by step and tries to avoid making irreversible decisions. In this case, however, she overreacted. I think it was a sort of response to German history – the dark, ethnically oppressive state of the past. That's why she said – come on, everyone can come.

**If Aleppo is destroyed – due to Russian intervention – there might be a million extra refugees on top of the numbers we are already predicting. At what point does a state like Germany, which has still not fully reintegrated its own Eastern German population, reach its limit?**

That makes the question of proper response even more pressing.

This is one of the features of the way of thinking I am most criticized for, which is – I think there are points in politics when institutions become dysfunctional and un-reformable. And this is the case in Europe. You might not notice it, because the historical experience and therefore the attitude towards EU in Eastern Europe is completely different – almost opposite from the one in Britain. And the reason is that, when asked the question “What do you want?”, people replied: we want a normal life as Europeans.

The problem is that what it meant in practice were normal European crises and in the 20th century they happened one after another. You weren't aware normal life has not meant integration into a stable Europe, but into Europe in deepening crisis. And the reason for that is paradoxically the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War. After the Cold War, the European project became hubristic. It was not only about opening the door for countries such as Poland, but also about introducing the common currency and having all those vastly different countries – as different as Czech Republic and Turkey – in one organization. Everybody believed Turkey would one day become a full member of the EU. Nobody considered what it would mean for Europe if its eastern borders reached Iraq.

### **We joined a project which can't really work anymore?**

At present, the EU is dysfunctional. It's not just economically dysfunctional, because its currency does not work. It has now proved to be dysfunctional when facing a major issue of migration. It's chronically dysfunctional.

Its external perimeters cannot be policed or secured, cannot be sealed. I'm not saying they should, but since many people demand it, it suddenly turns out they can't. There's no solution to this crisis except at the national level, with different polities which need to decide what to do.

**You said that when Central and Eastern European countries entered the EU, it was already a zone in which a crisis followed a crisis and we did not know this was the case. The question therefore is: should they engage in the crisis, accepting that the crises**

**are just an inherent feature of the EU, or should they turn their backs on the EU, just like Viktor Orban seems to be doing?**

Turning one's back on Europe would be to accept the so-called Putinization of Europe. It may happen at one point, but it's a very dark project. There's going to be some authoritarianism in Russia for an indefinite future. Joseph Conrad once wrote that "wherever in the world two Russians meet the shadow of autocracy falls between them". In Britain, we haven't been stuck between Germany and Russia, and, if we were, we would prefer to be closer to Germany. Poland is stuck with it and to turn your back on Europe would be catastrophic. Just don't join the euro.

**Europe can't guarantee our security?**

Your security depends on NATO. It's the only organization that really protects you. The same applies to the Baltic states. Let's put it more simply – if there was a real crisis in Eastern Europe or in the Baltic states, what would the response of Germany be? Would Germany go to a war with Russia?

**Maybe not, but probably neither would the US.**

If they did not, that would be the end of NATO, so they would have something to lose. And in the case of Germany, the response has always been to forge links with Russia – economic and other – which make conflict unlikely.

**But Angela Merkel was one of the politicians most strongly in favor of implementing sanctions against Russia.**



Right, but what does that amount to? They will probably end at some point next year.

**Because of what is going on in Syria?**

No, rather due to a lot of commercial pressure.

**Many commentators say this is the whole point of Putin going into Syria to divert attention from Ukraine and force Europe to deal with Russia again.**

I think Europe has already given up on Ukraine to a large extent. My friend George Soros advocates a sort of advanced Marshall plan for Ukraine, but Europe does not have the capacity to do that. And it's not only about the money. Gorbachev – who, by the way, supported Putin, or a tsar or Yeltsin if he was sober, whoever it would be – would have attempted something similar to what Putin did. That's the difference between Russia and Europe. European leaders are not serious, while for Russia that was an existential challenge. Their next goal, however, was not to incorporate Ukraine, but to permanently destabilize it and create a frozen conflict. My guess is that Putin aims to play a longer game of establishing a more pro-Russian government in Kiev. He just needs to wait long enough – five, maybe 10 years.

**That's a long time...**

But that's a foreseeable endgame. And what's the foreseeable endgame for the European intervention? Is it to force Russia to give up Crimea? Unless Russia was paralyzed in weakness to an extreme point, no Russian leader would ever accept it. The other difference between Russia and Europe lies in the fact that while

Europe – including Britain – is disarming, Russia is modernizing its army.

**Why then do you put any faith in NATO when you don't believe in Europe?**

It would be an enormous loss of historical importance, which is fully understood in Washington, even in president Obama's period. If NATO did not respond to a significant military threat to Poland or the Baltic States, they would no longer be taken seriously by anybody. The next day, there would be a huge response across the world. Japan would start going nuclear for fear they would not be protected against China. Any country that was dependent on US would do everything to become self-sufficient or make different alliances. That would mean a huge loss to American status and power in the world. The world could really plunge into something like the 1930s.

**This may sound rational, but it is the most popular conspiracy theory in international politics nowadays, that Putin is a genius, an unstoppable strategist who took Crimea, then part of eastern Ukraine, and has now entered Syria...**

Well, he's only a genius compared to the West (laughter).

**Is he thought of as a genius because he does things unimaginable to the West, or because he does things that really are so intelligent?**

He's an astute strategist, I think, but the first reason is that he himself and his regime remain unimaginable to the West. It's a regime which our predominant tradition of Western academic, ideological, philosophical and political

thinking not only did not anticipate, but didn't even think was possible. Western thinking is based on the idea that authoritarianism can't be modern in a way that is enduring, but it's wrong.

### **Why is Putin modern?**

First of all, he's ultimately more dependent on Russian popular opinion than traditional rulers. Russia is very skillful at disinformation, very good at cyber war. But the real sense of its modernity is, I think, the way in which it perceives war as an integrated total activity and it's especially modern in its use of perception. In shedding of perceptions, in its ability to shape this perception of Putin as being a kind of genius.

Some believe that he is simply irrational. Angela Merkel said that he might be insane.

That's a complete mistake. He's highly rational, it's just that he doesn't share the same goals. If you ask: which power in the world is the most rational in the European sense of "rationalism", it is China, in the sense that they're very cautious and aware of everything, they act purely with respect to a calculus of their power. Russia is a weaker power than China. It's a second-order power trying to regain a great power status. Putin's policies are more cautious, opportunistic and more adventurous in some sense. But they're not crazy.

We think of crazy people as people we can't understand. That's a terrible weakness of perception on the part of Merkel, if she really means it. If his goal is to restore Russia as a global player taken seriously by everyone, the test would be in Syria. Just the other day, I heard a speech on television by John Kerry, in which he said that

“our goal is to achieve in Syria what we always wanted, a democratic, secular, unitary Syria”. Ionesco could have written that line.

### **Kerry being more irrational than Putin?**

It sounds irrational, if he means it. Syria as a state has ceased to exist, just as Iraq has ceased to exist. Assad’s regime, which is murderous, is also secular. The alternatives to it are theocratic. There are about 120 jihadist groups there... What Russians perceive as a state of Syria is gone forever.

### **So what will Putin’s rational goals be?**

First, to stabilize Assad, who was looking weak. Not to reconquer all the territory, he can’t do that. If there is a genuine moderate opposition to Assad – neutralize that. Maybe stabilize the country that emerges, with Assad stabilizing a part of the country, the rest of it – who knows? If he pursues that, it would be a realistic achievable goal.

So to say that he’s irrational is completely absurd. What it highlights is the inability of European leadership to grasp that political leaders and political strategies can be rational, but anti-liberal and in some respect inhuman. Merkel is assuming no one can want a goal like reinstating a country as global power. If you think of this as a classical 19th century geopolitics, it becomes very rational.

### **What’s the rational response of Europe?**

Europe can’t do anything, it is completely powerless. Who is Europe in this context? The only thing Europe’s done recently is be disastrous. France and Britain, not

America by the way, destroyed the Gaddafi dictatorship and turned the place into a jihadist hellhole.

**The way you describe it suggests the logic of the situation is fatal. Russia is active and Europe is passive and nothing can be done. Don't you envision any way in which Europe can overcome this fate?**

Putin might overreach himself or something else might happen, but it's very hard to imagine that now.

**How about economic sanctions?**

It hasn't worked. It has had a major damaging effect on the economy, but has not measurably reduced Putin's popularity in Russia. It has not produced a regime crisis. And won't. So this would be Putin's calculation – how long will they do this? Five years? We'll wait and they'll abandon it. Now, he may have accelerated this process by his Syrian adventure, but basically Europe still depends on American protection, that's the key. It's not what Europe does.

**For some people problems like Syria, Ukraine or economic inequalities involve two separate questions, one of them being the question of morality, and the second the question of its practical applications.**

They shouldn't be seen as fully separate – it's Kantian insight that ought implies can. It's dangerous to talk about moral visions which are completely unsustainable. People would say: you mean in Syria you're prepared to accept this monstrous, evil, wicked regime of Assad, which uses barrel bombs and tortures large numbers of people? Well, then what you're gonna do? Are you going

to invade, are you going to be there for 30, 40 years? Whatever you think of our colonialism or imperialism, are you really prepared to be there long enough? Now that we're withdrawing from Afghanistan, the Taliban is back. Everyone knew that would happen. So we should only do things which seem realistically achievable.

Now, if you're a sort of utopian leftist who says we must expand the areas of what is imaginable and possible, that's a fine politics for a university seminar. You might get a coffee ten minutes later than otherwise you would, if you're locked in discussion. You don't get people dying, being murdered, you don't have anarchy and ISIL emerging.

**However, do you really believe that, no matter what happens, we should just sit and watch?**

In international relations I favor a kind of ethically constrained realism. Realism of my kind generally prefers peace to war. Sometimes, you have to wage a war, but sometimes you should do it even if you think you're going to lose. I think in the 1940s that even if we were certain to lose, it was better to fight and be conquered than to let it happen with shameful, disgusting peace. But what you shouldn't do in international relations is have these grandiose schemes: democracy, human rights and so on.

In internal politics, I'm very much an old-fashioned liberal. I've been told one of my sayings was once quoted by some Polish politician, I hope he was not from the Right...

**I think you're referring to Donald Tusk now...**

Oh, was it him? (laughter) Politics is a series of temporary remedies for recurring evil – that's what I believe.

**Tusk seems to believe this when he speaks of the migrant crisis, too.**

Tusk's public comments on the migrant crisis have been the most sober and useful of all European politicians. He's been very realistic in his assessment of the dangers of the far-Right rising.

If we can be as radically empiricist as we can be, we have to make value judgments. In that sense, you might have something like world views, but they shouldn't be too unified, too integrated or pretend to be too rational. They should be sort of flexible.

**Many fear that such an approach might turn us into nihilists.**

There are some values that are, in my view, non-negotiable and that we should be prepared to die for. To me, the Charlie Hebdo massacres were particularly terrible. First of all, because it was a direct attack, the most extreme since the second World War, on freedom of expression. Secondly, its aim was the killing of Jews. People were standing in the bakery, they weren't asked "what do you think of the Palestinian problem?". They were killed. So such things are non-negotiable, you just have to stand by them whatever the consequences.

Although I'm not sure that's what happened, because it involves this very painful difficulty, which the West is very unwilling to say if it's up to, of choosing between terrible evils. The Assad regime is very evil. Is it more evil than ISIS? Less of a global threat – is Assad really threatening Poland? I don't think so. It's terrible in other respects. Although if you're a Druze, a Christian or an Alawite, you think that if that regime falls, you will be killed.

This may be why we so often speak of rationality in such contexts. Some like to think that if we acted rationally, we wouldn't kill each other because of beliefs.

There is a wonderful speech by John M. Keynes titled "My early beliefs". It was a talk he gave in 1938. All his friends before the First World War believed human beings can be improved by reason, didn't respect religion, conventions, traditions. He has this wonderful line about Bertrand Russell there. He says "Bertie" believed two ludicrously contradictory things: that human history to date had been carried in the most irrational fashion, full of catastrophes, absurdities, crimes, atrocities and that the solution is very simple – we should just be more reasonable.

Isn't it wonderful? Many people think that way now. But Keynes closes with a killer punchline: such a position assumes that human beings are now capable of being guided by reason. Yet, what's the evidence for that?

**JOHN GRAY**

philosopher, he has lectured at Oxford, Harvard and the London School of Economics, among others. He has written numerous books, the most recent being *The Soul of the Marionette. A Short Inquiry into Human Freedom*.

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ROBERT COOPER IN CONVERSATION  
WITH KAROLINA WIGURA

## **Five European crises**

**Karolina Wigura:** There are at least four major crises currently happening in Europe: the Ukrainian crisis, the migrant crisis, the Eurozone crisis and the crisis in Greece. Have these four made Europe less secure over the last couple of years?

**Robert Cooper:** I think Europe is indeed less secure now, above all in a psychological sense. But is somebody going to invade Europe? There is large number of migrants trying to get here, but that's very different from a military invasion. In fact, paradoxically, these people are coming to Europe, because they see that the continent as secure. So we should be thankful for what we've got and as generous as we can be to those who appreciate it.

**What exactly does "generous" mean?**

This is very difficult to say, because the number of people who would like to live in Europe is probably limitless.

**And they don't only want to visit Europe, but to stay and be treated the same as other Europeans.**

I don't mind that, but then comes the question of absorption capacity. Europe has already dealt with such migration movements, for example right after World War II, yet these were times when all the countries were ruined, people had nothing and thus were much more generous. As you become more secure and comfortable you also become less benevolent towards others.

Europe has benefited from migration, but nevertheless there comes a point at which society can be overwhelmed, running the risk of political backlash. This crisis, however, should remind us that despite its defects, compared to the rest of the world Europe is still a very secure place, a place where many people can only dream of living.

**One of the biggest questions we are now facing is that of human rights – are we ready to apply the same standards to newcomers as we do to Europeans who already live here?**

I don't really think you can find an answer to that just in laws. The answer also needs a practical dimension. You have to calculate the cost of admitting those people, of finding them accommodation and integrating them both in society and the economy. The difficulty, as I have said, is that this problem seems to have no limits. There are lots of people in lots of places in the world who would like to get to this small part of the globe. To some extent, however, we can blame no-one but ourselves as these migrations result from the situation in the Middle East which we "helped" to create.

### **What do you mean?**

It's hard to think of any policy that the West has adopted in the Middle East which has done something good and thus we should be cautious about what we want to do now. All the crises you mentioned in the beginning are different, but all of them are far from over and that's the only thing they have in common. The migrant crisis looks more likely to get worse than better. The same applies to the Greek and Ukrainian crises as well.

**In a commentary published in The Aspen Review you wrote that the Ukrainian crisis is a challenge for European relations with Russia and that revising this relationship is an unavoidable necessity. Have we already done it?**

Yes, it's very clear that we have. I don't think that there are many serious people who want to have strategic partnerships with Russia anymore. The European Union just renewed sanctions against Moscow without many voices of dissent. This is a very different attitude towards Russia from anything I've seen in the last few years. So yes, I think that we have revised our view of Russia, although it doesn't resolve the problem, because the problem lies in the behavior of Moscow. I don't see any sign of change in Russian policy. In fact, they get worse every day – the sentencing of the Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov and the Estonian border guard who was kidnapped are only two of the latest examples.

**In an interview given by the American military strategist, Edward Luttwak, published in the Polish daily Rzeczpospolita, he said that the only chance**

**Poland has to be secure in the light of aggressive Russian behavior is not to count on NATO or the EU for help, but to modernize its own army in order to defend itself. Only then do we have any chance of surviving, claims Luttwak. Would you agree with such an opinion?**

Edward Luttwak likes to shock people and that should be taken into account. I think that this is a good moment for everybody to think about what they bring to the group of NATO and EU countries. And like it or not, although I believe deeply in NATO and the European Union, the fundamental unit in Europe is still the nation-state. Actually, what we really need to do in Europe is to do our defense procurements jointly. I don't personally believe in the idea of a European army, I don't think this is yet the moment for that, but I would very much like to see a European tank or a European rifle. They do not need to be made in Europe, we can buy weaponry even in Chiab. But if we buy together, we'll all be using same equipment, and we'll get it at a fantastically good price.

**Does Europe learn from the crises we are discussing? Are there any conclusions drawn from, for example, the Ukrainian or Greek crises which could be implemented in order to change European foreign policy or internal policy?**

Regarding the Greek crisis, I think we are in unknown territory, while with the other crises it's predictable what is going to happen or what risks are associated with them – they all look bad. With the Greek crisis – I don't know. Maybe in the long run a comprehensive reform will take place there? Maybe – given a second chance – Greece

can survive and prosper? The good thing about that crisis is that we don't know.

**What's the German role in the Greek crisis? The last round of negotiations between Angela Merkel and Alexis Tsipras was fiercely criticized by much of the German elite. Jurgen Habermas said that, by pushing Greece too far towards austerity, Germany lost the capital it has been gathering over recent decades. Do you agree with him?**

I don't think that situation is so simple, because this story has not come to an end. The thing which always bothered me about the Eurozone is that it seems to me a mistake to have a single currency without single economic theory. You need to have at least some intellectual consensus and it doesn't look like we have it at all.

**What would you recommend in this particular case?**

To be honest, I am happy with what has been happening in Greece, because I still think that Greece leaving the Eurozone would be a very bad thing to happen at this moment. I am myself Keynesian rather than an enthusiast of Hayek, but on the other hand there are some reforms in Greece which are really necessary. The country fundamentally needs political modernization. It has been run entirely on client relationships, with every new government giving a large number of jobs in civil service to its friends. That's not the way to run a modern country.

But many decisions forced upon the government in Athens frustrated much of Greek society. After the decision to sell some Greek airports to the German company

Fraport, there were commentaries saying Greece had become a neocolonial country, run solely by Germany.

The Heathrow Airport in London belongs to a Spanish company, Ferovial, which also owned many other British airports in the past, including Stansted and Gatwick. I don't think that it is neocolonialism. These are commercial transactions. Greece has already sold half of its Piraeus port to the Chinese and many companies around the world belong to foreign corporations.

**A few years ago Germany was called a “reluctant hegemony”. Has it already taken the lead in Europe or does it still remain reluctant?**

Germany is not a hegemony any way. Everything is in negotiations, not a hegemony, and that was made clear during the last round of talks with Greece, where the influence of other European countries like France and Italy was significant. So it is not the German leadership but the weakness of political leadership that we should worry about in Europe – it is a pity that there seem to be no other politicians who match Bundeskanzler in a quality of leadership.

**We have named four crises, but isn't the list longer? For example, Timothy Snyder repeatedly warns against a revival of the far Right in Europe.**

I think that there is a slow crisis in European political systems.

**A slow crisis, a silent crisis?**

I can't speak for all European countries, but I've repeatedly seen in my own country how the political class is

separated from the people as a whole. I am aware alienation of the political class is to some extent inevitable, but it may also be damaging. So I believe we should think a little more about democracy. Most of the constitutions of the Western European countries were written in the 1950s. Since then, almost nothing has changed in political structures, although the societies we live in now are very different from the societies of the 1950s. We should understand democracy as something that should change continuously.

**But what exactly do you mean? Thinking more about democracy sounds beautiful and idealistic, but what would it mean in practice?**

I think that you have to look at each country one by one and the only country I can really talk about is my own. There I see a political class which has got lots of talented people, but which is very distrusted by the population and seen to care only about its own interests. I don't think this is entirely fair, but this is how it is. We have a parliamentary system which has become uncomfortable with itself.

**Is that why prime minister David Cameron decided to resort to direct democracy and call two referendums – on Scottish independence and British membership in the EU?**

I find referendums to be an absolutely ridiculous way to make important decisions, such as the one about Scottish independence. If you take one vote on one day among the people who at that point of time happen to live in Scotland, that's not necessarily the voice of the "Scottish people". And it is enough to get 50 percent plus 1 votes

in favor of independence, then that's it. I don't find this a sensible way to make a decision. But why do we have these referendums? It shows that you lack confidence in your own political system. This is a kind of populism from above. Referendum is method of the populist government.

**We have a similar situation in Poland, as you're perhaps aware. We might have two referendums in only two months, which will inevitably make them a part of political campaigning before parliamentary elections. What you're saying about distrust towards the state is also something that you can sense very much here in Poland. So it seems it's not only a British problem.** Democracy is a process of continuous renewal. Society changes and institutions need to change with them. We are lucky in Britain, in that we don't have a constitution in a normal sense. The constitutional law is no different from ordinary law and it can be changed the same way with a simple majority in two houses of parliament. So we ought to take advantage of that and have a continuous debate about the constitution, for example about changing our parliamentary system. Your society has also changed a lot in the last 25 years.

**Tremendously.**

And that is why we ought to take politics more seriously.

**Every crisis brings change – is it possible that these four or five crises we're talking about might bring some positive change? Are you optimistic about it?** Personally, I'm always optimistic and there are reasons for it. I think if you look back at the last 70 years after the



war, you could probably make a list of 300 serious crises. And you've had a whole series of them in Poland. Yet, at the end of this, we all seem to be better off. So I think there's good historical reason for being optimistic. At the same time, I don't think being optimistic is very useful. I believe that we should always identify the problem, discuss it and find a way out. As Gramsci once wrote, you need pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will. You know, in Japanese and Chinese the word crisis is formed of two characters, one of which means "danger" and the other "opportunity".

**ROBERT COOPER**

British diplomat, journalist and expert on international relations. During a long career in the British diplomatic service, he worked in Her Majesty's embassies in Tokyo and Bonn (among others) and was advisor to Tony Blair. Since 2002, he has worked for various EU institutions, first in Javier Solana's team, then as a special advisor to Catherine Ashton. He is a member of the European Council for Foreign Relations.

**KAROLINA WIGURA**

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ULRIKE GUÉROT

## **Is the post-structuralist dictionary outdated?**

**Have we lost the sense of what really matters and are we merely defending our comfort zone? The German political thinker Ulrike Guerot describes the way “conflict” and “crisis” have replaced the notion of “war” – and how that seems to lead us down the dead-end of a new pacifism that no longer grasps the idea that security, freedom and peace reinforce each other and cannot be complete without each other.**

Time has come to rethink how the Western World deals with “conflicts” and how we frame them in our political vocabulary. I would like to suggest that we may need something like a conceptual – and also semantic – reframing, as we might be commonly dealing with wrong – or imprecise – words in new conflict situations. By doing so, we might be losing the political concept for what we are doing.

Our vocabulary in international relations still dates back to the last century, which is about “borders”, “powers”, etc., but in essence, and to overstate the argument due to lack of space, this seems precisely what we have somehow

lost in international relations. What I mean is, we are no longer doing “wars”, be they legitimate or not legitimate, “good wars” or “bad wars” – we have removed the word from our vocabulary, and now we only have “conflicts”. “Conflicts” however, are somehow morally neutral, they do not convey a moral sentiment or statement. Does a “conflict” have a cause, who is to blame for it, who started it, let alone: who is guilty? Our policy solution then is that we need to *stop the conflict* – mostly at all costs, because conflicts are *disturbing* us – we want *peace*. Our biggest interest is then to *not have a crisis*, or to end a crisis or else not let it escalate.

At first glance, this is a legitimate interest and obviously fine. But is it really? Is *keeping a conflict flat* a solution as such – especially if we always claim to defend our values? We might be in something like a “poststructuralist trap”, as we seem to be losing our notion, our very understanding of power, which is only diffused. Our biggest aim is *to not have a conflict*, which disturbs our comfort zone. We want *security* in the meaning of *no conflict*. In that sense, we put security (one could also say *peace*) defined as absence from (military) conflict as absolute. But is this ultimately good?

This is basically the question that Joschka Fischer posed to the German Greens when – in the midst of the Balkan wars in the 1990 – he went against the pacifist spin by saying “*No more war, no more Auschwitz*”. The second part of the sentence matters here, as the moment we consider “*no-conflict* “ (or *peace*) to be absolute, we might end up in state forms or situations in which you are absolutely secure and without conflicts, but unfortunately not free: the former GDR for example was – inside – absolutely peaceful and was not in conflict with anybody, yet, it was not

*free*. Therefore, the classical party programs of all parties of Western-style liberal democracies always bind security, peace *and* freedom together. In other words: peace alone or security in the meaning of *no-conflict* is just not it.

My point is that, increasingly, Western societies tend to talk about a “crisis” mostly in that “post-structural” vocabulary, where notions such as power, legitimate wars, moral or the will to really defend values (e.g. freedoms) are sort of a taboo. We no longer want to be engaged – we want our peace, but basically we seek for comfort. Conflicts seem to deranging us. The question whether we are still willing to die for something, e.g. for Crimea, for the liberation and freedom of Aleppo or the historical monuments of Palmyra (our global cultural heritage, which we could have chosen to defend, as part of our civilization and the expression of our values) seems to overburden us. We no longer want to die for anything, as our lives have become, indeed, so nice and comfortable. That is obviously – and I do not want to be misunderstood on that trick topic which is hard to deal with in 1000 words anyway – a good thing. Hence, it alienates us from the philosophical classics, such as the Roman Juvenal, who writes: “Consider it being as infamous, to put the naked life above the shame; and to lose, for the sake of pure survival, the reasons for which life is worth being lived.” This is precisely the meaning of the famous Hegelian vassal – and it might be that Western societies have, in this sense, become all together a sort of huge vassal – of their comfort zone.

So the intellectual task of Western societies might therefore be to redevelop a sort of *normative capacity* and to not drift into a (liberal) and, in the end, *arbitrary* understanding of conflict as being *per se* bad. The German word here

is *Beliebigkeit*. A strategy, which puts avoidance of conflicts absolute is, in this sense, arbitrary (*beliebig*). We are struggling here with a substantial problem of the postmodern concept of liberalism, which Jean-Claude Michéa describes in his brilliant book *L'empire du moindre mal: essai sur la civilisation libérale*, which ought to be translated into Polish.

One of the biggest problems with liberalism today is that both the Left and the Right think that they can get just half of the liberalism. The Left actually thinks that they can get only the cosmopolitan values of the liberalism – tolerance for homosexuals or refugees, meaning: value openness – but without economic openness or market liberalism; whereas the Right normally thinks that they can get economic and market liberalism (e.g. free trade), competition and so forth, without getting the cosmopolitan aspect. Yet, liberalism comes always in that “double-package”, meaning none of these two liberal sides can be had in isolation.

Michéa thus complains about the loss of capacity in Western societies to distinguish, to detect what is Left and what is Right – and similarly what is *good* and what is *bad*. That is because all of this is melting down in an arbitrary concept of liberalism, which means *anything goes*, except for societal moral statements – the only thing we aspire to is absence from *conflict*. Defending values deteriorates thus to deranging comfort zones.

To put in much more crude words: Europe or Western societies seem to have lost the meaning of heroism.<sup>20</sup> For example, we do not want to be aggressed (or: disturbed?)

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Tod Lindberg *The Heriocr Heart*. See also Pankaj Mishra *ISIS. Die Attraktion des Ressentiments und der bevorstehende Flächenbrand*, in: *La Lettre Internationale*, Vol. 110, Herbst 2015.

by terror attacks. But are we defending our *peace* (in the sense of absence of conflict) or are we really defending values, such as we pretend to do when going into war with ISIS? I know, it is both provocative and completely un-PC to say this, but ISIS warriors are ready to die for their “values”, as weird and irrational as those might be for us. But are we equally committed to defending ours? Violence, sociology tells us, is a form of critique. Are we ready to listen to that form of critique? It might be time to at least start a discussion about these issues, to which this very short text can obviously only act as an oversimplified contribution.

**ULRIKE GUÉROT**

co-founder and director of the European Democracy Lab, a think tank focused on the future of European democracy. In 2007, she set up the Berlin office of the European Council for Foreign Relations, which she then managed for six years. In 2013, along with Robert Menass, she published the “Manifesto for a European Republic”, in which she appealed for the setting up of a European Republic.





YAROSLAV HRYTSAK

## **The paradox of European crises**

**Historian Yaroslav Hrytsak contemplates the tripartite nature of the ongoing “European crisis” and puts events taking place in his native Ukraine in this context, shifting from the disillusioned view of current political realities to hope for change brought about by new types of revolution, as represented by the Euromaidan movement.**

I will play devil’s advocate here for a moment. Rather than criticize Europe, I’d like to defend it as well. I believe Europe fulfills a number of functions for which it was designed – and that those functions relate to Ukraine to a great extent. First of all, I believe there is a minimum of solidarity in Europe when it comes to Ukraine. There is probably one exception: Hungary. Apart from Hungary, it is difficult to find any other European government which is definitely pro-Russian or pro-Putin. If you think that this is not enough – think twice. Remember, back in the day, in a very different situation, when Schroeder was still in Berlin, Putin frequently visited Rome and was met by Berlusconi. Take this and add the French

Mistral warships which might have been patrolling the Ukrainian shore as part of the Russian Black Sea fleet. If you have those images in mind, you can really see that there is something that the EU has achieved and that it is basically a failure of Russian expectations that Europe will be fragmented, weak and unable to face the challenge of Russian aggression.

Secondly, I believe that the crisis of Europe proves, very ironically, paradoxically, that Europe is functioning. Have you ever heard anyone in the Kremlin talking of a crisis of Russian interests or values? Or Beijing seriously discussing the demands of Asia? There is something essentially European in discussing Europe as a crisis. The fact that we are now criticizing Europe means that, basically, Europe is psychologically sound.

Thirdly, Europe is very much like Ukraine. Since Ukraine became independent, I have heard many predictions that it would not last even two years, that it would imminently break up and disappear from the political map. We hear the same of the EU, that it is bound to collapse, that its multicultural politics have failed and so on, yet still the EU does exist as a European community, a kind of heterogenic entity, relatively stable. If we add up these three elements we might conclude that the EU is functioning, and functioning rather well.

### **BEYOND THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM**

That said, I believe this is a minimum requirement, one which was very good during the relatively stable 1990s. We expected the fall of Communism to mean the end of history, or maybe that the world would be flat – all those fancy prognoses. Nowadays we see that it is quite

a different story. We used to believe that the symbol of a new world was the fall of the Berlin Wall on November Ninth, 11/9. But the new symbol turned out to be 9/11, September Eleventh, the terrorist attack on New York. We are living in this new world, a world of crises, where security is becoming increasingly the main issue, a world of civil complexity.

Both Europe and Ukraine are part of this world and its problems. What makes Ukraine unique is that it is a crisis which has come closest to the gates of Europe, probably with only one exception now: refugees from Syria who have literally brought the global crisis into Europe. How can we stay secure? I don't know the answer, but we have to at least start asking the right questions. We haven't started yet, because we are used to thinking in terms of that secure, yet bygone world.

The Ukraine conflict is here to stay. It will be a long war; I think that this may be the kind of crisis that won't be solved in a few months or even in a year. We have to be prepared – we, the Ukrainians – as we are now living in a situation similar to Lebanon or Israel, yet we are psychologically unprepared for this.

The current crisis in Ukraine comes from our expectations, which were too high. Our expectations have been false, because we tend to believe in narratives and we are sometimes naïve in these beliefs. We were told that the EU is a community of values. Europe has been united around common values and these values are security, democracy, all the nice things. That is a grand illusion – these are not my words, but those of Tony Judt. It's a myth, in a negative sense of the word, not something which unites, but something that gives the wrong impression.

## **BOTTOM-UP CHANGE: NEW REVOLUTIONS IN THE AIR?**

The European Union was created after the War, as part of the post-war settlement; it was created around interests, not around values. We didn't see why this community started crumbling, because interest is not enough and therefore, by definition, we failed to understand and to grasp these changes. A new phenomenon has emerged in the last 10 years and it goes by the name "precariat". I know many articles both in Ukrainian and in Polish, as well as in other languages, which keep criticizing this term as something which is invented, not real. Now, it would be hard to find any political Polish scientist who is still challenging the term after the Polish elections of 2015, and especially after a large part of Poland's disillusioned youth voted for the rock-man-turned-politician, Paweł Kukiz. The same goes for Ukraine.

Without understanding what the "precariat" is you cannot understand the difference between the Maidan of 2004 and the Euromaidan of 2013–2014. It was quite a different type of revolution. Just as an illustration, at the first Maidan it was kind of civil society where the leaders mattered a lot. Think about Yuschenko and Tymoshenko. That meant everything during that first Maidan. The second revolution was quite the contrary, it was mass society which played the main role, while the political leadership was merely an oft-criticized appendix to the crowds. It is a generational shift, representing the political power of the precariat.

If you need a reference point for Euromaidan, better look to the Occupy movement, or the protest on Taksim Square in Istanbul, or the recent protests in Moscow. This is a new phenomenon and we do not yet have the words

to describe it. By many criteria, that precarious revolution reflects a different sort of values, the values of the self-expression. The main archetype of such a revolution is not the grand French or the Russian revolutions, with their grand scale and terrible violence. The roots of these new revolutions are in Paris 1968.

We are now facing quite extraordinary changes and we don't know how to deal with them. Basically, talking about revolution and recalling 1789 or 1917, we are missing the main point, the main element of this new type of revolution. We have to treat values seriously, this is probably the most important thing here. Values matter, they are not a smokescreen, we need a new politics of values. It might sound utopian, but we also need utopias. Leszek Kołakowski said that Europe is experiencing a crisis because we do not have a new utopia, a new myth in a positive sense, a new religion.

There is some cause for optimism though, because I believe that this young revolution in itself, this young generation of activists, may be seen as the social base which will bring about that change. Most of the recent crises occurred on the margins of Europe – Turkey, Russia, Ukraine. The precariat too is very marginal, so we have the consequence of double marginality, which makes this combination very productive. I don't have answers to this Ukrainian and European crisis apart from one plea, which for me is essential: let Ukraine in. Let us in, because ironically Ukraine is perhaps the only country or the last country in Europe which still treats European values seriously. To the extent that people are ready to sacrifice their lives there. If we want some kind of change, if you want to increase Europe's

chances for renewal, let Ukraine in with its new generation of citizens.

**YAROSLAV HRYTSAK**

ukrainian historian and journalist, professor at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv and the National University Ivan Frank, chief editor of the magazine "Ukraina Moderna".

JAROSŁAW PIETRAS

## **In the aftermath of the crisis: inaction or consolidation?**

**Diplomat and economist Jarosław Pietras talks about the challenges and benefits of the European Union's decision-making process and explains why the current crisis, like many in the past, may present an opportunity for Europe.**

I recently witnessed two events that inspired me to reflect upon the current “crises” in Europe. The first was a large protest of about 7000 to 10.000 tractor-mounted farmers in Brussels, the first event of this scale in seven or eight years. The parade of enormous farm vehicles rolling towards Schumann Square and encircling the buildings of the European Council and Commission evoked images of protests in years past, while also stirring up a sensation and inspiring respect among the other motorists on the streets of Brussels.

The fact that I couldn't leave the European Council building – as we were completely surrounded by tractors and cordoned off by the police, and there was a palpable sense of tension, accompanied by the occasional act of violence – reminded me similar events in the past.

The European Union (EU) has once again become important to farmers: were that not the case, they would not be demonstrating in front of the European Commission and the European Council. They would not be protesting if they did not have grievances to voice and if these institutions did not make decisions that mattered to them as EU citizens. In a sense, their protest was an acknowledgment of the fact that it was important for their social group to demonstrate their views, even if the form of their protest was quite radical. When I finally managed to make my way out of the building through a passageway leading next to the European Parliament, where all was calm, quiet and deserted, it occurred to me that during conflicts over the competences of European institutions, demonstrators also assess the role of individual institutions and state their own views on whether an institution is capable of solving problems relevant to their interests.

The other event, which also took place recently, was a meeting of the Bruegel think tank, during which European Council Chairman Donald Tusk gave a speech. In it, he said that our response to the problems currently facing the EU needs to be very pragmatic, and that we need to do what is possible rather than attempt to create grand new visions and push through revolutionary changes in treaties. I believe that what he had in mind were issues involving finances, banking, the banking union and other specific matters of this type, but he was also talking about the broader context. I don't think he is alone his views, considering that Tusk, as the organizer of the political debate in the European Council, has a keen sense of what the other participants in the process are thinking and can make a cool assessment of what European



leaders might want to do and what they won't be permitted to do.

In this period of intense upheaval, one which is causing a great deal of trouble for the EU and is forcing it to determine the best course of action, the European Union is turning in on itself. The process of agreeing a joint response to unexpected internal problems saps so much political energy that it becomes much more difficult to formulate a cohesive development policy, new goals and methods of achieving them. That is not to say that the current troubles are so profound that the EU has suddenly lost all ability to act. On the contrary: when larger problems emerge, matters that were once impossible to agree upon become key. EU leaders have never been particularly unanimous and consistent in their actions, but when a crisis emerges, they respond by closing ranks and making the kinds of tough decisions that were previously hindered by disagreement. This was seen during the banking crisis, in response to which the EU took steps that were previously impossible, and it reacted to the problems with Greece by taking steps for which there had been practically no support earlier. To the surprise of observers, practically every EU country acted together on the foreign policy front when they supported, quite unanimously, the imposition of sanctions on Russia (though some were more eager than others), despite the wide variety of business ties linking individual EU states to Russia and Ukraine. This example demonstrates that, in times of crisis, the European Union is capable of adhering to its values and acting in unison on certain fundamental issues, even if these might not be in line with the interests of individual member states.

## **THE EUROPEAN UNION: THAT STRANGE AND COMPLEX ENTITY**

Crises have a way of making Wdiscussions in the European Union more dynamic, though in its attempts to find solutions to its internal problems, the EU expends a significant amount of energy on reconciling different views which can be reconciled very quickly within each member state. Europe is a bit like an enormous minefield. I think that comparison illustrates the situation rather appropriately: while it's not entirely clear what the potential problems are, where they are located, what their area of impact is and who will be affected by them, we are aware of their existence and that caution must be exercised when solving them. That is why Europe moves carefully and is a much less dynamic entity than other world powers. It's also why the EU is regarded as an organization that is slow to react, despite rather widespread expectations that the response to difficult European problems will be swift and radical. This is because of the stark contrast between the pace at which the member state governments operate and the pace of the EU itself. Expectations that the EU would be a forum in which problems could quickly be solved and contentious issues resolved are largely unfounded, because member states have developed their own individual positions, and the EU is not an all-powerful entity that can just ignore the opinions of its members countries. The EU consists of twenty-eight states that are responsible for their own territories and attempt to act together as a part of cooperative structures. Unlike a nation state, however, it is not a homogeneous entity. Yet, the EU is very frequently perceived through the prisms of member states' perspectives, and is expected to act just as effectively as

any national government equipped with a much broader set of instruments that enable it to react in a quicker, more cohesive manner. The expectations we place on the EU are excessive. We can't expect the European Union to suddenly fix all the problems that it is neither prepared for nor equipped to solve.

When problems balloon to such proportions that many EU states are interested in their resolution, only then is the European Union used as a platform to facilitate an agreement between member states. As long as it remains the concern of one, two or three countries, the reaction of the EU will be much more restrained. The EU always needs more time to reconcile divergent views among its twenty-eight members.

This characteristic is particularly apparent at various international forums, where the European Union is expected to present a unified position on a given matter. But before that can happen, coordination meetings among EU member state representatives must be held – often starting in the early hours of the morning and sometimes running simultaneously with the main sessions – in order to agree upon what the EU representative can actually say on their behalf. It is, after all, a statement on behalf of twenty-eight countries, and the agreed-upon position is often so riddled with compromises that few can then actually understand what it is that the European Union as a whole is trying to say. For this reason, formal statements made by EU representatives are often accompanied by numerous back-room talks in which partners attempt to determine both the position of the EU as a whole and where individual member states stand on more specific matters. Here, it is perhaps most apparent that the European Union reaches

its positions through internal negotiations, and that those negotiations require compromises that outsiders sometimes find difficult to comprehend.

### **MORE EUROPE, FEWER MEMBER STATES**

This is why it very difficult for the EU to act in a clear and decisive manner, both in regard to international and internal matters. In many cases, when a member state faces a problem – be it economic or social, external or internal – the question arises as to what the European Union ought to do about it. At a public event in Brussels a few years ago, Italy's then prime minister Enrico Letta presented his country's position and explained what it was he was expecting as the head of a government of a country faced with numerous problems: namely, he wanted more of the kind of Europe that would have the power to make decisions on matters of this type. I asked whether "more Europe" in his view meant "less Italy". "More Europe," after all, means transferring more power to EU structures, which in turn means that when a problem occurs in Italy, the country's prime minister would have to tell its citizens that he is not competent to act on a given issue: it is Brussels that has the necessary competences.

These calls for Europe to do more, faster and more radically ignore the fact that this inevitably entails transferring away some of the competences of the member states, and that, in result, decisions on the same issue cannot be made at the national level. The crux of the matter – and this is the major challenge of our times – is that while they expect more involvement, more effectiveness and more intense action on the part of Europe, most politicians must also face their own citizens, who

expect that in times of crisis quick and effective action will be taken not by nameless officials in Brussels, but by the closest government to them, the one they themselves elected. If the government says, “We can’t act because European rules and rulings prevent us from transferring the necessary subsidies,” then the response of the citizens will be, “That means that Europe is the problem, not the solution. We elect our national government for it to solve problems, not to hide behind the byzantine rules of European law and the decisions of ‘soulless bureaucrats in Brussels”’.

### **THE BENEFITS OF THE CRISIS**

It should be emphasized, however, that times of profound crisis strongly encourage coordinated joint efforts, particularly when external threats are involved. Looking at the history of the EU, we can see that there were many periods of stagnation when the European Community saw no growth and its individual member states went through what one might call “euroamnesia.” Only when faced with crises and external threads did the member countries opt for solutions that for years had been impossible to agree upon. The banking crisis and banking union mentioned earlier, and even the debates on taxes, show that these topics were taboo during times of relative peace. The impasse in decision-making was only overcome in response to the crisis. EU member states always cooperate more freely when subjected to some kind of stress.

I have one more comment on the external relations of the European Union. The EU has enormous power to influence, but the nature of that power is not military. It has strong soft power, the power to influence others through

example, persuasion and standard setting, and through its attractiveness to neighboring states and societies. This was extremely important to Poland: the fact that we saw European accession as a realistic goal guided the process of systemic transformation and made it difficult to pursue policies that would push us away from the West. At the same time, the UE's lack of a military makes the union's arguments more credible. Such is my understanding of Yaroslav Hrytsak's proposal to allow Ukraine to join the EU. It's not just a question of permitting Ukraine to join, but a question of presenting a credible prospect on the part of the EU. It also bears mentioning, however, that Ukraine must present a credible prospect for EU integration as well. Only then can an agreement between the EU and Ukraine become a factor which drives change in the region. This is an optimistic scenario of events, one in which the EU has a positive influence on what goes on in Ukraine.

**JAROSŁAW PIETRAS**

polish state official, diplomat, economist, former Minister for Europe, director of the General Secretariat of the European Union Council.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE PANEL DISCUSSION

## **Steering Europe Through Troubled Waters**

**Karolina Wigura:** Some say that crisis is the font of creation. Robert Cooper pointed out that every crisis might be an opportunity. But can we afford such an optimistic outlook in 2015, with so many crises occurring in Europe at once? It seems that a new generation is making itself heard – the generation we know from the Occupy movement, but also that of the “young and disgruntled” Paweł Kukiz voters. This generation will inherit the EU and its decision-making process, which is so slow and indecisive as to be completely dumbfounding for the uninitiated and the young. Isn't there a danger of the Union collapsing after the current generation of power brokers yield their positions? How are European crises related to it? Can the Union and Europe withstand these strains?

**Aleksander Smolar:** I don't share this optimism, though I can compromise and echo a certain great politician in saying that crises are too precious to be wasted. You could say that a crisis contains a positive element, it forces a reaction, a search for answers.

A European analyst suggested that Europe is threatened by the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”, to borrow a term from the Holy Bible. These four dangers are: Russian aggression in Ukraine, which undermines the principles upon which the post-War order was built. It is a fundamental principle, confirmed in Helsinki in 1975, that one cannot change borders by force. The second “Horseman” is the economic and financial crisis which led to the recent conflagration in Greece, though I do not think that we’ve seen the last of it. The third “Horseman” is the shift in the character of the “Euro group” and a fragmentation of the Union – the threat of Greece leaving the Euro zone, and Great Britain leaving the EU altogether. This danger is made all the greater by the fourth, most dramatic crisis – mass migration. All these crises are related to each other.

**Karolina Wigura: But aren’t we also facing a fifth crisis – a crisis of political leadership in Europe?**

**Aleksander Smolar:** Of course, there are more problems and weaknesses, I could go on and on. For example, there’s the crisis of populist parties, which translates into a broader crisis of European democracy. Furthermore, during the commotion around Greece, when the banking sector’s pressure on politicians became all too apparent, certain fundamental democratic principles were also put in doubt. Europe is not a single entity. We are experiencing a clash between national democracies of the member states and attempts to shift their competences onto an intergovernmental, Union-wide level and to look for solutions there.

Another issue is the fact that all these factors are interlocked. The immigration crisis also has an internal



component, which we can witness in Poland and our entire region. The inter-Union migration to Germany or Great Britain also leads to tensions. It led to the heating up of the debate in Great Britain – Cameron wasn't talking about refugees, but about "Polish workers". In other words, there's a multitude of these interlocking crises.

I don't subscribe to the attitude adopted by, for example, Donald Tusk, who recently repeated in Slovenia the same thing he was saying in Poland as Prime Minister. Namely that we don't need a grand vision, we just need to forge ahead one step at a time. Unfortunately, that's not true, we are facing truly dramatic problems which require courage and specific answers. Today, the only brave politician in Europe is Angela Merkel. Her stand on the immigration issue is very commendable. As is the attitude of the German people.

**Karolina Wigura: The only brave answer is an answer based on values?**

**Aleksander Smolar:** The problem with this crisis, which touches upon the very core of European goals and values, is that the continent's traditional goals have all dried up. These goals were the prevention of a European war, and the prevention of totalitarianisms – these fears are no longer valid. Defense against the Soviet Union? The Soviet Union is no more, and Russia doesn't pose the same kind of threat yet. As for economic growth, the EU has been unable to provide it over the past 15 years. That's a serious source of tensions. We are witnessing a fragmentation of the Union. There are dramatic divides: North vs. South, developed nations vs. less developed ones, debtors vs. lenders, Germany vs. everyone else. Therefore, I wonder

if what we're seeing now isn't actually a much more profound crisis, or rather – a crisis of truly profound values.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** We have established that Europe was created in response to the challenges that do not exist anymore, but at the same time we have plenty of other challenges that Europe is not prepared for. This crisis is basically a type of reflection of how we should deal with these challenges. So what does Europe need to face them?

**Viola von Cremon:** The European Union has managed to generate a lot of *soft power* and it does attract people. That is obvious. But what irritates me when this fact is called up by EU policymakers to show Europe's strength is that when people from the outside feel attracted, the EU tends to ignore them. It is a danger, if you are developing soft power and keep up the image, obviously true, that this is definitely a good place to be, but fail to be consistent in making further steps. I think Ukraine is a very good example, if you followed the Maidan Revolution, a "Revolution of Dignity". I was in Ukraine many times, I talked to many people standing on the Maidan for weeks, for months, with their relatives or friends killed in the clashes or in the war. And naturally they ask: what did we do it for, if there is no perspective at all?

As long as we are so hesitant to really support Ukraine openly I can understand that people are completely fed up with the European Union in Ukraine. They are fed up with their own former government, with their new government, that's for sure. But Ukraine is a good example of missing opportunities. The oligarchic system could have been broken already before, if you really watch closely,

you have some journalists in the country who know exactly what is going on. You could have put some experts from the European Union, joining forces with independent journalists in Ukraine, to investigate corruption and state-level theft. Furthermore, what should have been done is more pressure on reform before giving money, i.e. to Ukraine, the logic of conditionality.

That would have been real support for Ukraine, not to mention tougher actions regarding the war in the East. We still hesitate to give a real signal to everyone in Ukraine, really showing Putin that there is a red line and we will not accept it anymore, while continuously putting pressure on the current government in Ukraine. I do not see any of these obvious measures within last year, so I am absolutely disappointed by what the European Union is doing. It is failing to use its potential and to live up to its promise – here we come back to values. I can understand the disappointment of the Ukrainians in Europe, the feeling that there is no perspective, no matter how many reforms are done, no matter how much they get organized, how the investment climate improves, because there will be no chance that we will be a member of this European club.

**Katya Gortchinskaya: Russia is in the middle of Ukraine's crisis, but actually Russia is in the middle of a lot more crises. It was in the middle of the Greek crisis, it is in the middle of the refugee crisis, because it is helping the very dictator who is causing the people to flee. We have already said a lot about Europe's role and the crisis, but not quite so much about Russia's part in it.**

**Roman Kuźniar:** I think this crisis doesn't tell us anything new about Russia. The thing Russia is doing with Ukraine,

and the things she's been doing in relation to the EU over the past year or so, are quite predictable. It isn't surprising in the least. I think Russia herself is a bit surprised by how this all played out, because she thought it would be easier. And it's not that easy, not only because the EU put up a resistance, but also because Russia isn't handling Ukraine as well as she thought she would.

This crisis tells us much more about the European Union, and what it says isn't pretty. It seems no one is fully grasping the gravity of the situation, and the situation is dire. So dire in fact, that the situation brings to mind a quote from Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Community. He said that Europe would be created amidst crises and that it will be the sum of responses to these crises. I have to say that for the first time in my life, I feel like the European response is lacking, that these crises are overwhelming Europe, and that she won't be able to deal with them. Since 2009, we've been dealing with three simultaneous crises which have undermined three chief EU policies: Schengen, the Euro and the Common Foreign and Security Policy. In this last case, Russia plays an important role indeed. The Russian attack on Ukraine revealed what we have been musing over for a long time now, namely that the EU abandoned the idea of a common foreign and security policy, that it pretty much abdicated its responsibility in this regard.

We are seeing a process of re-nationalization of foreign and security policy. This is most evident in case of the "Big Four". Italian policy is anything but serious, the British have withdrawn, and two nations – France and Germany – took the burden of negotiations upon themselves, sidelining the EU. Therefore there's no Ashton, no Mogherini.

The only reaction to the Russian attack on Ukraine were sanctions – meager, fearful and only forced by the Russians’ shooting down of MH17. If that hadn’t happened, there would be no sanctions. Because until that point, the EU was doing everything in its power not to react in any radical fashion. Until it had to. The EU’s response was neither geopolitical nor security-minded. Security is for NATO, not for the EU – we can send kindergarten teachers to Africa as part of our foreign and security policy, but nothing more. It was a response based on ideals and values, because it is in the best interest of most EU member states to maintain business links to Russia. It was a values-based response, but a very fearful one.

**Karolina Wigura: François Hollande said that if the Minsk format negotiations are continued and successful, the Union might crack open a door and the sanctions against Russia will be lifted. Given Russia’s military presence in Syria, these two crises – the Ukrainian and the refugee – are becoming more intertwined than we could have anticipated, which in turn brings us to the question of values and hypocrisy.**

**Josef Joffe:** I think Europe has plenty of values and has plenty of soft power and persuasion, but it lacks hard power and it lacks above all a strategic sense of itself. Look at Putin. I think he is the smartest strategist on the global scene today. Why is he smart? He does not take excessive risks, he looks exactly at what the Soviet used to call “correlation of forces”. He looks at opportunities and he uses them, but there is no adventurism in his case as there was with Khrushchev. But if I were Putin and I looked at Europe, I would probably act the same way.

Because what would I see? Europe, with a population of 500 million people, has 5.1 million men and women under arms, more than the United States and it has the GDP just a little bit higher than the American one, but it is not capable of strategic action. I also looked at the United States which in the past, for the last 60 years, has compensated for Europe's unwillingness or inability to act strategically, but as you all know the 300.000 troops that the United States had in Western Europe at the height of the Cold War is down to about the fighting force of two combat brigades. Now, if you are Putin, and you see this, why wouldn't you act like this? Why wouldn't you grab the opportunity? Why wouldn't you take back Crimea? Why wouldn't you subvert the South East, if the balance of tactical forces is in your favor, the balance of strategic forces is in your favor, and if you have faced a bunch of people who are constitutionally not able to conduct a common foreign policy.

**Karolina Wigura: So you wouldn't agree with Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes who said that Putin is already very desperate at home and he should perform all these crises in order to legitimize his own power at home?**

**Josef Joffe:** This is not a mutually exclusive question. Even if he were desperate at home, but he may or may not be, he wouldn't be able to act the way he does if he did not face the opportunity and the imbalance of power. I don't care what Putin's problems are at home, but what I want is to recreate the kind of strategic stability that has blessed Europe for 70 years and enabled us to transcend old animosities, like the Franco-British or the Franco-German

enmities, because suddenly there is somebody in the game stronger than all of us and even the United States who protected us from each other, and to protect all of us against Soviet Union. The issue is whether Europe, with its enormous strength, can recreate a strategic balance by itself. And since I have grave doubts that we can, I wonder whether somebody on the panel would tell me either that it is not necessary or else how we could do it.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** If we accept that Putin has the tactical and seemingly strategical advantages and uses them, what does he gain?

**Josef Joffe:** Russia gains very little and that is interesting, you pose a very interesting question. Russia ends up with Ukraine and I read that Putin had to put 7 billion dollars into Ukraine, just to keep the support system going. So, it's a net loss in economic terms for Russia, this is not like three-four centuries ago that we grabbed a province and we could eat the fruit and harvest the grain. Today, conquest means net loss in welfare. That's important. Second thing, true for the South East, it is another net loss in a sense that he is playing away respect, sympathy, cooperation with Russia. Having said that, the interesting issue is that why he is doing that...

**Robert Cooper:** And you call him the greatest strategist on the globe?

**Josef Joffe:** He is the greatest strategist at this point in Europe. If it's a matter of getting an advantage, a tactical advantage on the ground and if you manage to do that without raising much opposition or hostility or even a move, it is strategically well done.

**Robert Cooper:** Or tactically?

**Josef Joffe:** Tactically, alright. So what is his net gain? There is no net gain, it is a loss. It is an issue I mentioned and in the long run it will tell, but right now in the short run he is in a rut, because he is not beginning his next offensive move, because he sent his troops to Syria. It's not that he is not making mistakes or that they do not matter. He is making them, but we are suffering.

It's true that in the long run his gains will turn to net losses. Think about Putin's strategies in 2008, when he managed to defeat Georgia. He has managed to regain Crimea, he has managed to take a part of Ukraine which he won't return anytime soon. He has engaged militarily in Syria. Now, you may say that's all crazy when we think in European terms, in EU terms, that is when we think about costs and benefits. Especially in terms of reputation and income, because he has done very nicely to recreate parts of the old Soviet empire and, as he doesn't seriously fear the opposition, I think he will continue to do so. Does anybody here believe that, given the kind of veto power that Putin has acquired in Europe, the EU will offer an association agreement to Ukraine again?

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** So we have a tactical gain, but a strategic loss potentially.

**Roman Kuźniar:** I think that Putin's and Russia's purposes were very clear from the very beginning. The strategic purpose is to regain power status and to be one of the few powers deciding about the Europe or the world along the "concert of powers" line. That's why I am so unhappy with all these ideas, especially vibrant in Western countries, that we have to offer Russia a new European order. What does that mean? That simply means that we should reward



Russia for what it did and to offer even more. We agree that because it invaded Ukraine, we should offer her new European order, which means much more than is achieved by the violation of basic rules of not only European, but also international order. It is as simple as that.

**Adam Daniel Rotfeld:** I disagree with these interpretations. It seems to me that Putin is not a strategist; his strategy is in fact oriented to keep power. That's the end of the story. He knows that Russia is more than limited in the possibilities to play a role in the world. He cannot compete with the US, with the European Union, with China. It's a problem for him to keep power. Now Josef Joffe said that he does not have any opposition and true, the recent 15 years were used by him to limit this opposition, in other words, he was able to create a system without an alternative. And now he is a hostage of his own system. Russians are really in a very deep crisis and this crisis is not only economic, this crisis is political and in all our aspects. But when there is no opposition, Putin in fact created a situation where Russians do not have a choice and he is trying to eliminate such possible opposition in the next few years. In my view, the main problem is that problems are not generated between the states, they are generated within the states, within Russia, but also within Ukraine and these problems within Ukraine and Russia create a kind of qualitatively new situation and our instruments are not adequate to deal with these crises in Russia and in Ukraine.

**Yaroslav Hrytsak:** I believe Putin had a strategy, but his strategy has failed. The main strategy was to restore his status as a big player, a superpower, not within the space of the Soviet Union, but in a thin Russian world

and Ukraine is essential for this status. When Ukraine is moving to the West, Putin has lost.

One thing that we missed in our discussion is the failure of the “Russian spring”, in 2014. It was his strategy, and I know from many experts who know Putin better than anybody, he took that very seriously, this concept of *Novorossia*. What he got was small pieces of Novorossia that is Crimea plus Donbass, but he does not really care. What he really cared for is the Black Sea shore and the industrial core of Ukraine that are Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizia, and he was very consistent, his strategy was very coherent.

He always insisted on the values. We missed to what extent the values has also become the core part of his discourse. He was not talking about European values, but he was talking about the values of “Russki mir”, a Russian world which is claimed to be a different civilization. These are very fundamental values. This strategy failed and it is good for Ukraine. I believe that his capacities should not be treated as absolute, but only in relation to somebody, to something. In terms of relations to Europe, he looks to be a strategist, because Europe has no strategy.

I don't think that sanctions against Russia are value politics, it's still basic interest. Because it touches upon the basic interests of the European Union, to keep the borders intact. Putin violated the main principle of Helsinki, so how could Europe not react. If it is a basic principle of values about which we care very much, which at least two things could happen.

I completely agree with you that first of all the European Union should send out a message that Ukraine has a perspective, a European perspective. Political values

based on politics. I am a historian and I could quote you the statements of the French minister from the 1960s, that Britain is never ready to enter the European Community. Nobody is ever ready it seems. It is not a matter of readiness, it's a matter of political willingness, whether you have political will or not. Europe has not had the political will to offer opportunity. We are not naïve, we are not expecting to be an EU member in one, two or even 20 years, but it's a perspective which matters. You are losing Ukraine, because you are doing nothing. If you have strategic vision, you will see that Ukraine is as important as Greece, at least, or much more than Greece, because that's the strategic vision. Greece is not strategic. Ukraine is strategic.

**Karolina Wigura:** This reminds us that politics is not just about values and it's not just about interests – it's also very much about promise. Europe was about promise, so talking whether Putin has his strategy or not is for me not a subject that could be on the margins.

**Josef Joffe:** I think strategy is not a marginal issue, it is not a symbolic issue.

**Karolina Wigura:** I don't mean strategy as such, but about Putin and about his mind. We seem to be pre-occupied with his psychoanalysis, of sorts.

**Viola von Cramon:** But I would like to come back to Putin's motives again, though, and I think it's because he has this weak position and he is definitely completely frustrated at home. The new generation is frustrated, there was a necessity to regain popularity domestically, to stay in power and I am completely agreeing with Mr. Joffe in

that respect – there was no real answer from the EU to any of his attacks during the last year.

He is very successful in creating new leverage for his policy in Europe: feeding a little bit to Le Pen, promising some million euros for her election campaign, cooperating with AFT, with NPD, with all other right wing parties in the EU, causing trouble in Syria, bringing Dagestani fighters to fight for the Islamic State, at the same time assisting Assad with all kinds of military equipment. He is really using all the destructive power he has at his disposal, but there is no strategy. No, it's definitely true that at no point is he showing that he wants to become a constructive player. I am very skeptical of the way we are all hesitating and the way we have conducted our foreign policy during the last 2 years – in the light of this it seems unlikely that Russia will give up these kind of tactics. He will continue nursing all those little hot spots of conflict and tension, where he can have influence and really try to hurt the West as much as he can.

**Katya Gortchinskaya:** So isn't Putin actually doing Europe a favor then? He is providing plenty of opportunities for us to rethink many things, including our security and defense strategy, because the challenges that Russia is presenting are very different from traditional security challenges, in the same way the Schengen policy is challenged by the new wave of migration.

**Roman Kuźniar:** At first I shared your attitude. I thought this was an opportunity for Europe: *hic Rhodus, hic salta*. But unfortunately the EU didn't want to jump into the water, even though we have been promising each other

a common foreign and security policy for years. It was being built up since Maastricht. But then what happens? It turns out that we react to the Ukrainian crisis not with a common foreign and security policy, but by having just two countries shoulder the negotiations – I'll leave the result without comment.

As I've already said before, we wouldn't have sanctions had Russians not shot down the Malaysian plane. I remember well how the EU was bending over backwards to avoid actually imposing any sanctions on Russia. What I thought was an opportunity for Europe to show what it is capable of – she had been building up potential, making so many promises, kept talking about her international identity, global power, etc... All that was struck down by Putin's actions. In this sense, it is a failure of Europe, but the seeds had been sown much earlier. I'd like to quote Peter Sutherland, an excellent European Commissioner, who after the failure of the Constitutional Treaty uttered these memorable words. He wrote that after the catastrophic result of the referendum in France, the Union lost a sense of direction and was damaged in a most fundamental sense regarding its purpose, its future shape. He wrote those words in 2005. Then came other crises, but Sutherland's words remained true throughout them all. Unfortunately, even when Putin gave us this opportunity, we weren't able to use it.

**Karolina Wigura: We began by talking about many interlocking crises. If we reduce them all to Putin or the Putin-Merkel relationship, if we say that Angela Merkel truly is the only brave politician in the EU, does it mean that all the other crises are less**

**pressing? That the only real concern is power, and nothing else?**

**Aleksander Smolar:** I think that it is a very characteristic that we are talking about Putin. Stalin was never a subject of such analysis of personal psychology or what he would do. There was a system in motion under Stalin, and the weakness of Russia under Putin is that there is just a person. I spoke to one of his close collaborators, and was told that nobody knew if Putin had any plans to invade Crimea until the very end. By the way, Georgia was not subjugated, this is an exaggeration of our weakness presented as a success of the opponent, which is not necessarily true. Fiodor Lukianov, a brilliant Russian analyst who is close to Putin and is part of the middle-aged generation, said that there are two problems. One is the way that the West treated Russia, referring to a sort of Versailles complex, that they were not treated as equals again. The second is more interesting. Russia's objective was to join the West, it was to modernize, but they failed. Putin is a reaction to that failure. But as was already said, he does not display constructive power. "New Russia", Novorossia, he was not able to push that project through. He is doing what the Soviet Union was doing: manifesting negative power but not a positive power, not constructive whatsoever. The rest is just the imagination of people with a certain masochistic tendency to see strength where there is aggression.

**Josef Joffe:** How to explain aggression if it's not through our weakness then? Why isn't the crisis, which in the past often brought Europe together, doing this now? I think this is because of three levels: Putin, which is the military level, the euro as the economic level, and immigration, refugees. We have reached the very core of sovereignty. The past

decades were about slowly increasing integration, but we are now coming close to two cores of sovereignty, namely security and foreign policy. The solution for Europe would be to have a real economic union which we don't want to have, because the French and the Germans have very different ideas about how to do economic governance or fiscal union. Why can't we respond to the refugee crisis? This is because it touches on the core of our domestic politics, our societies are afraid to take too many people, fearing for the national identity. And so we finally come to countering the expansionist moves of Putin. That would require military resources, which we have, but putting them under one leadership, which we won't do because that would mean more Europe. More Europe always means less France, less Germany, less Italy, less Britain, so on each of these three levels we have reached the hard rock of sovereignty in domestic politics, and that is my explanation of why this crisis does not galvanize.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

This book part of the outcome of the conference “Cracking borders, rising walls – The Crisis of the European Order” which took place on the 8th of September 2015 in Warsaw.

The texts “Steering Europe Through Troubled Waters” and “Refugees. This Will Be a Long Crisis” are shortened versions of the transcripts of two conference panel discussions. The text “The old order is dead. Do we have a replacement?” is an edited record of a seminar which included all of those taking part in the conference and invited guests. The book also contains texts from those who opened the event: “Two paths to security” by Robert Cooper, “Is the post-structural dictionary outdated?” by Ulrike Guérot, “The paradox of European crises” by Yaroslav Hrytsak and “In the aftermath of the crisis: inaction or consolidation?” by Jarosław Pietras.

The remaining texts, with the exception of the essay by Kacper Szulecki, which was written especially for this book, are based on content published in our online magazine [www.kulturaliberalna.pl](http://www.kulturaliberalna.pl):

### **ŁUKASZ JASINA**

*Ukraine – the beginning of the end of the world order?*

in: “Kultura Liberalna” no. 348, 8 September 2015

### **RICHARD PIPES IN CONVERSATION**

**WITH JAROSŁAW KUISZ AND ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**

*Ukraine is like Mexico*

in: “Kultura Liberalna” no. 352, 6 October 2015

**ADAM GARFINKLE IN CONVERSATION  
WITH JARSOŁAW KUISZ**

*Piles of rubble around Russia*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 348, 8 September 2015

**FYODOR LUKYANOV IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**

*The West is overestimating Putin*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 348, 8 September 2015

**MICHAEL WALZER IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ADAM PUCHEJDA**

*War will not win democracy*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 356, 3 November 2015

**EUGENIUSZ SMOLAR IN CONVERSATION  
WITH ŁUKASZ PAWŁOWSKI**

*USA is no longer the guarantor of all security*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 352, 6 October 2015

**ASLE TOJE**

*What is Russia's endgame in Syria?*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 352, 6 October 2015

**KATARZYNA GÓRAK-SOSNOWSKA**

*Syrian dogs in the manger*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 352, 6 October 2015

**JOHN GRAY IN CONVERSATION  
WITH TOMASZ SAWCZUK**

*Europe is a series of crises*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 356, 3 November 2015

**ROBERT COOPER IN CONVERSATION  
WITH KAROLINA WIGURA**

*Five European Crises*

in: "Kultura Liberalna" no. 347, 1 September 2015

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