

## EUROPEAN SECURITY: FROM MANAGING ADVERSITY TO A NEW EQUILIBRIUM

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After the end of the Cold War, the Euro-Atlantic countries failed to create a regional security system that would include Russia. This failure lies at the heart of Europe's current security problem, in which Russia is challenging the world order that emerged at the end of the Cold War under American leadership. This conflict is systemic and can be defined as the Hybrid War. It is highly dynamic and is being waged in an integrated, global environment.

### Major Issues With European Security

- Given the current state of U.S.-Russian relations, a direct confrontation (either purposeful or accidental) between the two countries no longer seems impossible. The complete lack of trust in the bilateral relationship is the most serious security issue.
- Not long ago, Russia strove to become part of a Greater Europe, while the European Union (EU) was willing to share everything with Russia except its institutions. Now this foundation has been totally dismantled; Russia's relations with EU countries are generally strained.
- Eastern Ukraine remains the largest and most dangerous conflict zone in Europe, but a number of others—Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and parts of the Balkans—pose risks as well.

### Approaches to Bolstering European Security

- Preventing direct military conflict between Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should be the immediate goal.
- The second most important goal is for Western countries and Russia to cooperate where their interests overlap. This would partly offset the mutual alienation, even though it would not fully remove it.
- After the 2019 Ukrainian parliamentary and presidential elections, there may be a chance for de-escalating the Donbas conflict by way of implementing elements of the Minsk II accords. A sustainable ceasefire would be the first step.
- The areas of tension in the South Caucasus and Moldova require unique combinations of cooperating and avoiding provocations. Resolving any conflict could lead to further success in other areas.
- Russian-European cooperation is possible in Syria in light of Moscow's shift in focus from military operations to a political settlement and Brussels's capacity to play a leading role in Syria's reconstruction.
- In the longer term, a new foundation is needed so that European security can reach a stable equilibrium. The equilibrium would rest on NATO stopping any further enlargement into the post-Soviet space and Russia dropping its objections to former Soviet republics' rapprochement with the EU.
- As they proceed with stabilizing the standoff and crafting a new equilibrium, Americans, Europeans, and Russians need to bear in mind that long-term prospects for security in Europe will largely depend on the global security environment, which will be increasingly defined by the interaction between the United States and China. In Europe, the transatlantic alliance will come face-to-face with a Eurasian entente.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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