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**(DES)SECURITIZING POLICIES AND PRACTICES:  
EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS AND THE 'WAR ON TERRORISM'  
– BUILDING BRIDGES OR CLOSING BORDERS?**

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**(Des)securitizing Policies and Practices: EU-Russia Relations and the ‘War on Terrorism’ – Building Bridges or Closing Borders?\***

**Abstract:** By looking at the understandings beneath the conceptualizations of security, the definitions about the ‘war on terrorism’, and the social constructions of ‘the other’ both in Russia and the EU, the paper argues that the securitization of the ‘war on terrorism’ despite following shared concerns and fitting the same labelling, implies differentiated understandings, leading to the securitization of different objects. This mismatch in understanding has been translated into policies and practices and has led to increasing friction in the relation, not just driven by internalized procedures, but also fostered by the external context, in a co-constitutive manner. The paper understands that the clarification and implementation of joint counter-terrorist efforts demands concerted action, along with a streamlining of these approaches into concrete common actions.

**Keywords:** securitization, discourse, terrorism, European Union, Russian Federation

**Introduction**

The European Union (EU) relationship with the Russian Federation is based on the development of a strategic partnership, broad in its formulations and ambitious in its goals. It encompasses differentiated areas of intervention ranging from political-security issues to economic matters and cultural and educational policies. But agreement over a wide-ranging agenda does not necessarily have direct correspondence in extensive understanding over the policies to be followed and implemented. This relationship has therefore been object of concurrent dynamics of cooperation and competition: differentiated approaches underlying action point to the need for constructive engagement able to draw together seemingly irreconcilable discourses and practices. The fight against terrorism emerges in this context as an interesting example of how cooperative relations could be fostered and contribute to the consubstantiation of the so-called strategic partnership, building bridges between the parties. Instead, in many instances, differentiated understandings about agreed principles and action-

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led orientations lead to disconnection. The distancing between discourse and practice further reinforced by the entrenched dichotomy “us” and “them” – the process of “othering” – are, therefore, fundamental ingredients to deconstruct securitization dynamics associated to the ‘war on terrorism’ and to the ways this has been played in the EU-Russia relationship, both in their interactions and within the internal policies of these countries.

In this context, the paper looks at the EU-Russia relations, with particular focus on the ‘war on terrorism’, through the Copenhagen’s securitization analytical framework, seeking to understand (mis)matches in discourse and practice. The securitization of the ‘war on terrorism’ has allowed for the empowerment of governmental cabinets, security agencies, the passing of new legislation and enhanced mechanisms for countering terrorist-related menaces both within the EU and in Russia, as well as agreement on joint measures to fight what is defined as a transnational threat of common concern with serious implications for European security and stability. In this way the paper frames securitization dynamics in the broader security framework where they take place, regarding the EU’s externalization of the transpolar approach and the Russian projection of policies, in order to understand the different dynamics underlying the processes of securitizing the ‘war on terrorism’ in both Russia and the EU, in conceptual and operational terms. The nature of the exceptional measures which have been taken and of the different readings about these combine to render dialogue difficult, as analyzed in the paper.

By looking at the understandings beneath the definitions of the ‘war on terrorism’, the social constructions of “the other”, and the conceptualizations of security both in Russia and the EU, the paper argues that the increasing friction in the relation is not just driven by internalized procedures (such as decision-shaping and making processes), but also fostered by the external context where bilateral dealings take place. Thus, the paper understands the internal and external environments as co-constitutive in the definition of domestic and foreign options, including in the fight against terrorism. It should be acknowledged at this point that both the EU and Russia face the threat of terrorism for years now, long before the attacks of September 11, 2001. The distinct records of European countries become explicit in the also different procedures within EU member states with reflex in their inter-relations, as well as in Moscow’s approaches based on what is understood as cumulative experience.

These differences and past experiences add to an already unbalanced relationship informed by differentiated understandings of security, extending to difficulties in defining terrorism, as well as differentiated perceptions that shape a very particular and at times deterministic image of “the other”. These have been fundamental elements in the design of

this relationship. This means that although the securitization of anti-terrorism has been pursued on both sides, with an exceptional character implied in policies and practices, what has in fact been securitized in the EU and Russia are different objects under a similar banner, despite the shared concern and the acknowledgement of transnational terrorism as a problem shared in wider Europe.

### **Defining security: complementary and competitive visions**

The EU has not defined its own concept of security, acknowledging it as encompassing, to include human and societal aspects, besides the traditional military ones, and transversal to internal and external issues. The transnational menaces associated to international terrorism, understood as “international in nature” and constituting a “common threat” (Communication from the Commission, 2007), render this need for an encompassing understanding of security more explicit, leading to a transpilar approach where the second (Common Foreign and Security Policy – CFSP) and third (Justice and Home Affairs) pillars need to be combined in order to respond comprehensively to what is defined as a comprehensive threat demanding comprehensive responses. In the EU Commission wording,

The fact that security is becoming a wider concept reflects developments underway since at least the energy crisis of the early 1970's. This evolution clearly accelerated after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, traditionally, security has been analysed and managed from state and alliance perspectives. Now, the geographical pertinence of security issues has widened to include both sub-national and global levels. Similarly, the scope has widened from the purely military to include broader political, economic, social and environmental aspects. No single definition has been elaborated, which encompasses all these various aspects of security. Security is a wide concept often used in the most varying senses ranging from dependability of products, of product supply and security of the citizen to global peace and security. (EU Security Policy)

The Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism (2002) put forward the possible definition of international terrorism conjugating the different visions on the topic.<sup>1</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> There were several counter-terrorist efforts developed within the EU before and after 9/11, though the Framework Decision is the document which encapsulates the best possible definition reached among its state members. According to the text of the Council Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, paragraph 4, “At European Union level, on 3 December 1998 the Council adopted the Action Plan of the Council and the Commission on how best to implement the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam on an area of freedom, security and justice. Account should also be taken of the Council Conclusions of 20 September 2001 and of the Extraordinary European Council plan of action to combat terrorism of 21 September 2001. Terrorism was referred to in the conclusions of the Tampere European Council of 15 and 16 October 1999, and of the Santa Maria da Feira European Council of 19 and 20 June 2000. It was also mentioned in the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the biannual update of the scoreboard to review

essentially describes terrorism as constituting “one of the most serious threats to democracy, to the exercise of human rights and to economic and social development” and defines terrorist offences as “offences under national law, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of: seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation” (Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism, 2002, art.1).

The differentiated experiences of EU states regarding terrorism, as a perceived or a real threat, have influenced policies and procedures in fighting terrorism (as an internalized menace with transnational ramifications). Therefore, finding a suitable definition for all state members has proved to be a difficult issue, though it has been understood within the Union that the existing working definition constitutes a solid basis for the development of a joint counter-terrorism strategy.

While the UN has not yet agreed on a definition and while such an agreement seems distant, I would like to recall that relevant universal conventions and protocols provide a common legal understanding of what constitutes an act of terrorism. The Union also has a definition of terrorist acts in its Framework Decision on terrorism. These are solid legal foundations (Ferrero-Waldner, 2007).

However, the Russian authorities have referred several times to this lack of agreement as an added obstacle to collaboration between the EU and Russia, since the terms of this collaboration are not clear; i.e. the ample wording allows for divergent interpretations.

[I]t complicates the introduction of an international legal basis for agreement framework in order to effectively counter the threat on a collective basis. The reason for such a situation to exist is multiple forms of manifestation and a complex structure of that kind of criminal activity (Ivanov, 2002).

After 9/11 the EU swiftly approved an ‘Action Plan to Fight Against Terrorism’ (Extraordinary European Council, 2001) essentially directed at internal procedures, including

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progress on the creation of an area of "freedom, security and justice" in the European Union (second half of 2000). Furthermore, on 5 September 2001 the European Parliament adopted a recommendation on the role of the European Union in combating terrorism. It should, moreover, be recalled that on 30 July 1996 twenty-five measures to fight against terrorism were advocated by the leading industrialized countries (G7) and Russia meeting in Paris”.

the reinforcement of the European Police Cooperation Agency (Europol) and the establishment of Eurojust in February 2002, with the goal of increasing interaction between judicial authorities, as the issue of illegal financing of terrorist-related activities was clearly prioritized.<sup>2</sup> This Action Plan was reinforced in 2004, essentially highlighting the relevance of further engagement with third countries in the fight against terrorism. The underlying principle: a complex and transnational problem that also demands an integrated, comprehensive and cooperative response, requiring therefore the externalization of EU tools and procedures.

In March 2004, reinforcing the Union's strategy, the position of a Counter-Terrorism Coordinator was created (European Council, 2004), with Mr. Gijs de Vries assuming the post. To some extent, besides coordinating internal procedures, the post implies also the reinforcement of its external dimension by making the EU strategic approach on counter-terrorism known, following on the externalization strategy above mentioned. In fact,

[...] the fight against terrorism is on a double track: first, there is the internal, counter-terrorist dimension within the EU; then there is the external, anti-terrorist dimension [...]. Cooperation with third parties is accomplished by including standardized anti-terrorist clauses in bilateral agreements, offering technical assistance to countries affected by terrorism and to new members joining the EU, and by making joint declarations, agreements on the exchange of information and legal assistance, and extradition agreements with third parties (Martín, 2004).

The externalization of EU security practices, namely in the fight against terrorism envisages in this way to better reach third parties, including neighboring Russia. It combines clearly the internal and external dimensions in EU actions, underlining the cross-pillar approach to addressing the issue of terrorism.

Nevertheless, the process of securitization of the terrorist threat that has taken place has allowed critics to voice concerns about disrespect for fundamental rights, particularly individual rights. The exceptional character of the measures implemented, justified on the seriousness of the threat and legitimized by the requirement to provide security to the populations, has allowed exceptional actions, for example in the detention, sentencing and treatment of prisoners, in access to personal banking and other records, or in censorship and control of information. "There is a clear tendency among states, almost without exception, to criminalise established form of dissent and protest and to re-categorise forms of civil disobedience and direct action as 'terrorism'" (Ray, 2008: 4). Therefore, securitization

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<sup>2</sup> These developments will allow for the adoption of the Council Framework Decision of June 2002.

should not become a driver for justifying ample action falling out normalized procedures in the sense of allowing unlimited violations of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Trends towards greater secrecy and less accountability in organizations dealing with terrorism seem to “herald a new, dangerous, era of pre-emptive state action” (Bunyan cited in Euractiv, 2005). In order that the perverse effects of the securitization process might be averted, there has been an effort at the EU level to clarify procedures in intra and inter-state relations:

[...] nothing in this Framework Decision may be interpreted as being intended to reduce or restrict fundamental rights or freedoms such as freedom of expression, assembly, or of association, the right to respect for private and family life, including the right to respect of the confidentiality of correspondence (Commission of the European Communities, 2007, parag.14; see also JHA Council, 2001).

Parallel to these efforts, there are also international civilian campaigns, such as those promoted by *Statewatch* or the *American Civil Liberties Union*, appealing against mass surveillance, warning that counter-terrorism is endangering fundamental freedoms (Euractiv, 2005).

These are then two sides of the same problem: whereas securitization has allowed for exceptional measures in response to transnational terrorism, it has also allowed violations of fundamental liberties that the EU itself cannot afford. In this sense, “the ‘Europeanization’ of risk and the responses to it would tend to reduce differences in the perception of the terrorist threat and would strengthen the collective identity of being a community at risk” (Martín, 2004) that is commonly felt within the EU. And this process of socialization could eventually minimize the perverse effects that have been arising from the securitization of the fight against terrorism.

As for Russia, the country’s national security concept refers to

[...] a system of views on ensuring the security of the individual, society and the state from external and internal threats in all spheres of life in the Russian Federation. [...] [It] is interpreted as the security of its multinational people as the bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power in the Russian Federation” (National Security Concept of the Russian Federation 2000).

After 9/11 Russia has empowered its security agencies and ministries in order to better respond to the threat of terrorism. Following on this, in January 2002 the Russian President signed the Decree on Measures to Ensure the Implementation of UN Resolution 1373,

authorizing all federal executive bodies to take immediate measures to prevent terrorist attacks, in particular the Ministries of Finance, Justice, Interior and Foreign Affairs. The Federal Security Service (FSB) was primarily tasked with fighting terrorism, and a national counter-terrorism committee was also set up to better coordinate actions against terrorism inside Russia, while also contributing to intelligence sharing in the international sphere.

Russia has been target of several terrorist acts within its territory, such as the blow up of Muscovite apartments in 1999, the siege of the Dubrovka theatre in 2002, the Beslan tragedy in 2004, just to name a few, which has legitimized, according to Russian authorities, the policies to be followed in the fight against what is simultaneously an old and new threat. Attesting this, and particularly after September 11 and until 2007, Chechnya was always referred at all major speeches and interventions by Russian senior representatives. It constituted the example of how a country could be hurt by the tragedy of terrorism, and of how this threat, very real to the Russians, should be fought. 9/11 granted legitimacy to the Russian discourse, and in this way legitimized Russian counter-terrorism fighting in Chechnya, as described and pursued by Russian authorities. Counter-terrorism can only be effective “if and when the ideas nurtured by the masterminds and ideologues behind terrorism could be stripped of their attractivity, the links between the terrorist chapters around the globe could be torn off, with the financial backers shut down, manpower training facilities destroyed, and arms supplies disrupted” (Ivanov, 2003). From 2007 the Chechen problem was described as finally over, with just minor incidents under the local authorities control. This triumph over ‘evil’ was used by Russian authorities to sustain its discourse and reinforce the validity of the means at use in the fight against terrorism, thus avoiding further international criticism.

The views on security in the EU and Russia, despite a differentiated formulation, share the understanding of the concept as wide (diverse actors), deep (sectorial dimensions), and transversal (cross-cutting internal and external factors). This maturation in the conceptualization of security has been reflected in the way Russia and the EU relate to each other, amplifying the terms of the partnership to a more focused cooperation against international terrorism, as further analyzed. But this focus does not mean the sharing of understanding regarding the means to achieve the same goal of countering terrorism and fostering stability.

The difficulty lies already at the lacking of an internationally agreed definition of terrorism that allows for distinct readings about threats and responses, with consequent misunderstandings and accusations of double-standards in the definition and implementation

of these. “If those who blow up apartment houses in Moscow and Buinaks are declared freedom fighters while in other countries such persons are referred to as terrorists one cannot even think of forging a united anti-terrorist front” (Ivanov, 2002). Later Ivanov argued that “the attacks on military personnel of the coalition forces in Iraq are still unequivocally defined as display of terrorism, and similar actions of militants in Russia are quite often presented as display of struggle of Chechen people for their freedom and independence” (Ivanov, 2006). Russia would like to see a more equitable political process that should form the basis for EU-Russia collaboration. On its side, the EU would like to see a more committed Russia to the stated shared values and principles, allowing for a common basis for dialogue. However, “closer to home, things have been more difficult. No wonder: many times it seems easier to be strategic partners than good neighbors. With Russia we share a continent and a history. But our respective memories are very different” (Solana, 2009).

In the words of then Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, in the fight against terrorism and extremism, “we need to decisively abolish the principle of double-standards, which is still popular in world politics” (Pravda, 2004). Moscow argues the format of dialogue with the EU does not correspond to the desired standards, carrying even a sense of “imposition” of ways of doing, besides a perceived treatment as a “junior partner”, which Russia cannot agree with. In addition, it is also of relevance to note that Russian official documents hardly mention the EU as a main partner in the fight against terrorism besides general formulations. In fact, emphasis is given to cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) dialogue framework, and particularly within the context of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)<sup>3</sup> and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)<sup>4</sup> as operational *fora* for strengthening the external dimension of the fight against terrorism.

It is clear that the institutionalization of a relationship based on regular contacts and the signing of agreements has not been accompanied by the clear sharing of values and principles on policy procedures.

Never before have so many people worked to promote overall European security. Countless meetings are held in every conceivable format: bilateral and multilateral, formal and informal, among governments and with those outside. But while meet often, there is less trust among us (Solana, 2009).

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<sup>3</sup> CSTO members include Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

<sup>4</sup> SCO members include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

This is an acknowledgement that has been made by both parties, on distinct grounds, regarding the format and content of this bilateral relationship.

The values gap, the underlying norm setting differentiation, and the distinct understandings about (un)democratic practices render a common position about security difficult. The war against terrorism has become in this context an example of these underlying differences, of distinct readings and practices, and of how the building of an enlarged security area is such a difficult goal to attain. Language and practice are closely interlinked, “together they co-constitute social and political reality” (Jackson, 2005: 9). The mixing in cooperative and competitive policies and approaches confers a challenging dimension to this relationship: both acknowledge the relevance of the other, the strategic benefits arising from mutual understanding, and the possible gains from collaboration, not only for the two but for also for regional stability. But they also acknowledge deep differences in understandings and approaches. In this context, the framing guidelines for the EU-Russia relationship need to be clarified in order that the new legally-binding agreement under negotiation, to replace the old Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), might reflect shared principles and common guidelines for action, well beyond the written pages of the new document.

### **Securitization dynamics in the EU-Russia relationship<sup>5</sup>**

The end of the Cold War and the desegregation of the Soviet Union defined a new context where the process of desecuritization of the heavily militarized and highly securitized Cold War years permitted the winds of cooperation to blow. This new atmosphere allowed the establishment of political-economic and security cooperation in a period where Moscow defined itself as a natural ally of Europe. Already in the years preceding the end of the Cold War, at a time when dialogue became more fluid, channels of contact were established on a more regular basis. This slow rapprochement allowed also slowly the desecuritization of most of the issues in the agendas of both parties, with their returning to “normal politics”. The Soviet Union securitized everything “from nuclear missiles and opposing armies to miniskirts and pop music” (Buzan *et al.* 1998: 208), while in Europe the propaganda and the images of the Soviet Union were also informed by a political, military and ideological weight promoting the Eastern bloc as the bloc of ‘evil’ policies and restrictive rights. This process of artificial over-securitization is now overcome.

The Copenhagen School elaborates on the concept of securitization, arguing that security is “a self-referential practice, because it is in this practice that [an] issue becomes a security issue – not necessarily because a real existential threat exists but because the issue is presented as such a threat” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 24). Thus, securitization occurs when an issue is taken out of the realm of “normal politics” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 24). “The exact *definition and criteria* of securitisation is constituted by intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 25). At Soviet times, everything linked to the West was understood as threatening, while the reverse also applied. So, the relationship between the two blocs was extremely securitized, from the simplest issue to hard military options. In current times, the process of securitization is more selective, reflecting the ambivalences inherent to a simultaneously (un)cooperative relationship.

In a process of securitization there are the referent objects, those referred to by the securitization actor as constituting a threat, and functional actors, those who influence decisions in the process, but that are not securitization actors. In this formula, securitization “is always a political choice to securitize or to accept a securitization” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29). Therefore it implies for its empowerment the recognition of authority to the securitization actor, and the general understanding of the issue as a threat. This underlines the need for a convincing approach able to mobilize an audience (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 25).

When rules are violated and this violation is tolerated on the basis of a convincing argument of security urgency regarding an existential threat, we stand before a case of securitization. This means that the analysis of political rhetoric and discourse, along with political interactions and the international context where these take place are relevant elements in the securitization process. And then, the reversal of the process, that is, the return of the securitized issue to the realm of “normal politics”, is defined as the process of desecuritization. And this is “the optimal long-range option, since it means not to have issues phrased as ‘threats against which we have countermeasures’ but to move them out of this threat-defense sequence and into the ordinary public sphere” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29).

The highly securitized democratic argument, understood as a model to be followed to assure security and stability at EU borders, has slowly returned to the realm of normal politics. Mutual criticism abounds, but the Russian model of governance is increasingly understood by the EU as a political problem, rather than a security issue. Therefore, the discourse has been showing this development in the way democratic governance is addressed

by Brussels and Moscow, despite still much dissension, and of still constituting (and for sure to continue being) a topic of discussion and disagreement at all high level contacts.

The issue of international terrorism has long been an issue of concern both within the European communities and in Russia. September 11 clearly allowed for a changed treatment of the issue by providing for “a global fight against terrorism”, new in its forms, actors and reach. “[T]he new terrorism is different in character, aiming not at clearly defined political demands but at the destruction of society and the elimination of large sections of the population” (Laqueur, 1999: 230); it follows an “‘horizontal’ organizational arrangement wherein independent cells operate autonomously without reporting to a hierarchical (‘vertical’) command structure” (Martin, 2006: 40), thus blurring the identification of command and operational structures. It is therefore “the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change” (Hoffman, 2006: 40). And this constitutes a threat in itself to the *status quo* by challenging it, as well illustrated in the Chechen case.

The 2001 terrorist attacks and the global fight against terrorism were used by the Russian president in this search for realignment with the West, and in reaffirmation of its international political status as promoter of decision and influence in international politics. The exceptional measures that have followed 9/11 (reinforced by other attacks in Madrid, London, Moscow, etc.), based on public consent, have led, on the one hand, to a reinforcement of security measures in combating this transnational threat, whereas on the other hand, they permitted the adoption and empowerment of procedures on the basis of counter-terrorist efforts that question fundamental liberties and put into jeopardy democratically-based principles that have been pillars of European security. The strong wording that has filled discourses has amply legitimized actions, leaving little room for criticism or condemnation.

The ‘war on terrorism’ therefore, is simultaneously a set of actual practices – wars, covert operations, agencies and institutions – and an accompanying series of assumptions, beliefs, justifications and narratives – it is an entire language or discourse (Jackson, 2005: 18).

And this has informed the EU-Russia relationship with regard to the war on terrorism and how this has hindered/projected cooperation efforts between the parties as analyzed in the following section.

## **EU-Russia Relations and the ‘War on Terrorism’: Building Bridges or Closing Borders?**

In June 1994, the EU and Russia signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), a legally-binding agreement that set the foundations for their relations for a period of ten years from ratification. The agreement only entered into force in December 1997, mostly due to the war in Chechnya (1994-1996). Generically, the PCA envisaged cooperation in different areas with the goal of integrating Russia in the wider area of cooperation in Europe, the promotion of security and international peace, development of a democratic society, a spirit of partnership and cooperation, and the strengthening of trade (foreseeing the establishment of a free trade area), economic, political and cultural ties. It foresees a unified Europe without dividing lines and the balanced and integrated strengthening of the positions of the Russian Federation and the EU regarding the most pressing issues affecting the international community in the new century, including transnational terrorism. In its formulations, desecuritization dynamics are clear in the way the parties refer to a spirit of partnership in the various dimensions of joint activity. The political treatment of the issues testifies this normalization in the relations after the Cold War excessive securitization, despite the reduced contacts at those times.

September 11 immediately elicited a strong reaction of support from Russian President Vladimir Putin towards the United States (US), on what was described as a threat and suffering that has been well-known to the Russian people, with special mention to Chechnya. Putin described the attacks in the US as “barbarous terrorist acts aimed against wholly innocent people [which] cause us anger and indignation” (Putin cited in Radyuhin, 2001). From then on, the Russian authorities have underlined several times that they have been “struggling against international terrorism for many years, not only in Chechnya, [but also] supporting the Northern Alliance [in Afghanistan]” (Ivanov cited by Interfax, 2001). However,

the triangular situation of a modern industrial Russian state handling the Chechnya situation in a largely pre-modern environment, with the post-modern Europeans looking on, is an illustration of the discrepancy between the historical time zones in which these three worlds exist (Trenin, 2005).

The terrorist attacks in the US allowed the consolidation of trends by accelerating the securitization of the fight against terrorism, already a security concern before but that became issue of exceptionality regarding its readings and the measures adopted. But the contacts

between Brussels and Moscow point to disagreement over procedures and practices, over wording and discourse, meaning that the issue at the table is that of differentiated ‘terrorism[s]’, and not a joint fight against an object defined as similar and where therefore joint procedures could more easily be agreed upon. The evolution of the relationship on this issue reveals small steps with particular success on border monitoring but built over fragile foundations. This turns a dynamic that could foster rapprochement into a source of misunderstanding.

At the Russia-EU October 2001 Summit, a joint statement on international terrorism was adopted. Building on previous documents, right after 9/11 it defined the framework for cooperation between the parties, focusing on exchange of information regarding the movement of people, arms supplies, financial transactions, and new forms of terrorist activity, including chemical, biological or nuclear threats. It also pointed to increased cooperation with third parties having the UN as the referential framework. However, it did not really detail concrete measures between the EU and Russia in counter-terrorism cooperation, despite the favorable context. The evasiveness of the document in this regard, apart from the broad principles on the sharing of information, is revealing of the difficulties in really defining common ground for action (EU-Russia Summit, 2001).

The connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials has been clear (see for example Joint Statement on the Fight Against Terrorism, 2002). But the concrete steps that have been agreed to jointly address the issue of terrorism have been essentially broad, including references to the exchange of technical and strategic information, and the strengthening of judicial cooperation, with not much detailed procedures – the documents reiterate a common basis in the condemnation and fight against “all acts of terrorism”, with due regard “for the rule of law, for democratic principles and for the territorial integrity of states” (see for example Joint Statement on the Fight Against Terrorism, 2002; Russia-EU Summit, Moscow, 29 May 2002). However, when analyzed in more detail, this common basis reveals many uncommon procedures. Simultaneously it has however been permitting a common ground for dialogue of fundamental relevance in the context of increasing tension that has been developing.

In May 2003, the parties decided to deepen cooperation by establishing a ‘Permanent Partnership Council’, and the document explicitly refers to enhanced cooperation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, including border management and migration issues, and the

fight against organized crime (EU-Russia Summit, “EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement”, Joint Statement, St. Petersburg, 31 May 2003). Clearly this statement recognizes the need for more concrete measures in order to achieve more concrete results. Border-related cooperation becomes an area of utmost relevance in various dimensions, since it is understood that the transnational character of illegal activities contributes much to the rooting and rising of terrorism. And this has become the primary area for cooperation between the two. This convergence regarding the need for a joint front in the fight against terrorism is in this way present in the bilateral relationship (see for example Communication from the Commission, 2004), despite the many problems that this has been facing, resulting not only from difficulties in understanding between the EU and Russia, but also from the broader international context. This has proved a difficult one with NATO enlargement plans promising to bring western troops closer to Russian borders; the US anti-missile defense shield to be deployed close to Russian territory, with interceptors planned for Poland and the Czech Republic; and criticisms about the development model Russia was following under then president Vladimir Putin essentially described as authoritarian. The tense atmosphere sipped in the EU-Russia relationship resulting in increasing tension.

In the words of Vladimir Pankov, the 2004 EU enlargement contributed to a cooling in relations, and “the EU – in contrast to its friendly rhetoric – began to freeze its rapprochement with Russia and adopted a de facto policy of ‘peaceful coexistence’ and rigid, if not hostile, competition in the economic sphere’ (Pankov, 2008). The inclusion of several former Soviet satellite states in the EU caused discomfort in Moscow, a feeling which was later confirmed by the hostile positions that many of these states have adopted within the EU towards neighboring Russia. “It is now much more difficult for Russia to deal with the EU as a ‘solidarity community’” (Pankov, 2008). Defense Minister Ivanov harshly criticized the Europeans because “many Russian citizens are denied visas, while terrorists acquire Schengen visas easily. For example, Akhmed Zakayev, who is on Russia’s search warrant, hid at first in Denmark and is now living in Great Britain. In January he visited Germany” (Pravda, 2004). In addition,

[...] it was difficult for Europe to have a common position towards Russia as the Union’s member states all prioritize different aspects of their relationships with Russia. For example, strong states, such as Germany and France, prioritize economic issues, while Poland has concerns about Russia’s imperial attitude, while others, like the United Kingdom, want to see Moscow improve human rights and press freedom” (Wolf, 2009: 10).

Nevertheless, and despite growing difficulties, at the Moscow Summit in May 2005 the parties reached agreement over the roadmaps for implementing the four common spaces earlier defined at St. Petersburg (2003), contributing to a new framing of the relationship, by organizing the areas of cooperation and the main issues to be addressed around four broad categories – a common economic space; a common space of freedom, security and justice; a common space of cooperation in the field of external security (these two include a strong focus on terrorism); and a common space of education, research and culture (EU-Russia, 2005). Within the areas of external security and freedom, security and justice topics of relevance have included the strengthening of relations between Russian agencies and Europol, further cooperation on money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities, corruption, border management, migration, and trafficking in drugs and human beings. Implementation has been slow and further strained by the increasing difficulties in the relationship as a result of internal developments in the EU and Russia, and external ones with direct impact in their relations, particularly noticeable from the second mandate of Vladimir Putin as president of Russia.

At the Munich Conference on Security Policy in February 2007 (Putin, 2007a) and at the time of the state of the nation address (26 April) Putin severely criticized the Western formatted discourses on democratization and security, the use of double-standards and a disparate treatment towards Russia, to some extent rebuilding old walls and recovering old images, at the Cold War style.

In the past, in the era of colonialism, colonialist countries talked about their so-called civilizing role. Today, [some countries] use slogans of spreading democracy for the same purpose, and that is to gain unilateral advantages and ensure their own interests (Putin, 2007).

This harsh tone was accompanied by the announcement of a moratorium over the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), leaving clear the strains in the relationship. Years before, the Russian Defense Minister had advised that the “admission to the NATO of seven new members, with four of them staying out of the Treaty, finally makes the Treaty system of limitations imperfect, under-efficient, and cut off from the realities” (Ivanov, 2003). The Russian unilateral withdrawal from the CFE Treaty was

unavoidable<sup>5</sup> in a context of high international tension, demonstrative of the inter-linkage between internal dealings and external dynamics. However, mutual recognition of the relevance of the relationship has kept the parties dialoguing, with anti-terrorism dialogue constituting an example. These tense relations have enduring consequences implying lack of confidence and trust, something that cannot be afforded. These are resecuritization dynamics that seem to recover the old image of the “enemy” and give it material expression. But in this sense, securitization is being equaled to militarization.

The automatic renovation of the PCA by the end of 2007, after the inability of the parties to reach common ground on a new agreement, was interpreted as a negative sign (see Arbatova, 2006; Likhachev, 2006; Bordachev, 2006; Emerson *et al.*, 2006). On the one hand, it signaled Russia’s unwillingness to negotiate a new accord, which in the proposed formulations was understood as contrary to its interests, especially regarding energetic issues; on the other hand, it highlighted the reticent posture of the EU in putting forward a new model for the relationship with Moscow. In a new presidential context, after Medvedev came to the Russian presidency, negotiations restarted (Press Release, 3 July 2008), though they were again halted at the time of the Georgian war in August 2008. They were resumed in the spring of 2009, demonstrating the recognition of the mutual relevance of dialogue on several pressing issues, including the war on terrorism.

Greater political and economic stability in our shared neighbourhood is in the interest of all. The EU-Russia partnership has shown its capacity to maintain dialogue even in the most difficult times, and we need to continue to strengthen a partnership characterized by interdependence, reliability, mutual trust, predictability, and transparency. The progress made in the four common spaces and the ongoing negotiations for a new comprehensive agreement are clear signs for the vitality of our relationship and the mutual interest to develop it further (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009).

The war on terrorism has allowed for “the discursive creation of an external ‘other’, who reinforces the identity of the ‘self’” (Jackson, 2005: 59), in this way sustaining and legitimizing political objectives. The language of the “evil”, “vandals”, “savages”, “barbarians” defined by their “cowardly and criminal acts of terrorism” causing “disruptions to society” and “threaten[ing] our fundamental rights” completes the formula. Language of threat and danger increasingly sustains the process of securitization assuring public

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<sup>5</sup> CFE II, a revised version of the CFE Treaty agreed at Istanbul in 1999, has only been ratified by four countries: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. Russia withdrew from the Treaty by the end of 2006, with legal effect from January 11, 2007.

acceptance of the exceptional measures taken at the legislative and institutional levels to counter the menaces and threats associated to transnational terrorism. Simultaneously, the discourse allows for the process of securitization to take place, but it also contributes to an “institutionalisation” of approaches. “[T]he discursive straightjacket of the ‘war on terrorism’ prevents clear and creative thinking about alternative strategies and approaches” (Jackson, 2005: 184). This is more so when the joint measures are so weak, as in the EU-Russia thorny dialogue.

### **Conclusion: EU-Russia relations and the ‘war on terrorism’**

In the EU-Russia relationship, the conducting of dialogue and the implementation of initiatives must be sufficiently clear to dismiss Russian fears about EU options, which have risen with the diminution of Moscow’s power in the world stage. Neither side sees its interests as best served by excluding the other, but they also realize the need to deepen cooperation. President Putin has mentioned the need to improve the efficiency and quality of this cooperation (Lynch, 2003: 18), an objective reiterated by president Medvedev (2008). However, there is a clear tension between the expansion of the normative agenda of the EU and the considerations of Russian power politics (Timmins, 2003: 78-79). The ambiguities inherent to this partnership in the fight against terrorism, where the conciliation of interests, even in the face of a common concern, is not always easy, are a reflex of the need to balance trade-offs, policies of engagement, enrooted practices and self-interests, as well as of the distancing in words, understandings and actions.

In this way, finding innovative ways to dealing with differences is essential in the building of confidence and in consolidating cooperative approaches. The redesign of the PCA might constitute an opportunity for the parties to engage differently, assuming the differentiated narratives that are present in Brussels and Moscow and that need to be incorporated in any new dealings. The consequences of the mismatches resulting from similar wording but differentiated understanding, clear in the ‘war on terrorism’, as analyzed, constitute serious impediment to raising the level of EU-Russia cooperation. The way ahead points, therefore, to the urgency of convergence in this bilateral relationship, and particularly here in the clarification of counter-terrorism measures, in a context where the securitization of the ‘war on terrorism’ has resulted in the securitization of different objects, with negative impact. The need for streamlining the approaches of both the EU and Russia into concrete common actions is thus clear.

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