

*Guido Lenzi*  
*“Medvedev Initiative:  
New Security Structure for Europe?”*

I'm supposed to address the other issue, the other leg of this equation. That is not only what we have – the NATO structure and the European Union ambitions – but also in general the European security architecture that Moscow has been invoking for a very long time. We now remember that it was Putin at the meeting in February 2007 who at first in Germany declared very forcefully dissatisfaction with the state of things in Europe. And then we had Medvedev who in June, in Berlin last year just two before what happened in Georgia specified more clearly what they had in mind. And we had repeated indications in papers distributed ever since.

Basically putting down on paper, indicating what are the main objections that the Russians have to the present state of affairs in the institutional structure of Europe. I would like to start with one statement. Ant that is by Gareth Evans, as you know former prime minister – I think – of Australia who is now a very much respected president of the International Crisis Group. He came up with the article after the events in Georgia saying that 8/8, I mean the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, was much more of a turning point in international relations than 9/11. Much more dramatic, much more incisive – as it were – element. Basically terrorism and its horrible acts are elements that strike of course popular imagination but they are, in a sense, occasional. They do not necessarily change the approach and the attitude of governments. What happened in Georgia, on the contrary, has indicated the change of attitude in the Russians very forcefully and I think we have to address. All of us. Those of us who are in the international business either as officials or think tankers, academics etc.

The basic question is: what do we do with Russia. Also, what does Russia do with itself. That is another question which we cannot respond to. So try and elicit from the Russians some kind of a clearer indications of they are up to. We think what we're up to. Sergio Balanzino indicated what NATO thinks it will do when it develops. In European Union we have statements about what will happen if and when the Lisbon Treaty will be ratified, etc. etc. So we have a general idea of what we will want to do when we grow up. If we grow up and when we grow up. I am not sure that Russia knows what it wants to do if it grows up when it grows up. And that I think is something that has to be a question that we address to ourselves and but also question that we address to the Russians.

I would like to look at this issue for the European Union point of view. First of all the European Union has two basic fronts of instability. It's surrounded by two fronts of instability. One is the Mediterranean issues, Middle East, Gaza etc. We all know what we are talking about. And the European Union has to do more. The Europeans in general and the European Union have to do more about Mediterranean. The other instability belt is the belt of states that resulted from the expansion of the European Union, the enlargement of the European Union and of NATO and the retraction of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet Union etc. There is a belt – you can see it on the map – of states: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, down to the Caucasus where the business is unfinished. That is clearly unfinished business. You cannot say that it's settled. Those who are here are here, those who are there are there and those who are in the middle are a bit here and a bit there. No, no. This situation is an unstable situation. Many of them are frozen conflicts or maybe some of them unfrozen like the Georgian one. That is an extraordinary state of affairs in Europe, among Europeans that we

do have in our own common house like Gorbachev used to say. In our common house we have such unacceptable, unresolved, unfinished business.

What is necessary, both in the Mediterranean where we come from and here where you are with respect of this European belt of instability... The basic issue in both instances is how we do restore, reintegrate the system of international relations. The cooperative security system of international relations interrupted by the Cold War which has been rediscovered by the Helsinki Final Act basically. Rediscovered in 1975 by the Helsinki Final Act, re-proposed to the Russians and that has established some kind of Pan-European cooperative system.

The reintegration of the Pan-European cooperative including The European Union members, the Balkan states, the states which are in the middle and Russia is indispensable. The reintegration is indispensable in order for the general world system, United Nations system, to reintegrate itself. If we don't put order in our house, how are we going ourselves... The cooperative system is a western model, as I said Wilson, Roosevelt etc. But how am I going to tell the Chinese and the Arab states and the Latin Americans: let's come together, let's cooperate among yourselves, subregionally and with each other if we haven't put our house in order. It is indispensable, it is a priority that we demonstrate that it can work in Europe, as it has worked so far but without areas of persistent dispute. So it is indispensable that we reestablish...

In order of this to happen, to reintegrate the western model two things are indispensable. One is putting order in the transatlantic relations. Many things have happened, we're among experts, I will not... Transatlantic relations... With the help of Obama who will come knocking at our door pretty soon, we will have to restore that commonality of purpose, that Ambassador Balanzino has mentioned.

I have read recently some absorbed discussions or papers whether the Atlantic Alliance nowadays is the alliance of necessity or the alliance of choice. It is not an alliance of necessity because we don't have the Russian-Soviet threat and therefore it is an alliance of choice. That does not make sense. It is still an alliance of necessity because Transatlantic Alliance is necessary in order to preserve coherence of the western cooperative model of security. So we still have business to do as Transatlantic Alliance not only for hypothetical territorial defense but also for this out-of-area engagement that the West thinks it has to do in order to persuade others that it is better to cooperate rather than to fight. And this is demonstration that still needs to be made. The principles of the United Nations basically. So one is restoring and clear working commonality of purpose and strategy transatlantically. In NATO and otherwise. Between the European Union, within the European Union, Europe, America.

And the other indispensable element is Russia. We cannot solve not only the issues of the Caucasus and Ukraine etc. etc., but also the Middle East and Iran and Afghanistan and Pakistan without Russian cooperation. Now, it is paradoxical that Russians are members of the Security Council, they are members of G8, they are members of the Contact Group in the Balkans, they are members of the Quartet in the Middle East, they are members of the Five Plus One in Iran

because they are there and they claim that they are not being consulted and that nobody tells them anything and that they are sidelined. I mean they are all over the place! They are sitting wherever the principle decision makers about global issues are sited. Now why is it that the Russians have this frustration and this feeling that they are sidelined. Wherever we look they are there sitting passively. We have to try and extract them from the attitude of passivity. We have to restore the Pan-European context – I would say.

And now I come to the basic purpose and then I will finish and we will discuss. And that is this new security architecture that Medvedev has been expanding. He, of course, the Russian have been trying to promote this as a substitute for NATO and European Union common foreign security policy for the past 20 years, ever since the Berlin Wall came down. They felt that something else had to be done etc. Therefore they were interested in OSCE. They were initially active in the OSCE etc. And there things have gone wrong. I was there for four years, I saw it going wrong. And when Georgia happened, I knew it was going to happen. It could have happened when I was there. It happened after I left. Unfortunately. Because I would have loved to be there when it had happened. It could have happened any moment.

The OSCE is a multifunctional organization, it is not a decisive organization. I am not even sure that it is an organization. Maybe Minister Rotfeld can tell us how he feels. It is an instrument. It is a vehicle. It does not have a security council, it does not take decisions. The decisions are taken – if they are – on a consensus. You do not count the votes: so many for, so many against. If there are no objections, the decision is taken. So it is a consensus building organization. It is a political organization. It is not a treaty. It is a Final Act. Which means that there are

no member states in the OSCE. There are co-participating states. They are called participating states not member states which is unusual. Maybe we should call members of the European Union as well participating states in the European Union. No. We do have treaties. We have difficulties ratifying treaties but we do have treaties in the European Union. Not in the OSCE.

Participating states which means that this states are in the OSCE to the extend that they participate. If they don't participate, they are lesser members of the OSCE. Then they cannot complain that they are not being taken into consideration if they don't do some participating. It is an organization where decisions are not taken but where decisions are prepared. Where points of view are exchanged. Where attitudes are being compared etc. etc. It's a constant getting together, discussing.

The purpose is developing, increasing the political consensus among the European countries, Pan-European – whether they are members of this or that and the other, does not matter. And the purpose of this is to develop, encourage best practices. You can do different things in your different parts of Europe but this things have to be compatible with each other and they have to be convergent. So you may not have fully perfect elections but every election must be better that the previous one. And it almost going into direction when you have resulted as a result oriented organization. The proof of the pudding is in the eating not in the producing. So it's a final result of this process that actually determines. You cannot say that the organization doesn't function. You have to help it function, especially the OSCE.

Now what is strange in Medvedev's proposal? Some things are strange. Apart from the fact that obviously it is intended to diminish the relevance of NATO and also diminish the thrust of the common foreign security policy, and even more the European Security and Defense Policy. It's called I think Common, CSDP, Common Security Defense Policy in Lisbon. So cut the ground under these two organizations. Not abolishing them but reducing their relevance. What is strange in these initiatives of Medvedev is that he says that this new treaty, elements of European security treaty should be legally binding treaty. Legally binding? This is to me very ambiguous. Does Russia really want to bind itself legally in the multilateral Pan-European system?! This is the first time I hear that. It would be an extraordinary event. But I don't think that Russia is any more multilateralist than America, the Arabs and others. The only multilateralists in the World are the Europeans. European Union is multilateralist genetically. It cannot be anything else but multilateralist. It does not exist if it is not multilateralist. No other international actor is multilateralist. So it is strange that he says legally binding. I frankly don't see how can you legally bind a country. I mean apart from what is legally binding in the United Nations Charter obviously. But how can you make, what a special European order legally binding?

Other things that are still somewhat ambiguous. Leaving Israel and Palestine resolving the issue by themselves? We see on television that it doesn't work anywhere, not only in Europe. Nowhere. You have a European security system overarching and then leaving them for themselves. It's a contradiction. It does make sense to me. And respect of agreed, of existing negotiation and peace keeping format. You know, Russian are in Abkhazia etc. and nobody is going to touch that. I mean what kind of a Pan-European system is it? Etc. etc. you will look at it.

In any case, any document proposed has its ambiguities. And ambiguities at times are constructive because you can work around them. I think that this meeting that is planned in Vienna in June I think could be useful, should be useful. The Madrid text says at the end that it should serve to approve basic principles and directions of the future work and define a relevant platform for negotiations. So maybe we will see how far we can go. So far so good. There is nothing wrong in discussing. Particularly in the OSCE context which is precisely the place where such issues can be and should be discussed.

The important, the essential thing regardless of what will come of this overarching security architecture, replacing or overarching the existing organizations is that it has to reaffirm strongly that the European countries – because they are Europeans and they have common history and they have common problems and common interests – need to develop coordinated approach to international politics. Not only among themselves – as I said – but in order to present a kind of model for the rest of the international community. So make sure that what comes out of this meeting is a clear indication that we accept that we have a common interest to promote... Not values. Values is a complicated term... Interests are values. Common interests are essential values in themselves so let's talk about it.

And a European common law indicating that we actually want to have not legally binding agreement like he says but rather a common law. As we know common law is not inscribed in the Constitution. The Brits have a common law but there is no Constitution. So ensuring that we involve, expose the Russians, help them to develop a more elaborate position in a kind of cooperative containment. It's a cooperative reform. Like tango or judo. You are acting with each other to hold each other. If you dance alone it looks silly. Frankly! So you have to be two.



And the other important thing is cooperative containment and the willingness to internationalize the issues. The contrary of what I just read. So get from the Russians the agreement that some of these issues will be dealt within an international framework, Pan-European international framework and not only exclusively by the neighboring country in its privileged neighborhood etc. In other words: persuade the Russians that it is in their interest, in our interest and in the interest of the broad world that it recovers a role of a superpower (it wants to recover the role of a superpower and I think it is useful for it to recover such a role of a superpower) with the relevant responsibilities. Nowadays you are not a superpower if you don't assume responsibilities. And it's clear to the Americans. Obama has recognized it. The time has come for the Russians to recognize it as well. In order for that to happen the European Union should of course develop a much greater, much more coherent common foreign and security policy of its own as a contribution to this process.