

European Security – National Interests, European Interests

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Introduction

Historically, security and insecurity in the region has been the result of relationships and interaction between three different types of actors. First, the permanent great powers – i.e., "Germany" and "Russia" in different historical shapes. The see-saw of German-Russian relationship has led to a situation today with Russia pushed far back towards the East and with Germany united and (again) the potentially most powerful state in Europe. Second, the some time great powers: Denmark in the Middle Ages and the early Modern Age – but today a small state; Poland – a major power in Europe during roughly the same period, subsequently divided but today returning as major actor in Northern and Central Europe; and thirdly Sweden – the major power of the North during the so called Swedish Century 1621-1721, subsequently a small European state but a "medium power" with a strategic role during the Cold War. The third category is made up of the maritime powers of the West – the Dutch of the 1600's, the English of the 17- and 1800's, and finally the Americans of the mid- and late 1900's – and, still, of the early 2000's. Without any territorial ambitions of their own but with trade and strategic interests as regulators of the balance in the Baltic Sea region these powers have chosen, over the centuries, to intervene in conflicts in the region, basically supporting the smaller states against the expansionist ambitions of the mightier.

Conflicts did certainly spill over into the North also in the past – the Thirty Years' War, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, two World Wars and ultimately the Cold War which achieved something no earlier conflict had succeeded in doing: a divided region, frozen for some forty years with no communication between the two halves of the Baltic Sea region.

Today, we speak less of individual states, excepting Russia, when we try to analyse the security structures and "complexes" of Europe and of its regions and subregions. Instead we refer to institutions, "communities", "regimes" and networking. The Baltic Sea region itself is today a meeting place of such arrangements: the European Union with Swedish and Finnish membership having once and for all changed the strategic map of Northern Europe – these states now being not only states of the West but also states in the West; NATO with the effects that Polish membership as well as the networking of Partnership for Peace will bring, making the Sea previously divided into one NATO domain; WEU – planting its flag also along the eastern shore of the Baltic through associated partnership agreements; the OSCE – demonstrably present in the region with its missions in Estonia and Latvia; the Nordic Council, Baltic Council and Baltic-Nordic cooperation arrangements; and the Council of Baltic Sea States – a regional arrangement involving all of the shore states plus Norway and the European Commission, thus including Russia in active cooperation activities that bridge divides created by NATO, the European Union

and the WEU – a factor of considerable strategic potential for the "Europeanisation of Russia".

The "security complex", to use Barry Buzan's terminology (People, States & Fear Hemel Hempstead 1991) is thus truly complex, including both Russia and the United States, alliance networks, supranational institutions and process oriented forms of Nordic cooperation dating far back in history. True romantics also like to invoke the old Hanseatic League seeing a revival thereof in the process of re-integration of a region formed by a sea dating back to the iceage!

European and, with NATO and the United States, global power relationships and interest patterns meet with regional and subregional arrangements. How will "Europe" and the regional arrangements interconnect to provide for a security community based on common and converging interests for the duration? And where and how should Russia fit into the "Community"? How will the still ambiguous and "fluid security structures" (Kate Bundt, "Europeisk sikkerhet i frit flyt?"; Europaprogrammet Seminarrapport 1/1999) contribute – as dangers and risks, or as possibilities for creative security building and integration?

Today, the Baltic Sea region is remarkably stable – a true marvel when compared with Southeastern Europe. Still, we need to consider possible dangers, threat and risks that might arise either within the region – or as a result of spill-overs from other regions, such as has already happened with the most calamitous consequences during previous centuries.

The aim of this paper is to discuss these possible threats, as identifiable today, and the possible ramifications thereof.

Conflicts in the Region – always Russia in One Way or the Other

Possible threats of conflict, gradually defined as risks rather than threats, have since the end of the Cold War, been identified almost exclusively in terms of Russian instabilities – internally or in the relationships with neighbouring states, primarily the three Baltic Republics. Scenarios have focused on the assumed Russian inability to resign itself to the loss of the Baltic Shore, to Russian exploitation (also for domestic political reasons) of the Russian speaking minorities in above all Latvia and Estonia, Russian efforts to circumscribe Baltic freedom of movement and to prevent Baltic membership of EU and NATO by using the still unfinished business of border regulation between Russia and Estonia as well as Latvia. But attention has also been focused on the uncertainties surrounding the status and possibly disastrous economic development (or, rather, non-development) of Kaliningrad with, for example, the Kaliningraders acting in despair to seek ties in the West in various "break-away" scenarios leading to Russian retaliation that would also bring Lithuania and perhaps Latvia and Poland as well into the conflict. Baltic views of Belarus have also tended to be sinister, identifying Belarus as a possible "North Korea" used by Moscow against them; one way, thus, of applying a historical parallel – always risky!

Other, internal destabilisation scenarios have been based on assumptions about a continuing breakup of the Russian Federation with far reaching processes of regionalisation leading to scenarios à la China of the interwar period – with civil war and efforts of the "Centre" to hold the Federation together spilling out across present borders.

In sum, thus, there has been no shortage of such "risks" all based on Russian "revanchist" strategies or Russian collapse in various shapes – but also conditioned by worries in the West (including, of course, Finland and Sweden) about "bold" and "provocative" policies pursued by Tallinn, Riga or Vilnius, perhaps even by Warsaw. These latter worries have, however, tended to recede rather dramatically – also to no little extent a bonus of the discussions of and preparations for NATO and EU enlargement, which have led to moderation on the part of everybody in the region except Russia.

The Barents and Arctic Connection

The Barents and Arctic Seas, and the strategic complexities arising out of these areas, cannot be kept apart from the Nordic-Baltic or Baltic Sea region. They are a part of the "security complex" with which we have to deal. It is also very much in this context that old Cold War scenarios, along the traditional conflict patterns of a strategically bipolar world, have lingered in the High North with continued Norwegian worries about a neighbouring Russia, given both nuclear weapons and Norwegian concerns about their new status as a supposed world power in the energy field (oil and gas) with possible confrontations with Russia in the still unregulated waters of the Barents and Arctic Seas – confrontations that might also involve a very peculiar strategic resource, namely fish. The geographic (and geostrategic) position of Norway has contributed to making spokesmen of that country and defenders of its interests highly concerned about the fading away of the Cold War in the minds of NATO allies, above all the United States, with Cato-like reminders of dangers still existing also from a drastically reduced superpower.

In terms of strategic, nuclear weapons the START negotiations have already produced one ratified treaty, START I with very substantial reductions in United States and Russian arsenals. A second treaty, that would cut these arsenals further (from some 6.000-6.500 warheads to some 3.000-3.500), has been negotiated but START II has not been ratified by the Russian Duma. The still non-treaty is used in the domestic political debate in Russia and also as a very blunt instrument against the West – with very limed credibility as it is generally understood that the Russians, whose nuclear arsenal is decaying, need an agreement for controlled, mutual arms reductions for economic reasons rather more than the Americans who can better afford theirs. One important aspect of START II, however, is that it would bring a real "strategic" change in nuclear doctrine for the Russians: not only reducing but also shifting emphasis from land-based to sea-based systems. Such a shift would tend to increase the importance of the Kola base area where the bulk of Russia's strategic submarine force is stationed and would thus increase the risk that matters of maritime and grand strategy would impact directly on regional security in Northern Europe.

Conflicts from afar and in global contexts would thus constitute possible sources for conflict spilling into the Nordic-Baltic region with strategic bipolarity still a determining factor. Things could even get more complicated than that over the medium and long term, with Russia and China, the latter with much greater nuclear potential than today, clashing in the East for reasons which have nothing to do with the Nordic-Baltic region as such. In 1904-1905, Japan could not strike against Russia's military bases in Europe and could thus not prevent the Second Baltic Squadron from sailing to

Tsushima; in tomorrow's strategic world China might not be similarly constrained.

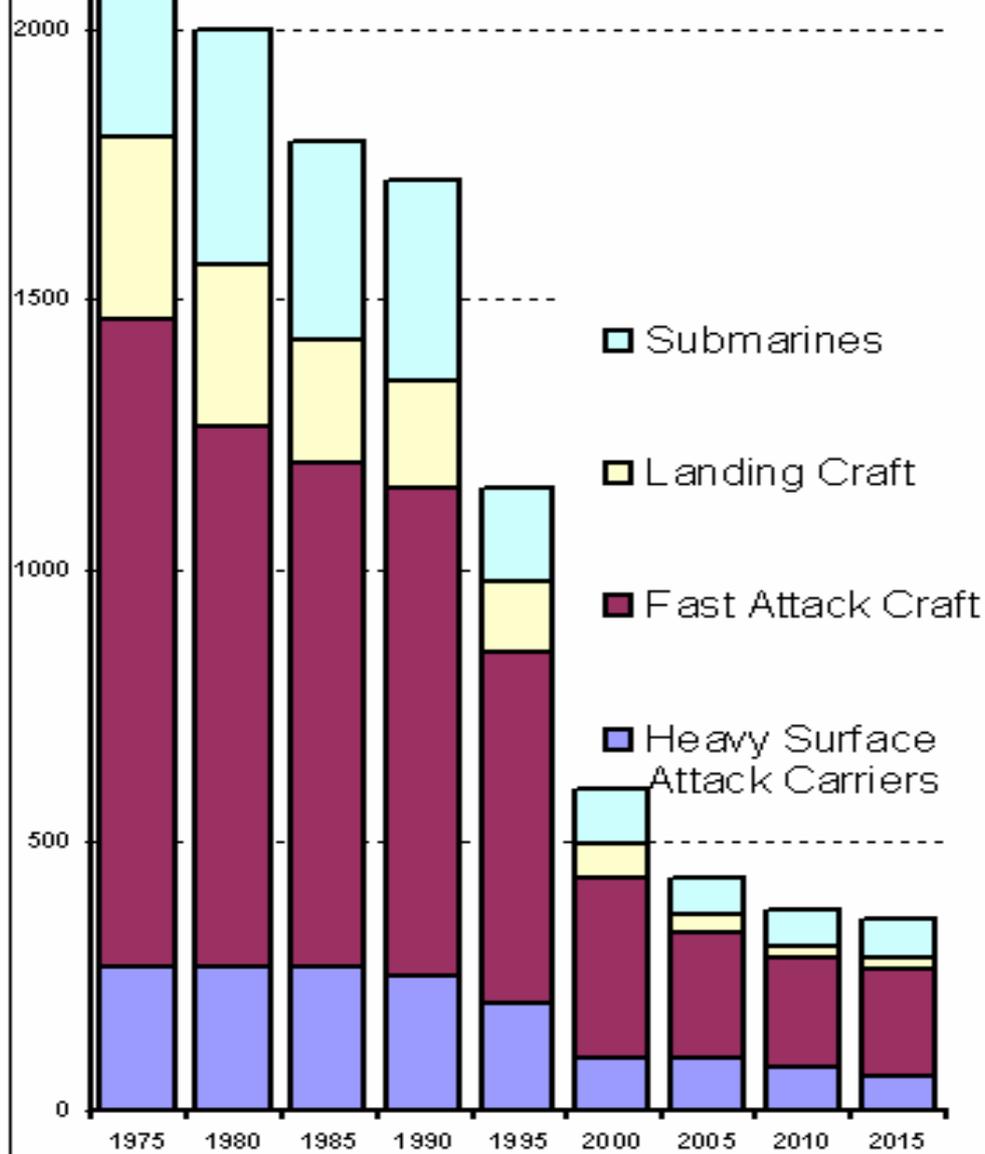
All this is, of course, pure speculation and there are also experts who predict that both Russia and the United States may, for their own reasons, no longer be interested in START II and that instead a quantum leap will take place to a START III agreement with both deeper cuts and a possible opening for Russia to avoid being driven to sea and instead staying with its trusted land-based solutions (ICBMs – but now only single-headed). In contrast to the previous "START II argument" this would thus be likely to *diminish* the strategic importance of the Kola area and lift some of the burden from Northern Europe. Land-based ICBMs would in all likelihood be stationed in the Russian heartland.

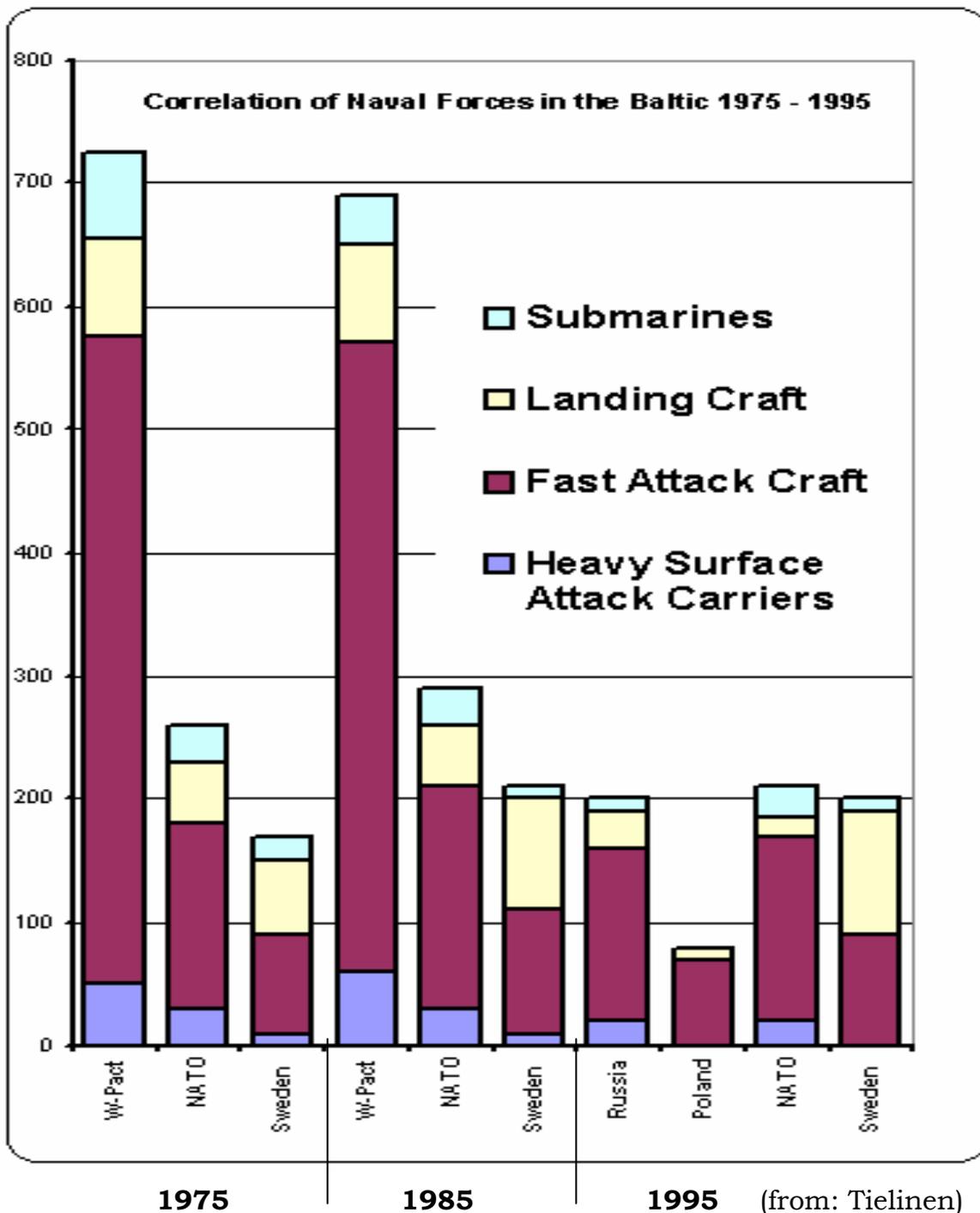
Such a development – Russia resigning its former naval ambitions and staying a continental power – would also be consistent with what is seen as the general trend concerning the Russian navy. A Finnish study, undertaken for the Swedish National Defence Research Establishment (FOA), predicts a long term decline of naval capabilities. For many years, even far beyond 2010, Russian maritime ambitions will remain limited and their naval forces have little global or even regional significance. (Hare Tielinen, *The Russian Navy in Future Perspectives in Swedish*, FOA Stockholm 1998)

Thus, Russian naval pressure on Northern Europe would generally diminish (and with that any possible risk of "invasion" across the sea). This would also, one may assume, make the risk for open confrontations with Norway in the waters of the High North less likely to take place and, above all, to escalate. A recent analysis produced by a Norwegian think-tank, Europa-programmet, *On New Security Structures in Europe Consequences for Norway* (Seminar 1/1999, Oslo; in Norwegian), puts much emphasis on the positive aspects of a new Russian-Norwegian relationship with Norway playing a mediating and go-between role between the West and a Russia which the Norwegians should see less reason to fear but many reasons to cooperate with, also in the Northern Seas.

The following graphs, from Tielinen's aforementioned study, demonstrate first the development of the Soviet and Russian navy from 1975 to an estimate of its inventory of ships in 2015, second the correlation of naval forces between the Warsaw Pact/Russia, NATO and Sweden 1975-95 (Poland added in 1995). Numbers indicate that a "triangular" balance now exists in the Baltic between NATO, Russian and Swedish naval forces. Today, however, the Russians are also outclassed in terms of technology and the quality of manpower by both NATO and the Swedes. The reduction of Russian capabilities is thus even larger than demonstrated by the graphs.

**Russian (Sovjet) Navy Ships (All Fleets)
1975 - 2015**





"Horizontal Escalation" after the End of the Cold War

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been few explicit references to possible "horizontal escalation" scenarios with Russia punishing the High North (or the Nordic Baltic area in general) for setbacks suffered in other places and regions. What conflict in what region could have been of such catastrophic character that the opening by Russia of a new front in the Nordic-Baltic region might have appeared justified and strategically motivated with identifiable rational ends in sight?

This has also – increasingly – been the way to look at the immediate risks for a Russian assault on the Baltic Republics, singly or all together. The economic,

social and political costs involved have been considered forbidding, at least from the perspective of the present Russian regime.

"Rationality" – always a difficult factor to calculate – will thus, supposedly, keep Russian adventurism in check.

One very obvious explanation for this, illustrated by the naval argument, has been the state of weakness of the Russian armed forces, well demonstrated in the Chechnyan conflict and still assumed to be a fact for the next ten years or so given that the military reform process remains a non-starter. In the Baltic case, no one doubts that Russia even today could mobilise resources for an invasion of at least one of the Republics (Latvia being the most obvious target given both the relative weakness of the Latvian armed forces, the size of the Russian speaking minority and the importance of the Latvian ports). However, as already stated, non-military factors are supposed to rule out such a hazardous enterprise.

The point is, thus, not only a question of lack of resources on the part of the Russians; "we" seem to be – almost all of "us" – in a different frame of mind altogether. Russian retaliation, expansion and invasion, or "strikes" and "raids" short of invasion, have come to appear increasingly unimaginable for all sorts of political (economic, democratic, public relations) reasons. Not only could the Russians not do it – they wouldn't.

Here, the assumption would have to be that the West would not push Russia into such a comer that the Russian leadership would see itself having no choice but to strike out – either in the North or some other direction. Views will always differ, depending on where you stand, about what constitutes a "comer". NATO enlargement was by some analysts identified as such a "comer" which would produce everlasting Russian fury, derail the democratic process, and generally destroy everything that had been achieved since Gorbachev took over in 1985. US and UK bombings of Iraq have hardly produced great concerns about Russian retaliation against Baltic Sea states – neither have developments so far in former Yugoslavia, with a protesting Russia being at one and the same time incapable of preventing NATO action and being treated as an important diplomatic actor which NATO has consistently tried to have "on board".

There have, however, been clear indications of Russian unhappiness at being – in a more general sense – pushed around, shoved and "nibbled at" along its borders from intruding American submarines along the Kola coast, to the US-Baltic Charter, NATO-isation of Central and Eastern Europe, to the Black Sea, now "lost" much like the Baltic to the Russians, to Western speculations on Caucasian and Central Asian oil, gas and special relations with former Soviet Republics, and all the way around the globe to worries over the future of the Pacific maritime provinces. This over all concern in Moscow with "erosion" of the one time Eurasian heartland à la Sir Halford Mackinder might be understandable also to non-Russian analysts – although we may choose to interpret history in less ominous, conspiratorial and inevitable terms than one does in Moscow. However, there has been relatively little alarmism in the West about these Russian rumblings – despite Russian declared determination to base the defence of their limes on nuclear deployment to the periphery and on a nuclear strategy not excluding first use. (The decision of the Russian Security Council on April 29 of this year.) "Horizontal escalation", again, has been seen as "out". Still, we should note the Russian reactions.

The question now is whether there are new indications of a changing situation. Should we reconsider our relative ease about the possibility of conflict spreading from outside of Northern Europe into our midst? Has Kosovo or any other single factor – or the combined effects of Kosovo and a number of other factors – made for a new, more dangerous world with rising risks of conflict spill-over and spill-in?

A Different Russia Emerging?

Russian foreign and security policy has undergone substantial change since 1991. Put in simplified terms, the Russian leadership during the first post-Soviet years, with Andrei Kozyrev as foreign minister, seemed both stunned by the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and expectant as to Western initiatives that would bring Russia "into the West", make it a direct and cherished partner joining the ranks of the victors rather than staying outside as a loser. As described in a study done for the Swedish National Defence College by Nadia Arbatova, *Russian Foreign and Security Policy during the 1990's* (to be published as a DSS report in 1999), an abrupt turning point came in 1993 with the realisation that Russia would not become a Western insider and thus a swing began towards an openly nationalist course with a new emphasis in diplomacy and security debate on the "near abroad", Russian "interests" along the (former) rimland, and ambitions to "remake" the lost Union through the CIS.

A new phase begins with the NATO enlargement decision in 1997: now Russia is not only left out but others – former allies and "friends" of Russia – are being brought into the West with possible future candidates discussed who were parts already of the old czarist Russia for centuries, i.e., the Baltic states. Ultimately, Russia accepted the first enlargement process – not with good grace but in lack of other options and on the conditions that there would be no second phase and above all that former Soviet and Russian territory would never be included, and upon NATO's word that the alliance would pose no threat to Russia being a "non-aggressive alliance".

Next phase would then supposedly be the launching of the War over Kosovo – in which NATO, contrary to the Russian "assumptions", turns out to be what under Russian eyes (according to Arbatova) is an "aggressive alliance". Official rhetoric now first jumped to apocalyptic levels – "A New Cold War or even a Third World War is at the gates!" – but quickly backtracked once it became obvious that media, political parties and interest groups were becoming dangerously hysterical and the immediate need arose to control public opinion in order not to be trapped by one's own strategy.

Nonetheless, a new situation seems to have arisen characterised not only by Russian dissatisfaction with and estrangement from the West but now also a direct confrontation. The conflict over Kosovo as such is not the subject of this paper. Here we are concerned with its possible impact upon Northern Europe: Is this – or could it develop into – a crisis and conflict factor in a region far away from the actual war scene?

The War over Kosovo – Impact on Security in Northern Europe?

The basic issue, is whether the Kosovo conflict will signify a genuine shift of Russian strategy with Moscow breaking away from the formula adopted in and

consistently pursued since 1985: The future of the Soviet Union (now Russia) lies in cooperation with the West. This is a fundamental question. As an historian one would probably have to say that only history will tell us if this is so! My argument, however, would be that nothing that has happened so far indicates a break with the 1985 formula. Arbatov notwithstanding, I cannot see that Russia under its present leadership has taken any such leap into the unknown.

On the contrary, I would argue that the behaviour of the present Russian leadership indicates full Moscow awareness of the fact that a break with the West would be a disaster for Russia, which cannot do without the West while the opposite is much less true, but also a clear realisation of the opportunities offered for Russia as an international actor by the impasse in the Kosovo conflict with NATO continuing its bombing campaign with almost no losses but gradually losing the high moral ground because of the rising refugee problem, lack of ground commitment and lack of success so far in breaking the Serbian government's resistance. Russia is not in the game to break with the West but to secure itself that seat at the table of the mighty (i. e., the West) which it had expected to receive in the early 90's through Western generosity ("In victory – magnanimity", as Churchill put it!) but did not get.

Such a Russian strategy, still anchored within the old 1985 formula, is also based on confrontational tactics, overt threats and balance of power manoeuvres in the good old style of the 1800's. From Arbatov's analysis – and Arbatov does not draw the same conclusion as I do that the cooperation strategy is still the basic guideline, logically enough! – there emerges a clear emphasis on a possible link-up between Moscow and the Europeans in order to get us all out of the present mess in the Balkans and in Russian-Western relations. The EU is no villain in Russia's mental map of the Kosovo situation – the danger is NATO (and the United States). The fact that Britain is even more committed than the US and now demands ground forces against Milosevic has not produced anti-British sentiments.

Arbatov is no doubt right in making the connection between NATO enlargement and the subsequent Kosovo War – Russian suspicions from 1997 and before now being confirmed in 1999 – but there are also all sorts of domestic (December elections, possible impeachment of Yeltsin) and international reasons for Russia to play different games in the new situation. Still, breaking with the West is not a desired outcome in any of these games. What we are interested in here, again, is how these Russian strategic games may play out in the Baltic Sea region.

Russian Policies and Strategy towards the Nordic-Baltic Region

In the first place, Russian opposition to any kind of further NATO enlargement is going to be if anything even more determined than ever. This seems likely to lead to NATO toning down immediate candidacies, looking for intermediate measures and additional PFP-like solutions that will also be open to Russia. From the point of view of the Baltic states this will be a clear setback and also, against the background of an increasingly belligerent Russian rhetoric waving nuclear weapons and other drastic arguments, a more dangerous situation for the Baltic states themselves calling for more national armaments with the assistance of, i.a., the Nordic countries. The Baltic

determination to reach the protected havens of both the European Union and NATO will also increase.

On the other hand, one should not rule out a possibility that out of this crisis there may emerge a settlement in Kosovo with the Russians included and with a new Russian relationship to NATO that may, on the contrary, produce a different and more favourable Russian attitude towards a new, "fourth generation" NATO to which Russia is linked in some constructive way. That, however, seems a less likely scenario for the short term future.

At the same time, we must again review the possibilities of Russian retaliation (or "horizontal escalation") against its small and nearest neighbours, the Baltic states. Is the situation now such that our previous rationality argument need no longer apply? Would Russia consider itself having the same "rights" to intervene on an "ethnic" and humanitarian issue in Estonia and Latvia, as the West has done in the Balkans? Would Moscow see a "historical opportunity" for "roll-back" with NATO bogged down in Kosovo?

One cannot rule out such a risk. However, there is nothing in present official policy to suggest that the Russian government is contemplating abandoning the "high moral ground" it is now holding against NATO over Kosovo with all the Alliance mistakes during the bombing campaign so far for the certain condemnation that would result from a Russian attack or raid on the Baltic states. Generally, reactions so far among Russia's other Baltic Sea neighbours have also been very low key to such immediate risks. In the Swedish debate, the Commander-in-Chief and others have tried to connect the Kosovo Crisis with the risks of the deep, cuts now planned for Sweden's national defence establishment but there is no indicatory of a general alarm and rising preparedness for war in the region among the shore states. Such would not have been the case during the Cold War. We may, of course, be wrong – although present wisdom is against such a development, that would also run contrary to my previous argument that the Russians are now seeking a final deal on "admittance to the West" rather than conflict with it.

Second, the Russian view of the European Union may on the other hand become increasingly positive both against the background of a strategy of "dividing the West" and of genuine Russian interests to secure, for the long term future, a Russian special agreement with the Union securing access to markets and technology. This could mean less opposition (perhaps none at all) to EU enlargement involving also the Baltic states.

Third, diplomatic efforts to shape the security environment in the Baltic Sea region are likely to materialise through renewed initiatives along the line offered by President Yeltsin on his visit to Stockholm in December 1997, when he presented his "Zone of Confidence" involving Russia and the "Group of Five", i.e., Finland, Sweden and the three Baltic states. These efforts would thus aim to add to the regional or subregional networking securing Russia special relationships with non-NATO members. In that sense they would also add to the "infrastructural ambiguities" in the region. The Baltic states would no doubt be anxious to secure EU (and NATO) membership before engaging in special relations with Russia, and the two Nordic states have so far demonstrated no interest at all in being identified as members of such a "Group of Five" Still, subregional and regional arrangements would constitute ways of "Europeanising" a Russia still not a member of either EU or NATO –

and the urgency of such Europeanisation will weigh heavily with some political groups in the Nordic countries.

Fourth, Russia's relations with the larger Baltic Sea states, Germany and Poland, will be increasingly important – also against the background of the present tensions over Kosovo and the supposedly new Russian foreign and security policies identified by Arbatova. She herself notes the changing face of Germany under Schröder which "seems fully to have overcome its past", but despite the German role in the Kosovo campaign she is careful not to draw any further conclusions about Germany's future. Russia cannot afford quarrels with all in the West. Efforts to maintain special relationships will certainly be more important than the fury of the moment and diplomatic initiatives will be directed towards the Berlin Republic. Germany is very important to Russia but will also be difficult to pressure. Poland is also a very substantial country in the new Europe, a new and highly loyal NATO member in the Kosovo context, but Poland may also be in a more exposed position, with Russia tempted to play its Byelarussian card. Still, there remains an element of caution in Moscow's newly re-proclaimed love for Belarus and the most likely outcome still seems a continuation of the status quo of distant attachment. (Compare the analysis by Alexander Ruchlja in the April 1999 issue of *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Auslandsinformationen*.)

Fifth, Russia has so far refrained from direct military responses to the Kosovo War. After some early, bloodcurdling proclamations also from President Yeltsin, greater moderation has characterised the official reaction. Russia's proclaimed nuclear doctrine – because of the decline in conventional capabilities Russia has to rely on nuclear weapons and will not hesitate at first use – has been given both publicity and some organisational substance. On other hand, there is no known effort to either make the military reform program immediately airborne, neither do the Russians seem to have tried to initiate the sort of short term military crash programme deemed possible to execute if president, duma and military can agree, but also in the longer term deemed suicidal as it would swallow all resources that might have been available for real reforms and would only produce very limited result for "small campaigns of limited duration". This does not exclude volunteers in large numbers going to Kosovo – but it is hardly going to produce a new military situation in the Baltic Sea region. Such a Russian posture would in all likelihood result in changes of the defence policies of the other shore states, i.e., a regional re-armament process of sorts which the Russians are the very last to be able to afford.

Sixth, there is still the risk that estrangement over Kosovo could produce a long term "drill" between Russia and its neighbours in the Baltic Sea region. This, however, would also seem likely to produce unacceptable results for Russia with the Nordic and Baltic countries moving gradually closer and closer to both the Union and NATO – thus enforcing present trends with Sweden, for example, today closer to NATO than at any time during the Cold War after a remarkable process of pragmatic reorientation through day-to-day practical cooperation with NATO – while still staying within its doctrinal framework of "military nonalignment".

Seventh, and finally, we cannot rule out the possibility of a full scale European catastrophe being the result of Kosovo – not in the shape of a general European war (or even a global conflict given the bombing of the Chinese

embassy in Belgrade) but as a weakening and even breakup of NATO. A full collapse would not be the most likely outcome, to my mind, but a real failure of the NATO system is fully conceivable. Would this lead to sheer chaos, or would it serve as a boost to a "European option" with the Western European great powers marshalling their wits and resources, or would it mean a reshuffled NATO – perhaps even with Russia invited? We cannot possibly know. Present strategy for NATO – as well as for PFP states such as Austria, Finland and Sweden – is to stand fast and bite the bullet. Qui vivra, veyra.

Some Concluding Observations

We have reviewed the indigenous or regional risk and conflict factors in the larger Nordic-Baltic region coming to much the same conclusions as had already been drawn before Kosovo. Everything seems somehow connected with Russia whether we talk about aggression against other states or consequences for stability in the region as a result of internal conflicts, civil wars etc. The impact of Kosovo is also a factor because of Russian linkage rather than anything else. No one can rule out a disastrous development in the Kosovo conflict *per se*, also with the neighbouring states Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Macedonia all collapsing, but this seems less likely have specific Baltic Sea region effects than becoming a general European crisis where we will all surely be involved – but not in new, open or even armed conflicts in the Northern region.

Kosovo has already produced a new German profile; will this translate itself into a new, more pronounced posture in the Baltic Sea region? Difficult to predict – it would seem reasonable to assume a more active German policy in the region but very much with an outstretched hand towards Moscow, rather than German "expansionism" of any kind.

The old strategic controversies in the High North may re-emerge as a consequence of agreements or disagreements on START, but the present tendency is to downplay these risks. Russian present weakness will remain – or be even further accentuated – for considerable time to come.

The possible controversies over natural resources in the High North seems today – also from a Norwegian perspective – less likely than efforts to develop cooperation in the exploitation of these resources. Again, a totally different scenario would be conceivable if a more general European crisis develops along lines already outlined. Still, I would not hold this to be the most likely development.

Other problems should be mentioned. It is possible to imagine a totally new international situation with terrorist activities on a grand scale, with missiles flying into Europe from afar, even bringing weapons of mass destruction to bear on the Europeans in different regions. The Baltic Sea region is favourable located – more so than Southern and Central Europe – if we assume that the threat will come from the south and southeast. Nonetheless, we must consider such freaks and distant risks – which is also a part of the new Swedish "wider security concept" – which might bring almost any international conflict into even remote regions. It is, however, difficult to specify any special crisis and ongoing conflict that might be the cause. At the same time, were such "rains" to come they would end all our assumptions about being able to defend ourselves alone – defence could only be successful through joint, European action.

Richard Betts, American strategist, has elaborated on these problems and the future policies of the United States as a prime target, in a recent *Foreign Affairs* article. His conclusion is that the result will be increasing US reluctance to get involved at all in any but the most serious and "strategic" regional conflicts – in order to avoid putting itself at risk. For us, the smaller states, it may become important to consider what risks our participation in different international operations, involvement in crises in other regions and exposure through having minorities involved in our own countries, could bring. Still, internationalism is a prerequisite for some world order, for a share in the decisions of the international community, and for the maintenance of human rights standards and a humanitarian, national profile.

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