

THE KEY TO PAN-EUROPEAN SECURITY

Charles Kupchan



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■ *What are your expectations from the Russia-NATO summit in Lisbon? Is it a formal meeting, or should we expect some breakthroughs?*

Well, you know, NATO has made it quite clear that one of its key objectives for the summit is to advance its relationship with Russia, and the fact that Medvedev is going to Lisbon, and that NATO will be devoting a significant portion of its time to the issue of rapprochement with Russia suggests that we can expect progress.

I don't think that we will see any breakthroughs, but I do think that what we will see is the articulation of a work plan or a Road Map for a program of cooperation between NATO and Russia, and an upgrade of the NATO-Russia Council, the

main forum, in which discussions take place between Russia and NATO. In my opinion, that forum has been under-performing, and by raising its status and its agenda, NATO and Russia can move in a more constructive direction.

■ *If Russia and NATO manage to one day overcome their animosity, what kind of scenario do you foresee from the following three options: 1) Russia joining NATO, 2) forming a union on the basis of a bilateral treaty, 3) the creation of some kind of coordination council?*

I think that we are still at the beginning of a process of rapprochement between the West and Russia that has two different components – one is the bilateral reset between the United States and Russia, and the other is the emerging discussion between NATO and Russia about how to anchor Russia into the Euro-Atlantic community.

It is too soon to tell how successful these initiatives will be, but I think that by opening this conversation it represents that for the first time since the early nineteen nineties a vision of Russia's place in the post-Cold war settlement is becoming clear and this is a very positive development. Of the options that you mentioned, I think that the most likely and desirable outcome would be for Russia to ultimately join NATO.

This is because I think NATO has already established itself as the primary institution for Euro-Atlantic security, and that means that **if Russia stays outside NATO, it will always be a junior partner, it will always be an outsider. Therefore, I would be more comfortable with a scenario in which Russia ultimately joins NATO and completes the process that NATO**

began in the nineteen nineties of becoming a Pan-European security organization.

■ *Russian President Medvedev has suggested the creation of a European Security Treaty, forming a unique security space in Europe. What does NATO think about this initiative, and are NATO and the European Security Treaty compatible with each other?*

Well, I think that **Medvedev's proposal was very important in indicating to NATO members that Russia is interested in creating a new mechanism for European security.** However, the objectives and the modalities of that proposal remain somewhat vague and I think that the preference for NATO members is to keep NATO at the center of the game, rather than create a situation in which a new institution could threaten the efficacy of the alliance.

Consequently, I think the more realistic approach to building a Pan-European security order is to continue with the expansion of NATO. Moreover, I think that this is particularly important because of the discomfort that continues to exist in Central Europe about Russian intentions and some of the residual concerns in the United States and Western Europe about how reliable a partner Russia will be. As a result of these residual concerns, I think that Western countries will want to move cautiously through the NATO framework rather than to move quickly to create some institution that could ultimately be put above NATO. ■

Charles Kupchan was speaking with Yulia Netesova