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THE FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPT OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract:

On 14 March the English version of the new "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" was released. This document, signed by Vladimir Putin on 12 February, establishes the basis of the external action of Russia at least until 2018, and replaces the one endorsed by Dmitry Medvedev in July 2008, which is the successor of the Concept approved by Putin in 2000 during his first presidential term. The comparative study of the three Concepts illuminates the main lines of Russian foreign action and how the Kremlin perceives changes in world geopolitics.

Resumen:

El 14 de marzo se ha publicado la versión en inglés del nuevo "Concepto de Política Exterior de la Federación de Rusia". Este documento, firmado por Vladimir Putin el pasado 12 de febrero, sienta las bases de la actuación exterior de Rusia al menos hasta 2018, y reemplaza al aprobado por Dimitri Medvedev en julio de 2008, sucesor a su vez del Concepto que Putin formuló en el año 2000 durante su primera presidencia. El estudio comparativo de los tres Conceptos permite identificar las líneas maestras de la acción exterior rusa y el modo en que el Kremlin percibe los cambios en la geopolítica mundial.

Keywords:

Russia, foreign policy, security, West, Asia-Pacific.

Palabras clave:

Rusia, política exterior, seguridad, Occidente, Asia-Pacífico.

***NOTE:** The authors of the **Framework Documents** are responsible for the ideas contained therein, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion from the IEEE or the Ministry of Defence.

THE MAIN GOALS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF RUSSIA

The "Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" of 2013, as it is stated in its introduction, consists of a systematic description of the basic principles, priorities and goals of that policy, a similar definition to the one used in the 2000 and 2008 editions. The main structure of the three documents is compared in the following Table in several sections:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
- General principles	- General provisions	- General provisions
- Modern world and foreign policy of the Russian Federation	- Modern world and foreign policy of the Russian Federation	- Foreign policy of the Russian Federation and modern world
- Priorities for the Russian Federation in the resolution of global issues	- Priorities for the Russian Federation to face global issues	- Priorities for the Russian Federation to face global issues
- Regional priorities	- Regional priorities	- Regional priorities
- Design and start-up of foreign policy of the Russian Federation	- Designing and starting up the foreign policy of the Russian Federation	- Development and implementation of foreign policy of the Russian Federation

Table 1: Concept Structure

As reflected, there are hardly any differences in the titles, which induce us to believe that it is a well-established document that makes its comparison with the successive editions easier.

The approach of the general principles/provisions is also pretty similar, as after mentioning the legal references of the document (such as the 1993 Constitution and the rest of the federal legislation), there is one paragraph that states the main changes at international level, as the engine and main cause for the elaboration of a new Concept. The principle that guides the foreign action of the Federation is the following:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
To protect citizens' and society's interests.	Protection of citizens', society's and State's interests.	To Guarantee the protection of citizens', society's and State's interests.

Table 2: Main goal of the foreign policy of Russia

Therefore, the main goal in the foreign action of Russia is also formulated in very similar terms in the three documents, being the novelty that, in 2000, there was no reference to the State's interests. This reflects the continuous reinforcement of the government's power, with concepts such as "Sovereign Democracy" or the vertical structure of power and the recovery of the control of strategic resources —such as energy— that the chaotic period of Yeltsin left in the hands of a few oligarchs. It is also in line with the Russian traditional political culture, in which the interests of citizens were always sacrificed for what was understood as the State's supreme interest.

As a consequence, the first differences must be looked for in the identification of the objectives derived from that main priority, ordered by importance in the following table:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
- Improve the safety of the country, preserve its territorial sovereignty and integrity, getting a standing position in the international community, consistent with Russian interests as a great power and as one of the most influential centres, necessary for its political, economic, intellectual and spiritual growth	- Improve the safety of the country, preserve its territorial sovereignty and integrity, getting a standing position in the international community that meets Russian interests as a great power and as one of the most influential centres, necessary for its political, economic, intellectual and spiritual growth	- Guarantee the safety of the country, protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty, ensuring its standing position in the international community as one of the influential and competitive poles in today's world
- Have influence on global processes to form a new world order that will be stable, fair and democratic, according to the standards of the international legislation (in particular, those of the UN)	- Have influence on global processes to form a new world order that will be fair and democratic, based on collective solutions on international issues, according to the in-force legislation, in particular of the UN, as it has a unique legitimacy	- Actively promote world peace, security and stability, to set up a fair and democratic system of IR based on collective decisions on global issues, giving priority to the international legislation (in particular of the UN)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create external conditions that are positive for Russia's development, improve its economy and the living conditions of its citizens, carry out successful democratic transformations and respect individual rights and freedoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create external conditions that are positive for Russia's modernization, the innovative transformation of its economy, the improvement of living conditions, the strengthening of its society, its constitutional system, its justice and its democratic institutions, the respect of individual rights and freedoms and, in that way, guarantee Russia's competitiveness in a global word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create external conditions that are positive for a continuous and dynamic growth of Russia's economy and its technological update, to improve the quality of life, strengthen justice and democratic institutions and guarantee Human Rights (HR) and freedoms - Strengthen Russia's positions in the world trade and economic system, using diplomacy to avoid the discrimination against Russian products, services and investments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a close environment of good neighbourhood along Russian frontiers, to remove any trouble spot and prevent other from appearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a good relationship with neighbouring States, help to remove any trouble spot and prevent others from appearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a good relationship with neighbouring States, help to remove any trouble spot and prevent other from appearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for similar interests with other States and international organizations, respecting Russia's national priorities, and build an alliance and association system that improves international cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look for similar interests with other States and international organizations, respecting Russia's national priorities, and built a bilateral and multilateral association system that ensures the country stability facing the volatility of the international policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop bilateral and multilateral associative relationships, beneficial to both sides, with other States, international organizations and forums based on respect for independence and sovereignty, pragmatism, predictability and protection of interests that avoid confrontation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defend, in every possible way, rights and interests of Russians and compatriots abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prove a global protection of legitimate rights and interests of Russians and compatriots abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prove a global protection of legitimate rights and interests of Russians and compatriots abroad
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a positive view of Russia in the world, and popularize its language and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote an objective image of Russia as a democratic State committed to a market economy and an independent foreign policy - Promote and protect the Russian language and culture abroad, as this is a contribution to the diversity of civilizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the Russian language and strengthen its world position by showing Russia's achievements - Provide a development of a constructive dialog among civilizations

Table 3: Main goals of the foreign policy of Russia

This formulation of the derivative goals allows a deeper analysis, as the continuity over time of some of them reflects the Russian strategic culture, its particular view of the world and the way this country pretends to assert its national interests, whereas the changes from one document to another reflect the adaptation of Russia's foreign policy to a variable strategic environment.

The first goal is related to the traditional concept of security of any sovereign state, whose main responsibility is to protect its population and to guarantee its own survival. One relevant aspect in the case of Russia is that, despite its size and major power condition, there is really a perception of security deficit, based on traumatic historical experience because of the invasions suffered from the West. Its appeals to its territorial integrity are very far from the simple rhetoric given the five million km² that Russia lost in 1992 with regard to the USSR, and to internal secessionist movements, such as the North Caucasus movement.

Another important aspect is that, if in the year 2000 it was said "*getting a standing position*", in the year 2008 it was said "*getting a strengthening position*". That change in the discourse is explained because during the first presidency of Putin (2000-2004), Russia mainly used soft power tools for its relationship with its neighbours, and looked for cooperation with the West on issues of common interest, whereas during its second presidency (2004-2008), its relationships with the near abroad were mainly based on the hard power coercion and there were stressed situations with US and its allies.

On the other hand, the 2000 and 2008 appeals to the nature of Russia's major power and to its establishment as one of the poles of world reference reflect exactly that such status was lost in the Yeltsin period, whereas the 2013 Concept was focused on the need to consolidate the progress already reached since then.

If the first goal is related to the internal strengths and weaknesses of Russia, the second is focused on the opportunities and threats from its environment. Moscow's position is pretty clear: active participation in the definition of a stable and fair world order, and collective solutions for common challenges, but always under the legality provided by the UN. The appeals to the central role of the Security on the maintenance of world peace and security,

this being a forum in which Russia is a permanent seat with right of veto, are a constant in the whole 2013 Concept.

The third goal is related to the economy, as the Kremlin considers its external action might have an influence on the internal development. This view is also influenced by the 90s socioeconomic legacy, as when Putin arrived to power in 2000, Russians did not even have their basic needs guaranteed, so the respect of Human Rights and freedoms is always mentioned after the improvements of living conditions. One change in 2013 is that there is one particular section dedicated to the preservation of Russian companies' interests abroad, not least because of the EU legislation, such as the "Thirds Energy Package", that Moscow considers to be discriminatory.

The fourth goal does not change: the relationship of good neighbourhood with bordering States (most of them being former Soviet Republics) and the progress in the resolution of "frozen conflicts". The idea that Russia promoted the appearance of these conflicts for its own benefit when the USSR disappeared is widely extended. Nevertheless, nothing could be further from the truth, as the instability across its frontiers has damaged its own safety and economic development and, the fact that this country was bonded to intervene in the 90s to impose commitment solutions to the conflict parties due to the indifference from the West, has weakened its international position over time.

The fifth main goal also remains unchanged and reflects a liberal-institutionalist view from International Relations, when understanding them as a game of variable sum in which all parties can benefit from the cooperation on issues of common interest. The organizations promoted by Moscow in the post-Soviet area, such as the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are good examples, although the disproportionate burden of Russia in such organizations makes its role hegemonic when defining these common interests.

The sixth goal is also permanent and has its origin during the end of the Cold War, when the USSR disintegration meant, in addition to the aforementioned territorial lost, that over 20 million ethnic Russians stayed out of the new Federation's frontiers, suddenly becoming

residents in other independent States. In some of them, such as Kazakhstan or Lithuania, there was an almost exemplary integration of those minorities, but in other cases, such as Estonia and Latvia, the segregation of ethnic Russians, that have neither citizenship nor basic rights, such as the right to vote, unless they go on a process of "naturalization" has been perpetuated.

It is quite relevant to bear this matter in mind, as Russia has followed a policy of providing Russian passports to residents in other States, so that they can become citizens of the Federation. However, Russia is also willing to use every tool to protect not only those citizens, but also any ethnic Russian whose rights or interests are considered to be threatened. Russian society's sensibility about this issue is quite important, and it exacerbates the chances of conflict with neighbouring countries.

Finally, the seventh goal is also related to the soft power tools, such as promoting Russian language and culture, which are considered an intangible asset of the country and a bond with the neighbouring states that once were part of the Empire (Russian language is in the seventh place in the classification by number of native speakers). The novelty in 2013 is the reference to the need of a constructive dialog among civilizations, in a moment in which the Russian internal situation seems to become worse in this aspect, as the Islamic radicalism present for decades in the North Caucasus is expanding to Muslim republics from the Middle Volga Region.

RUSSIAN'S WORLDVIEW:

Continuing with the Concept structure, in the three editions there is one section in which the Kremlin's view from the rest of the world is detailed, in terms of opportunities and threats for Russia. Regarding the first lines, the most relevant are the following:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International Relations (IR) transformation, end of confrontation, removal of the consequences from the Cold War - Threat of a nuclear conflict reduced to minimum - Less role for military power - Majority of States respect market economy and democratic values - Scientific and technological progress, development of information society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drastic IR transformation, end of ideological confrontation, overcoming of Cold War legacy - Reduction of threat from global conflict, nuclear included - Policy of blocs replaced by diplomatic networks, flexible ways of cooperation, combined solutions to common issues - Economic independence among States, growing relevance of non-military factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IR transition, creation of a polycentric system - Reduction of West ability to control international politics and economy - Reduced risk of large scale war, nuclear included - Traditional political-military alliances replaced by flexible cooperation in multilateral frameworks, effective solutions to common challenges - Economic, legal, scientific, environmental, demographic and information technological factors as important as military power

Table 4: Setting opportunities for Russia

As seen in 2000 and even in 2008, overcoming consequences from the Cold War and the bipolar system continued to be referred to, whereas in 2013 it is confirmed the appearance of a new world order based on numerous power poles, principally motivated by the progressive loss of the relative importance of the West (the US and the EU). What it is important is that Russia sees itself as one of those power poles, willing to cooperate with the rest of the world facing the common challenges, but in any case it contemplates an integration in organizations such as NATO or the EU, unlike happened during the first part of the 1990s.

Even so, given the aforementioned security deficit that Russia perceives invariably and the mainly reactive nature of its policy facing external events, the interpretation of the following concepts about the regional threats are much more significant. The most relevant points are found in the following table:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
- Tendency to establish a unipolar structure of the world, political and economic control of the US Unilateral actions destabilizing international situations, provoking tension and potential arms races and aggravating conflicts among States	- Different interpretations of meaning and consequences from the end of Cold War Competence among different value systems and development patterns Western reaction to its loss of power is stated in policy of "contention" facing Russia	- Incomplete recovery of European economy after crisis in Euro zone implies severe future risks, competence growing for strategic resources, value hierarchy imposition of a civilization leads to xenophobia, intolerance and IR tension
- Western institutions replace UN to safeguard international security Use of force without respecting legal mechanics does not solve deep causes of conflicts	- Unilateral action strategy leads to destabilization, provokes tension and arms races, aggravates differences, exacerbates ethnic and religious arguments, endangers the rest of States' safety	- Crisis management throughout unilateral sanctions and coercive measures, out of the Security Council framework, and protection of population as an excuse to interfere in sovereign States, do not solve deep causes and perpetuate conflicts
- Political-military rivalry among regional powers, separatism and religious extremism, baseless interference on internal issues from the States, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of launch capabilities, regional conflicts, international terrorism, racketeering, drug and arms trafficking	- International terrorism, drug trafficking, racketeering, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of launch capabilities, regional conflicts, demographic problems, global poverty, illegal immigration and climate change	- Proliferation of WMD and their means of launch capabilities, international terrorism, uncontrolled arms trafficking, radicalization, religious extremism, ethnic tensions, illegal migrations, maritime piracy, drug trafficking, corruption, regional conflicts, shortages of basic commodities, demography, global poverty, environmental and health challenges, climate change, threats to information and food safety

Table 5: Setting threats for Russia

It seems obvious that the Russian dissatisfaction about the world and regional safety order appeared after the Cold War when understanding that the US defended its condition as the only superpower to unilaterally solve conflicts, displacing the UN Security Council where major powers like Russia or China can restrict the exercise of such indisputable military supremacy. To understand this view, we must remember the historical moment when each Concept was formulated:

- In 2000, NATO had just approved a new Strategic Concept in the Washington Summit stating in April 1999, which endorsed management crisis operations out of the

established geographic area in Art. 6 of its Treaty; in the same Summit the three first States from the former Communist camp were incorporated to the Alliance (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary), beginning an extension that in 1990 was guaranteed to the USSR that would have never occurred; and from April to June 1999, NATO carried out an air strike campaign against Serbia due to the Kosovo crisis, without counting on the previous consent of the UN Security Council.

- In 2008, the Iraq occupation continued with a multinational coalition led by the US, whose invasion of the country in 2003 had been rejected by the UN Security Council not only by Russia and China, but also by allies such as France and Germany; the promotion policy of Western values had led Washington to support the "Colour Revolutions" in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005), after which leaders clearly hostile to Russia came to power; and the US installation program of its missile defence shield close to its Russian frontiers was perceived in the Kremlin as a threat to its nuclear deterrence.
- In 2013, the reaction facing the "Arab Spring" divides the international community in two halves, since Russia and China consider that the West stepped out of the line with its armed actions which led to the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi's regime in Libya, taking advantage of the fact that their abstention in the Security Council authorized the adoption of the Resolution 1973/2011, and they are not willing to let the same pattern in Syria to be repeated under the excuse of the "responsibility to protect" in order to take part in the internal issues of a sovereign State.

Apart from the permanent appeals to avoid unilateral decisions out of the UN framework, in 2008 the mention to the Western "contention" policy of Russia, given that the other constant of Russia's strategic culture is the strategic siege feeling, increased as a result of the "Colour Revolutions" during this period in its area of special interest, forcing it to attempt to

form a glaxis of allied states which distance it from those potential threats. The view that the EU economic and financial crisis presents a risk for Russia is also relevant.

Regarding the catalogue of threats to international security, its continuity over time and its wide spectrum is confirmed when including many of non-conventional nature. In addition, it should be pointed out the complete coincidence with threats identified by EU in its 2003 Strategy and in the 2008 monitoring report, which should make cooperation easier to face them in the common neighbourhood.

In relation to NATO, its 1999 Strategic Concept wrongly underestimated the threat of international terrorism, whereas it highlighted a potential conventional attack on a large scale referring to Russia in the middle of the crisis due to the Kosovo campaign. Although the new 2010 Strategic Concept from NATO has already aligned the threats' catalogue with the one of the EU and Russia, the mutual lack of confidence within the relationship between Russia and the Atlantic Alliance makes doubtful the cooperation when facing them.

After establishing the general principles of the foreign policy and detailing the Russian view of the world, the three Concepts determine Russia's priorities to face this strategic environment. In any case, it is the longest section of the document, which gives an idea of the level of detail with which the Kremlin determined its future foreign action, divided at the same time in the following subsections:

2000 Concept	2008 Concept	2013 Concept
- Creating a new world order	- The emergency of a new world order	- Emergency of a new world order
	- The supremacy of the legislation in International Relations	- The empire of the legislation in International Relations
- Strengthening international security	- Strengthening international security	- Strengthening international security
- International economic relations	- Economic and environmental international cooperation	- International cooperation in the realm of the economy and environment
- Human Rights and International Relations	- International humanitarian cooperation and Human Rights	- International humanitarian cooperation and Human Rights
- Information support to foreign policy actions	- Information support to foreign policy actions	- Information support to foreign policy actions

Table 6: Russia's priorities to face global issues

As it can be seen once again, there is a clear continuity in the structure of the Concept. The first point reflects the Russian perception which is that, on the one hand, since the end of the Cold War the world order is in permanent evolution, and, on the other hand, that the character of the European security system is unfinished:

- In 2000, it was stated that the UN should remain as the main centre for regulation of the international relations in the 21st century: a strict adherence to the principles of its Chart (including the status of the five permanent members of the Security Council) should be maintained, a reform to respond quickly to crises and conflicts should be made, the Security Council should be boosted increasing its representativeness with the incorporation of developing countries as new permanent members. Russia attaches great importance to its participation in the G-8.
- References to the UN are reiterated in 2008 defining it as an organization for which there is no alternative, because of its legitimacy, and besides from the G-8, other formats such as the “troika” (Russia-India-China) or BRIC (Brazil-Russia-India-China) are mentioned as forums to manage global development and establish regulatory frameworks.
- References to the UN are reiterated in 2013 and the cooperation formats mentioned above join the G-20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

What was new in 2008 from 2000 was the introduction of a paragraph about the primacy of law in international relations. At this stage of tension with the West, Russia said being ready to counteract the efforts of individual countries, or groups of countries, to review the basic rules of international law to arbitrarily interpret precepts as non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the right of people to self-determination. In 2013, the same exact arguments are reiterated with a special mention to the fact that it is not acceptable to intervene militarily in another State under the principle of the “responsibility to protect”. Also, it is mentioned in 2008 and 2013

the need to secure the land and sea borders of the Federation, still unfinished task since 1992.

The third priority, “Strengthening of the international security”, is the one which is developed in greater detail in accordance with the lines listed in the following table:

Concept of 2000	Concept of 2008	Concept of 2013
- Reduction of the role of force in IR and simultaneous reinforcement of the strategic and regional stability.	- Reduction of the role of force in IR and simultaneous reinforcement of the strategic and regional stability.	- Reduction of the role of force in IR at the same time that the strategic and regional stability is promoted.
- Regulation to reduce the nuclear arsenal based on the bilateral agreements with the U.S.	- Negotiation with nuclear powers to reduce strategic offensive weapons up to minimal necessary level with the objective support strategic stability.	- Key importance of the implementation of the Agreement with U.S. towards reduction of strategic offensive weapons.
- Collaboration with other States to fight against proliferation of WMD.	- Policy of development of multilateral agreements towards non-proliferation of WMD and its means of launch.	-Reaffirmation of the policy of development of legal and political frames against proliferation of WMD and its means of launch, strengthening of nuclear security.
	- Collective solution to potential threatens of missiles against Europe, rejection of unilateral attempts of development and deployment of new systems as antiballistic shields.	- Against arbitrary construction of a system of defence that mines strategic stability.
- Reinforcement of regional stability with limitation of conventional FFAA and measures of mutual confidence in the military sphere.	- Reinforcement of regional stability in Europe with limitation of the conventional FFAA and measures of mutual confidence in the military sphere, principle of equal security for all parts.	- Fulfilment of international agreements of control of weapons and measures of mutual confidence in the military sphere, principles of equality and indivisibility of security.
- Active participation in maintenance missions of peace of the UN and regional/sub regional organizations.	- “ <i>Peacemaking</i> ” as an effective tool to solve armed conflicts, increase of Russian participation in the UN missions and regional/sub regional organizations.	- Intention of taking part in the international activities of peace construction in the UN frame and regional organizations, precise mandates of maintenance of peace that aren’t open to arbitrary interpretation.

- Unilateral use of force under concepts such as the one of humanitarian intervention that without agreement of the UN isn't acceptable.	- Only the Security Council can authorize the use of force to impose peace. Art. 51 UN letter as legal base of the self-defence including the fight against terrorism and proliferation.	- Art. 51 UN letter as legal base of the self-defence including the fight against terrorism and proliferation.
- Russia will take part in response to natural disasters as well as in humanitarian assistance.	- Support of mechanisms of response to natural or provoked catastrophes and other emergencies.	- Support of establishment of efficient institutions of response to natural or provoked disasters, global systems of management.
- The most important task of the foreign policy of Russia is fighting against international terrorism.	- The most important task of foreign and interior policy of Russia is fighting against international terrorism, systematic use of all the tools.	- Crucial task of foreign and interior policy is fighting against international terrorism, all kinds of measures to avoid assaults against Russia and its citizens.
- Russia will fight against illegal traffic of drugs and the growth of organized crime.	- Efforts against traffic of drugs and organized crime, cooperation with other States.	- Permanent fight against traffic of drugs and organized crime.
	- As a multidemonational State, to facilitate dialog among cultures, religions and civilizations.	- As multinational and multidemonational State, facilitate dialog among cultures, religions and civilizations.

Table 7: Strengthening measures of international security

Once again, a clear continuity can be seen in the Russian approaches: reduction of the role of military power; support to peacekeepers of the UN and regional organizations; primacy of the Security Council to authorize the use of force; right to legitimate self-defence under article 51; don't justify in any case humanitarian interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States; transnational networks of management of natural or man-made disasters; the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of launching, within the framework of the multiple existing international treaties; and fight against drug trafficking and organized crime.

Other measures require a more detailed analysis. For example, a new Russia nuclear arsenal reduction isn't that predictable, since the START III signed with the U.S. in 2010 already fixed a few levels close to what Moscow considers the minimum necessary to maintain strategic stability. The explanation is that, due the evident supremacy of U.S. conventional forces, only nuclear deterrence preserves the status of Russia as a great military power. Also this is the reason why in the concepts of 2008 and 2013 the Kremlin manifests itself vehemently

against the deployment by NATO of a ballistic missile shield near its borders, something that has become one of the main obstacles in the relationship with the West.

In terms of the limitation of conventional forces and mutual confidence-building measures agreements, developed mainly in the framework of the OSCE, it should be recalled that Russia suspended its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in 2007 as a way to protest against the non-ratification of the modified Treaty by the West, Treaty which was agreed at the Istanbul Summit of the OSCE in 1999. At the same time, Western States argue that the non-ratification responds to non-compliance of Russian with the agreement of that Summit, regarding the withdrawal of its troops from Moldova and Georgia, and in 2012 also suspended compliance with the original Treaty.

It is also relevant the constant reference to the fight against international terrorism, which in the concept of 2000 was already defined as the fundamental task of Russian foreign policy, something that underlines the importance given to this issue because of the situation that was taking place in Northern Caucasus. At that time, Russian appeals to international cooperation against Islamist radical movements were falling on deaf ears, and in some countries was maintained an ambiguous posture regarding the Chechens, despite their links with Al-Qaeda and the support provided by the Taliban from Afghanistan. As it is well known, the attacks of 9/11 of 2001 have highlighted how wrong was taking that position.

On the other hand, in terms of cooperation on economic and environmental matters, Russia pursues a development based on innovation, as well as to minimize the risks of its recent entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) and its future incorporation into the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). There is a tendency towards protectionism (although the Kremlin claims that international rules should be respected), that can hinder the objective of modernising and diversifying the economy, and Russia is willing to protect their businesses against trade policies of other States that may infringe their rights.

Another constant in the three documents are the appeals to attract foreign investment in key sectors of the economy, although in 2013 joins also attract advanced scientific knowledge, technology and business experience. This ties in with the Russian need to modernize many sectors, such as energy or transport, whose infrastructure come in many cases of the Soviet state, as well as the objectives of the "Partnership for the modernization" signed with the EU in 2010, with limited results. The three concepts referred to the need to fight climate change, while the 2013 recalls the character of bridge between Europe and Asia by stating that Russia must become a key transit country in the trade between the two regions, with its inclusion in the new transport corridors.

In terms of international humanitarian cooperation and human rights, in 2013 Russia says it will work to secure them through a constructive dialogue, that take into account the ethnic, cultural, and historical of each State, while in 2008 there was talk of preventing double standards and respect the national and historical peculiarities of each State in the process of democratic transformations without imposing foreign values. The confrontation in this field with the United States, who Russia accused of interfering to convenience in the internal affairs of certain States under the excuse of the promotion of its principles, while in geographical areas such as the Persian Gulf those principles are clearly subordinated to other political and economic interests.

Finally, in all the concepts there is a long reference to the protection of the legitimate rights of Russians living abroad, ensuring that they can preserve their cultural and ethnic identity as well as to the promote their language and culture in the world. It will also be against the manifestations of extremism, neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, and it will enhance the dialogue among civilizations, all supported by an appropriate information strategy and a network of public diplomacy that serves to improve the image of Russia in the world.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES IN RUSSIA

A paragraph about regional priorities of Russia from the Kremlin is particularly revealing because it sheds light on the eternal debate of their Europeanness and, also, because it sets clear political objectives that are related to each region and even to individual States. The order in which the various regions of the world in each concept are mentioned is the following:

Concept of 2000	Concept of 2008	Concept of 2013
-Commonwealth of independent States (CIS): Customs Union, the Treaty on collective security,	-Commonwealth of independent States (CIS): EurAsEC, CSTO, SCO	-CIS: CSTO, EurAsEC, Eurasian Economic Union, Ukraine, Moldova, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and Georgia, South Ossetia
-The Caspian Sea region	-Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions	-Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions
-European States: OSCE, Council of Europe, EU, NATO, Western Member States, Central and Eastern, Baltic, Balkans. USA	-Euro--Atlantic region: Council of Europe, OSCE, EU, Western States Centre, this and Southeast Europe, Baltic, NATO, USA, Canada	-Euro-atlantics States: EU, Western Member States, Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO, Baltic, Balkans, USA, Canada, Arctic
-Asia: Asia-Pacific economic cooperation forum, ASEAN, "Shanghai Five", China, India, Pakistan, Japan, Southeast Asia, Iran, Korea Peninsula, Afghanistan	-Asia Pacific: Forum of economic cooperation, ASEAN, OSC, China, India, Japan, Turkey, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya, Pakistan, Southeast Asia, Korea Peninsula, Iran, Afghanistan	-Asia Pacific: SCO Forum APEC, ASEAN, Forum Asia-Europe, China, India, Korea Peninsula, Japan, Mongolia, Viet Nam, Australia, New Zealand
-Middle East, Gulf Persian, North Africa	-Middle East: Palestine-Israel, League of Arab States	-Middle East and North Africa: Iran, Palestine-Israel, League of Arab States, Afghanistan
-Africa: Organization for African Unity (OAU)	-Africa: African Union	-Latin America: Brazil (BRICS), Argentina, Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, MERCOSUR
-Latin America: Central and South America	-Latin America: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, other countries	-Africa: African Union

Table 8: Regional priorities of Russia

Besides the anecdotal struggle between Africa and Latin America to avoid the "Red Lantern", the progressive rise of Venezuela in the Latin American ranking or the questionable location from the geographical point of view of one or another State, this regional vision of the foreign policy of Russia allows us to perform the following analysis:

- The CIS (not all the former Soviet republics belong to this organization) is the priority area of action for Russia. This is because we aren't talking about countries conquered during the time of the Soviet Union, but most of these countries had been part of the Tzarist Empire for centuries and in they remained ethnic Russians after independence, while others such as Ukraine and Belarus are part of the historic core of the Russian identity. In the so-called "near abroad" or "area of special interest", Moscow has tried to implement various regional cooperation initiatives, but unable to encompass all the republics has decided to cooperate with the ones that are more favourable which are basically Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- Russia considers itself a European State that is why dedicates much more attention to its relationship with the West than with the East. The EU has been scaling positions and is already perceived by Russia as the key player in the continent. Priority is given to the OSCE, involving all Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian States, instead to the NATO in designing the architecture of European security, and U.S. is always named at the end of the heading, despite their status as sole superpower.
- They are committing to multilateral cooperation frameworks and the regionalization of security in all geographical areas, but without forgetting that the sovereign nation States continue to play a key role in the international relations.

Moreover, in the concept of 2013 the CIS is considered as the framework in which to preserve the cultural heritage and the common civilization, in which to guarantee the rights of the Russian diasporas, and in which to face new risks and threats, especially those coming from the South Caucasus and Asia Central, although for this particular situation the CSTO is the useful tool. Frozen conflicts such as Transdniestria (Moldova) and Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan-Armenia), in whose negotiation processes Russia is fully involved, and expressly supports Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which unlike the previous have been recognized by Moscow as independent States, are mentioned. This greatly complicates the alleged

normalization of relations with Georgia as, despite the arrival in Government of the "Georgian Dream" of Ivanishvili (with more conciliatory positions towards Russia), Tbilisi will never renounce to restore its sovereignty over those territories.

To the West, Russia always advocates for a trilateral partnership with the EU and the U.S based on deep-shared links. In the case of Europe, because the aim is the formation of a common economic and human space from the Atlantic to the Pacific, Russia tries to go even further. The development of the four 'common spaces' with the EU (economy; freedom, security and justice; exterior security; research and education) would move toward that model, in which the OSCE is useful to build an indivisible security system. However, the role of NATO is perceived as negative to achieve those goals, and though it leaves the door open to cooperation on specific issues, the Kremlin reiterated his opposition to the expansion of the Atlantic Alliance, as it perpetuates the dividing lines.

To the East, Russia perceives that rapid geopolitical development in the area and shifting towards the centre of it of the world economy represents an opportunity for Siberia and the Far East. The importance of China, with which on the one hand, coordinates actions in Central Asia through the OCS, and on the other hand develops an active bilateral cooperation in all fields, is clear in that geographical area. In the three Concepts, there is a reference to India, main customer of Russian defence companies, and the need for cooperation of the Russia-China-India triangle, ends up being something difficult because of the historical disputes between Beijing and New Delhi. Japan always occupies a discrete third position, in part because the perennial dispute over sovereignty of the southern Kuril, and in the case of Korea, the political dialogue and economic cooperation between Seoul and Pyongyang is advocated, and also a non-nuclear status of the Peninsula.

Moreover, in the three Concepts it is mentioned the concern of Russia about the instability in Afghanistan, especially in 2013 due to the possible consequences for Central Asia of the Western withdraw (scheduled for 2014), in terms of growth of Islamist terrorism and of illicit traffics. With regard to the Middle East, it is of special interest the Concept of 2013 because of the different point of view of the crisis in Syria in comparison to the point of view of the

West. Russia seeks to contribute to the stability of the region, but based on the respect for the sovereignty, the territorial integrity of States, and the no-intervention in its internal affairs. Also, it is committed to a negotiated settlement of the Iranian nuclear crisis with full respect for the regulatory regimes in force as the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

CONCLUSIONS

The first conclusion that can be drawn from this comparative study of the three Concepts is that there is a clear continuity in the basic lines of Russian foreign policy, as they were with the arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yevgeny Primakov in 1996. The identical structure of the documents and the reiteration of positions in front of the various challenges and actors on the international scene aren't a sign of lack of new ideas, but the evidence of a very consolidated model, a clear definition of its national interests, and how they should be defended.

Thus, issues are highlighted such as the formulation of a broad concept of security, which in addition to traditional defence takes into account economic and human factors; the fervent defence of the U.N. Security Council as the only legitimate body to authorize the use of force for the maintenance of peace and security; the identification of a wide range of threats which doesn't include a conflict on a large scale; the vision of a progressively multi-polar world in which West loses importance and the geopolitical axis moves to the Pacific; and the supremacy of the sovereignty of the States against the right of interference by third countries due to humanitarian reasons.

Given that feature, which the Concept itself describes as predictable, of the Russian foreign policy, the task of identifying possible areas of cooperation with Moscow remains in the hands of the rest of the poles of power. Quoting the speech of the then German Chancellor Schroeder in the Munich Security Conference in 2005 in which he said that "one of the fundamental truths of the European policy is that the security of our continent cannot be achieved without Russia, or certainly against it", there is no doubt that the EU is the international actor with greater interests of all types in the relationship with Russia.

In fact, membership of the European common civilization, despite all the peculiarities that the thousand-year history of Russia has introduced in its political culture, would facilitate cooperation at one much higher level than the current one. Even from a purely pragmatic point of view, the complete coincidence in the catalogue of threats would be reason enough to reinforce the "common space" of external security, and the two-way relationship in the field of energy, with the EU in need of supplies from stable countries and Russia in need of customers willing to pay the amounts required to renew its economics, it should be another incentive for the strategic partnership.

However, it is easy to see that this relationship is not so positive. On the side of the EU, the incorporation in 2004 of 10 new States, mainly from the former Communist bloc and supporters of confrontation with Moscow, has greatly hampered relations with Russia, to the point that the "Partnership and Cooperation Agreement" expired in 2007 has not been able to be renewed. In addition, the European Commission has produced some legislation, such as the 'third energy package', very harmful to Russian interests, and the European Parliament regularly adopts resolutions of condemnation of Russia, to demand a democratic pedigree not contemplated in the relations with other regions.

For this reason, Russia has been favouring bilateral relations with some Western States, such as Germany or France, against the whole of the EU. On the other hand, the recovery of the great power status lost in the 1990s has led Russia more and more to a position of strength, both in its near abroad and in front of the EU, which has also coincided with the adoption of internal measures of authoritarian character after Putin's return to the Kremlin. To begin to reverse that situation, it would be good to cooperate in the resolution of some of the 'frozen conflicts' in the common neighbourhood, in particular that of Transdniestria in Moldova.

Meanwhile, in the case of U.S, that coincidence of interests doesn't happen, so that cooperation with Russia is based on more pragmatic criteria. In the first Obama administration, "reset" of relations had a major success with the signing of START III, but as already mentioned, it seems unlikely that Russia wants to further reduce its nuclear arsenal. In addition, the issue of the anti-missile shield is far from having been resolved, and

represents an obstacle of importance in the bilateral relationship. It would be important that the US founded some common ground with Russia in the redefinition of the European security architecture in the context of the OSCE "Helsinki+40" process, rather than continuing to expand geographically and functionally the NATO.

Moreover, and as it is concluded from the analysis of the regional priorities identified in successive Concept Russia is an actor with global interests around the world, although its role in Africa, Latin America or even Middle East is much lower than that of the stage of the USSR. Despite its nature of Pacific coastal State, Russia continues to be a peripheral player in that area (as in some way happens to U.S.), and its cooperation with China in frameworks such as the OCS or the BRICS does not hide the fact that the Asian giant is considered the greatest long-term challenge facing Moscow, above all by the complex socio-economic situation in the Federal District of the far East.

In short, nothing would serve better to the objectives and priorities of the foreign policy of Russia that the constitution of a genuine strategic partnership with the other two "wings of common European civilisation" (EU and U.S.), paraphrasing former President Medvedev in his speech in Berlin in 2008, to give a response as coordinated as possible to the arc of instability and conflict that extends outside of the OSCE area. To do this, and in addition to all abandon maximalist positions in search of the common interest, the first thing that is necessary is to assume that Russia doesn't want to be integrated in the West yet, and instead wants to form one of these poles isolated power whose interests couldn't be ignored as in the past.

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***NOTE:** The authors of the *Framework Documents* are responsible for the ideas contained therein, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion from the IEEE or the Ministry of Defence.