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WEU's relations with Russia

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Political Committee
by Mr. Baumel, Rapporteur

ASSEMBLY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION
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1. Adopted unanimously by the committee.

2. *Members of the committee:* Mr. *de Puig* (Chairman); Lord Finsberg, Mr. *Roseta* (Vice-Chairmen); Mr. Alegre, Sir Andrew Bowden, MM. Caballero, De Hoop Scheffer, Ehrmann, Fassino, Feldmann, Goerens, Homs I Ferret, Sir Russell Johnston, Mr. Kaspereit (Alternate: *Baumel*), Lord *Kirkhill*, MM. Kittelmann, *van der Linden, de Lipkowski, Müller,* Pécriaux, Mrs. Prestigiacomo, MM. Puche Rodriguez, Reddemann, Rodeghiero, Rodrigues (Alternate: Mrs. *Aguiar*), Salvi, Selva, Seeuws, *Seitlinger, Soell,* van Velzen, Vinçon, Ward, Wintgens, Woltjer.

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation

on WEU's relations with Russia

The Assembly,

(i) Considering the importance of the Russian Federation, the main successor to the Soviet Union as a world power, for the management of international relations and in particular for the establishment of an order of stability, security and peace at world and European level;

(ii) Gratified that Russia is no longer a threat to the security of Western Europe, but recalling nevertheless that, in terms of conventional and nuclear armaments, it is still the greatest military power in Europe and still has the largest army and the highest defence budget of all the countries of Europe;

(iii) Recalling that after the withdrawal of the last military units from the states of Central Europe, Russia still maintains troops in at least ten member countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);

(iv) Considering that the Russian Federation is, on the one hand, at a difficult juncture in the consolidation of its internal political, economic and social situation and, on the other hand, at a stage where it is defining its rôle in the world with particular regard to its place in a new security architecture in Europe;

(v) Convinced that such a security architecture in Europe is inconceivable without the participation of the Russian Federation in the process of concerting approaches in the various international bodies destined to strengthen confidence, stability and collective security, particularly in the framework of the CSCE, NACC and the partnership for peace;

(vi) Also convinced that the improvement in the domestic economic situation in Russia is an important factor for strengthening political stability and security on the Eurasian continent;

(vii) Believing it essential to consolidate democracy and respect for human rights in Russia;

(viii) Calling consequently for the conditions to be created without delay for Russia to be associated with the work of the appropriate international organisations for economic and financial co-operation;

(ix) Wishing relations between the Russian Federation and European authorities and countries participating in the process of European integration to be governed by the principle of partnership and co-operation;

(x) Welcoming, therefore, the conclusion of an agreement of partnership and co-operation between the European Union and Russia;

(xi) Believing that WEU as defence component of the European Union and European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance must also improve its relations with the Russian Federation;

(xii) Convinced that the new relations with Russia should result in a permanent system for information, dialogue and consultation and also co-operation in specific areas of mutual interest;

(xiii) Emphasising the importance of establishing contacts and dialogue between the WEU Assembly and the two chambers of the Russian Parliament;

(xiv) Consequently welcoming the re-establishment of a regular interparliamentary dialogue in the framework of these new relations;

(xv) Stressing the importance of the controlled dismantlement of nuclear and chemical armaments on Russian territory and that of the CIS in conformity with the international treaties in force;

(xvi) Concerned at the dangers that might stem from possible shortcomings in the control of Russian nuclear arms and the clandestine traffic of Russian nuclear material abroad;

(xvii) Insisting that all activities in crisis-management and the maintenance and re-establishment of peace in crisis areas in the territory of the CIS should be conducted in conformity with the rules fixed by the United Nations and the CSCE and in co-ordination with those bodies;

(xviii) Also wishing the appropriate western organisations and their member countries to show greater readiness in providing assistance in maintaining or re-establishing peace in the crisis areas mentioned above;

(xix) Calling the attention of the Council in particular to the consequences of present developments in the Caucasus and in the Turkish-speaking republics of the CIS for the future evolution of relations between Russia and Turkey;

(xx) Wishing WEU to start a specific dialogue with the Russian Federation for harmonising their respective concepts concerning the future development of the CSCE, particularly in the light of the summit meeting that organisation is preparing to hold in Budapest;

(xxi) Emphasising that outstanding questions between Russia and Ukraine should be settled to the satisfaction of both sides, respecting the sovereignty and independence of each one;

(xxii) Wishing the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to continue to develop in such a way as to become a factor of security and stability from which all its member countries might benefit;

(xxiii) Wishing all the problems of neighbourliness between Russia and the countries that have become associate partners of WEU to be resolved with due respect for the principles of international law and to the satisfaction of all the partners concerned in such a way as to increase security and stability in the regions in question;

(xxiv) Convinced that co-operation between WEU and Russia in the framework of the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty should be a prelude to the enlargement of this co-operation to other specific areas;

(xxv) Emphasising the importance of establishing close relations between the appropriate Russian research institutes in security and defence and the WEU Institute for Security Studies,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Offer the Russian Federation permanent co-operation including a regular system for information, dialogue and political consultation at ministerial level and at that of the chairmanship-in-office, the Secretary-General and senior officials of the ministerial organs of WEU;

2. Determine, in co-ordination with the Russian authorities, the specific areas in which WEU might offer the Russian Federation practical co-operation that might include questions within the purview of WEAG and possibly space questions;

3. Offer its good offices to the Russian Federation:

   (a) in its struggle against the clandestine proliferation of Russian nuclear material by creating a joint WEU-Russia monitoring committee;

   (b) for implementing the destruction of Russian arsenals of chemical weapons;

4. Offer, in co-ordination with the CSCE and using the framework of the conference on the stability pact, its good offices for facilitating the settlement of all problems of neighbourliness remaining between the Russian Federation and certain countries that have become associate partners of WEU and which might jeopardise security in the regions in question;

5. Encourage its Institute for Security Studies to increase its contacts and co-operation with the appropriate Russian research institutes in the field of security policy;

6. Establish with Ukraine and Belarus similar relations to those proposed in paragraphs 1 and 2.

Draft Order

on relations between WEU and Russia

The Assembly,

(i) Emphasising the importance of establishing a regular dialogue between the WEU Assembly and the two chambers of the Russian Parliament in the framework of increasing relations between WEU and Russia;

(ii) Consequently, wishing the contacts established between the WEU Assembly and the Russian Parliament on the occasion of the visit by a delegation from this parliament to Paris from 17th to 19th October 1994 and the visit by the Political Committee to Moscow from 24th to 29th October to be followed by the establishment of regular meetings outside plenary sessions of the Assembly,

INVITES ITS PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE

1. To take a decision allowing the exchange of views started with the two chambers of the Russian Parliament to be pursued on the basis of regular meetings, specifying the regularity and ways and means of the participation of the committees of the Assembly in such meetings;

2. To ask the President of the Assembly to transmit appropriate proposals to the Presidents of the two chambers of the Russian Parliament;

3. To study the possibilities of establishing a similar dialogue with:

(a) the parliamentary Assembly of the CIS;

(b) the Parliament of Ukraine;

(c) the Parliament of Belarus.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mr. Baumel, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Drawing up guidelines for the development of relations between WEU and Russia might appear a very ambitious, indeed overly ambitious project. For until now sufficiently clear points of reference have been lacking which might form the basis of a specifically " WEU " policy towards a country which regards itself as the principal heir to the defunct Soviet empire, now in the midst of transformation and still searching for its identity and rôle on the international scene.

2. During the final phase of the Soviet Union's existence, initiatives by the WEU Assembly permitted the development of a regular dialogue between the Presidential Committee and the committees with a political function and representatives of the Supreme Soviet, even before the WEU ministerial organs had established their initial contacts at governmental level with the Soviet leaders. It should be recalled that this dialogue was started in April 1987 with the visit by a delegation of the Bureau of the Assembly to Moscow which had been assessed from the political point of view in the report presented to the Assembly by Mr. Pécriaux at the plenary session in autumn 1987[1]. With the collapse of the Soviet Union it proved difficult, if not impossible, to resume regular parliamentary dialogue and, for a time, the attitude of the Russians to WEU seemed to waver between ignorance and indifference and a degree of mistrust.

3. However, certain recent indications would seem to suggest that the Russian authorities wish to intensify the dialogue with WEU and establish special relations with the organisation. The character of these remains to be defined, based on mutual interests that the two parties are to make known. Under the present circumstances, WEU is in point of fact the only western organisation which has no institutionalised relations with Russia. The European Union has just signed a wide-ranging partnership and co-operation agreement with that country which provides, inter alia, for political dialogue to " bring about an increasing convergence of positions on international issues of mutual concern, thus increasing security and stability; " (Article 6 of the agreement).

4. The Atlantic Alliance has also established relations with Russia, offering the latter participation within the framework of the North Atlantic Council. Russia also decided to join the partnership for peace programme which NATO proposed at its last summit meeting to all states participating in the work of NACC and " other CSCE countries able and willing to contribute to this programme ".

5. WEU has therefore several reasons for wishing to determine the aim, nature and scope of the relations which it can and should enter into with Russia. The first of these is based on WEU's calling and function as an integral part of the process of European Union and as the European pillar of NATO, which make WEU the nucleus of a European security and defence identity. In initially offering the nine Central and Eastern European countries a Forum of Consultation within WEU, then a status of association within the organisation, WEU has demonstrated in a meaningful way how it intends to shape the outlines of a European security order that includes a specific and determinate number of Central European countries – a perceptibly different concept from that chosen by NATO through NACC and the partnership for peace.

6. Russia cannot remain indifferent to WEU's approach at a time when that country is in the process of developing its own concepts in relation to a new European security order, since this approach includes the three Baltic countries that formed part of the former Soviet Union and were, until now, regarded by Russia as " near abroad " countries in spite of their refusal to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Moreover, WEU's approach does not include countries like Belarus and Ukraine, or indeed Russia itself and the other CIS member countries.

7. However, there is another factor strengthening the need to establish an intensified dialogue with the Russian Federation: already with respect to the three Baltic states and Poland, which became associated partner countries of WEU, but also with the imminent enlargement of the European Union to include three Scandinavian countries and the prospects thus opened to the latter of becoming either full members or observers of WEU, the emergence is apparent of a new development whereby the European Union (and perhaps WEU) and Russia will, in the foreseeable future, become direct neighbours with a common border over 2 000 km in length.

1. See the report on recent developments in Soviet external policy presented on behalf of the General Affairs Committee by Mr. Pécriaux, Rapporteur, Document 1111, 15th October 1987.

8. However, the question is not merely limited to relations between neighbours. It is above all a matter of reaching a more specific mutual understanding of the way in which Western Europe and Russia each regards their own and the other's place, calling and rôle in the world and in the management of international problems, with the specific concern of strengthening international security and stability. Western Europe and Russia are both at a stage of redefining their rôle in the world, the first with the objective of becoming a credible player in world events on the basis of a true common policy, the second facing the challenge of once again finding a rôle that enables it to fill the vacuum left by collapse of the Soviet Union and which reflects the fact that Russia still represents one of the major world powers. However, the signals emitted by the huge geographical area occupied by the twelve of the successor countries of the Soviet Union, of which Russia is the powerhouse, are still too contradictory and too incoherent to enable a clear idea to be obtained of the direction which Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States are about to take.

9. The main purpose of the visit the Political Committee made to Moscow from 24th to 29th October 1994 was therefore to gather more detailed information on the political situation in that country, the working of the various organs of state and their co-operation and, above all, the foreign and security policy of the Russian Federation. The committee's various exchanges of views with the Vice-President of the Duma, the appropriate committees of the Duma, the Council of the Federation, representatives of the ministry for foreign affairs, defence and co-operation of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and also representatives of the Institute of Europe and the Institute of International Relations were most instructive. These meetings, however, also showed that many questions were still outstanding and that much remained to be done to increase reciprocal knowledge and understanding. This visit should therefore be considered as the start of a dialogue that should be pursued in a more regular manner.

II. The situation in Russia

10. Through the parliamentary elections held on 12th December 1993 and the adoption of its first democratic constitution based on a multiparty system, a market economy and civil rights, Russia has doubtless taken an important step towards democracy. The constitution rests on the principle of the separation of powers, with a very strong centralised executive power in the hands of the President, while the powers of parliament, which comprises two chambers, are relatively limited. However, it is still difficult to ascertain, in practice, who really governs the country. A very important question seen from the outside is who is responsible for defining its strategic policy in general and its foreign policy in particular. Is it the President alone and his minister for foreign affairs? What is the extent of parliament's influence? What rôle does the Security Council of the Federation of Russia play? The constitution is, unfortunately, unclear on these points. Even at the level of the executive, it is not easy to understand the operation of the present system where power is shared between the President and the government. What is the rôle of the army which is still deployed in the majority of Russia's neighbouring countries?

11. After the departure of the last Russian military units from Estonia, Germany and Lithuania on 31st August 1994 and signature of the agreement, on 10th August 1994, between the negotiators on behalf of Moldova and Russia for the withdrawal over a period of three years of the fourteenth Russian army, stationed in East Moldova, Russia still maintains troops in Belarus (25 000-30 000), in Ukraine (approximately 17 000), in Georgia (approximately 5 000), in Armenia (approximately 9 000), in Azerbaijan (approximately 500), in Turkmenistan (approximately 15 000), in Kazakhstan (approximately 1 000), in Uzbekistan (approximately 5 000), in Kirgizstan (approximately 3 500) and in Tajikistan (approximately 24 000)[2].

12. However, above all, it is the uncertain future of the Russian army once repatriated inside the borders of the Russian Federation that is tending increasingly to cause problems for the country's domestic policy. During the cold war period, the Soviet army, on the strength of an offensive military doctrine, played a leading rôle; present in all the component parts of the Soviet Union and in the majority of Warsaw Pact countries, in 1989 it still numbered 4.2 million troops. On 5th May 1992, the " official birthday " of Russia's armed forces, it numbered only 2.8 million and this figure had fallen to 2.2 million in 1994. Between now and the end of the year, its number will fall to 1.9 million and then subsequently to 1.5 million[3]. Furthermore, the fact that the troops are available only in part due, on the one hand, to massive desertion and, on the other, because the inadequacy of logistical means and poor maintenance of equipment reduces even further the operational part of the army. Troops very rarely receive their pay on time. Conversely, the new KGB and the military

2. The situation in May 1994; figures taken from The Economist, 21st May 1994.

3. Le Figaro, 8th September 1994.

intelligence service, the GRU, have lost none of their efficiency. Furthermore, the arsenal of strategic nuclear forces is still in an excellent operational condition.

13. The crisis in government caused by the army, the substantial reduction in the defence budget, the uncertainty as to the future rôle of the armed forces in a Russia that is no longer involved in a global confrontation with a strategic adversary, have all contributed to diminishing the political and social standing of the army, inevitably causing tension and discontent among the military. Material factors are also having a negative impact. Low salaries and delays in payment, a lack of decent housing for the families of officers repatriated from abroad, especially from Germany, although the latter has financed the building of thousands of housing units in Russia, are among the factors exploited by various political elements seeking to take advantage of the anger and disappointment evident within the army.

14. A case in point is Mr. Zhirinovsky, whose LDP party may have picked up a third of the military vote[4]; another is Mr. Aleksandr Rutskoï, the former Russian Vice-President, who at the end of May 1994 succeeded in bringing together the opposition communist and nationalist parties in a " Front for National Unity ", thus strengthening an already powerful extra-parliamentary opposition. Recent rumours and discussions on the holding of parliamentary elections, which might be deferred by two years, for fear that the advocates of reform obtain an even more mediocre rating in the event of early elections, are evidence of the difficulties in which those close to President Yeltsin find themselves.

15. When the question of deferring the elections of both parliament and president was brought up during the visit by the Political Committee to Moscow in October 1994, it aroused mostly strong opposition. Mr. Karaganov, vice-director of the reputed Moscow Institute of Europe and counsellor of President Yeltsin, for example, said that the postponement of the elections would be a major blow to democracy in Russia. Once deferred, nobody would be able to say authoritatively when they would be held.

16. President Yeltsin's proposal to convene a " pan-Russian " assembly to discuss questions of local management and ways of organising the legislative and executive powers more rationally has further added to the confusion. Moreover, rumours abound that a real hand-to-hand struggle is being played out between the President and the government on the one hand and the defence minister and the military authorities on the other[5]. At the root of this crisis are both the revelations of fraudulent practices in the army stationed in Germany until the end of August 1994 and the dissatisfaction of the defence minister with the meagre budget allocated to him. More important still, however, is the loss of control by the political authorities to the military, who are playing an ever-increasing rôle in the foreign policy decision-making process. Such is the case in Moldova where General Lebed, Commander of the Russian army, conducts his own policy independently of the usual ministry of defence hierarchy and in Georgia, where Russian soldiers have set themselves up as defenders of Russia's geostrategic interests.

17. During its stay in Moscow, the Political Committee was able to note the keen tension between the Duma and the Russian executive, and particularly the defence minister, when the defence ministry refused to receive the committee at political level. A motion of censure against the government, only just negatived by the Duma, had repercussions on the programme planned by the parliamentary authorities for the committee's visit, and it was therefore not possible to go to Sotchi as planned to meet representatives of the peace-keeping forces in Abkhazia. The last repercussion of this political crisis was the Russian President's dismissal on 1st November 1994 of Mr. Burlakov, First Deputy Minister of Defence and former Commander-in-Chief of Russian forces in Germany.

18. The consequences of the acquittal of Mr. Valentin Varrenmikov, former Soviet under-secretary for defence and one of the authors of the failed coup of August 1991 against the Soviet President, Mikhaïl Gorbachev, cannot yet be accurately assessed. It is clear nevertheless that this decision strengthens the hand of the former communists and nationalists grouped around Mr. Rutskoï, with their incessant claims for the re-establishment of the former Soviet Union.

19. Although there is no immediate prospect of conservative forces returning to power in Moscow, the political crisis is still disturbing. Even if there is temporary stability, one cannot exclude several possible scenarios that might stem from the present political crisis. Your Rapporteur would quote four:

(i) President Yeltsin manages to retain power;

4. However, a recent poll conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation among more than 650 officers in the Russian army whom they trusted revealed that support for Zhirinovsky, if it had ever been high at all, had plummeted sharply. According to the poll, which was published in the Moscow Tribune of 28th October 1994, 70% distrust him. The highest rating (58% approval) was scored by General Lebed, Commander of the 14th army, currently stationed in the Transdniestr region of Moldova.

5. Le Figaro, 30th August 1994.

(ii) Conservatives and/or nationalist forces take control;

(iii) Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin takes over;

(iv) a chaotic situation arises in which the army takes over.

20. As to the economic situation in the country, the indicators and information are conflicting. What is certain is that the economic crisis is continuing. The economic system is still marked by Soviet dirigism, particularly in regional industrial centres far from Moscow. Although a reduction in the inflation rate has been possible, there is as yet no prospect of a recovery in industrial production. Rather the reverse – according to recent research carried out in Moscow, industrial production has again fallen by 27% for the first half of 1994 as compared with the previous year and the Russian economy is suffering increasingly from insolvency. According to estimates by the Vienna Research Institute in October 1994[6], 30 million Russians have incomes below the vital minimum and 9 million are unemployed. Russians have little confidence in their economy. The Institute's experts estimate the drain of capital from the country at between $5 and $25 billion since the collapse of the USSR. In the same period, international investment was less than $2.7 billion.

21. The economic system is still far from perfect. Economic activity is at times completely uncontrolled. The state cannot manage adequately to protect those in the market and prevent corruption. Many would like to see a more stable system. Regrettably, those who trade on the black market seem to be the first to get rich quick. The underworld elements (" mafia racketeers ") have naturally no interest in changing the status quo. The state's weakness is their strength. The more their political influence grows, the longer it takes to achieve reform and to establish the rule of law. To inspire greater confidence in the market system, it is necessary to improve and strengthen the commercial code so as to support the development of a spirit of enterprise within an orderly environment. Moreover, it is absolutely essential for the rules of commerce to be underpinned by state guarantee in order to create an attractive climate for international investment.

22. Moves to establish a private sector are underway with the implementation of the first privatisation phase. In this initial stage, the State distributed free privatisation vouchers with a face value of 10 000 roubles to all Russians. It was intended that these could be traded for company shares. An entire new class of entrepreneurs emerged at a stroke in the commercial and service sectors and then in industry. The business and service sectors are the first to take off since they are not weighed down by the economic heritage of the old Soviet Union, as is the case, for example, with industry. The banking system still needs to be improved and the tax system modernised. The first cannot offer a system of financing that functions adequately and the second does not bring in enough revenue to a state which substantially lacks the financial means to mitigate the social consequences of radical economic reforms. Consequently, social inequality is on the increase.

23. After the first private enterprises went bankrupt on 13th July 1994, parliament, which is dominated by opponents of the reform, blocked the implementation of the second privatisation wave. In this phase of cash sales, Russians would have been able to sell their vouchers to interested investors who in turn would have been able to raise capital. The government was hoping that a new class of investors would emerge around banks and insurance or financial groups. The programme has now been referred back to the parliamentary committees concerned for review. On 19th July 1994, President Yeltsin announced that he would have recourse to a decree if parliament continued its opposition. A decree might certainly be one solution; however, given the extent of privatisation, it would be better to have the support of the majority of political forces.

24. The description of the process of transforming a planned economy into a market economy given by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus, during the annual session of the Mont Pélerin Society in Cannes[7] is also valid for the Russian economy. The process of transformation should be a mix of spontaneity and deliberate action. In other words, the private economic activities of thousands of participants in the market should be conducted freely in an economic framework fixed by the state. Economic reconstruction is not the result of the omnipotence of one group of reformers or another. It is therefore in the interest of the West to support further the development of private business. The more private entrepreneurship emerges and the more private property rights are awarded, the higher the pressure on the Russian Government becomes to continue with economic and democratic reforms. Also, the higher the price will rise for Russia to pay, if it decides to march backwards.

25. As to the cohesion of the Russian Federation, completely contradictory signs are also observable here. There is evidence of both centrifugal and centripetal tendencies in a country that covers more than three quarters of the territory of the former Soviet Union and houses more than half its population – around 148.5 million inhabitants, 81.5% of them Russian. Geographically,

6. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5th October 1994.

7. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5th October 1994.

Russia is still the largest country in the world, with a vast wealth of natural and human resources. More than 25 million Russians now live outside the borders of the Federation. Internally, Russia seems to have trouble in defining its identity, whether at national, state or international level. History offers no precise guidelines, other than the fact that Russia has never been a nation state, but has invariably conducted itself as an empire. With more than 100 nations and races, it is a multi-ethnic country which today must carve out its destiny without reference to the past. Of very recent birth, in one sense it represents the world's most modern form of state with enormous reserves of potential. Time alone can tell in which direction it will turn: towards Europe, the East or possibly in both directions at once.

26. However, a major preoccupation for its political leaders is the problem of controlling the centrifugal forces in evidence in several regions of the country. From its very foundation, the Russian Federation has suffered from a degree of disintegration and is prey to secessionist elements. The Federation of Russia has 89 parts: 21 republics, six territories, 49 regions, two cities of federal importance (Moscow and Saint Petersburg), one autonomous region and ten autonomous districts. The statutes of the parts of the Federation republics are different. For instance, the republics have a constitution which enables them to establish their own structures of power. Thus, several of them have elected a president who sometimes develops his own ideas on the future of his territory. The integrity of the country is threatened, particularly by separatist and nationalist tendencies and especially in the Caucasus, Siberia and the Urals. This phenomenon illustrates Russia's heterogeneity. Moreover, without being able to offer adequate incentives, the state can no longer manage adequately to justify to the different peoples making up the country why a strong central leadership should be retained. It is not only the prosperous regions that are beginning to demand the right to organise themselves more independently[8]. Boris Yeltsin has tried to stabilise the process by offering the separatist regions agreements granting very wide autonomy which, in his terms, would be tantamount to real federalism[9]. Tatarstan, a republic in the southern Urals, with a wealth of oil resources, was the first to conclude such an agreement on 15th February 1994, followed on 3rd August 1994 by its neighbour, the independent republic of Bachkortostan which also has oil deposits. The agreements provide for a greater autonomy in economic decision-making particularly with regard to the exploitation of petroleum resources.

8. For example, on 10th August 1990, Tatarstan asserted its sovereignty by claiming the right to exploit its own natural resources (Ramses 1992, page 53).

9. Financial Times, 4th August 1994.

27. It is perhaps understandable that a country as large as Russia should never achieve a distribution of wealth that is completely equal or development that is entirely even. However, the fact remains that the various discrepencies in supply, infrastructure and salaries can threaten the stability, peace and existence of Russia. Very often, such differences of economic and social status underlie a so-called " ethnic " conflict. Russia undoubtedly has its share of civil strife, disasters inflicting heavy losses of human life and damage to the environment[10] and extreme tension between different populations, both internally and in the territories of the newly independent republics. Several cases of violent hostilities, some of them dating back to early this century and often exacerbated down the years as a result of Stalin's policy of deportation, have either erupted or are currently threatening to do so. These give rise to waves of refugees which neighbouring countries have difficulty in absorbing and which add to problems of secession.

28. Among the latter one might note in particular the Chechen rebellion under the leadership of the former head of the Soviet airforce, Major Dzhokhar Dudaev, who assumed the presidency in October 1991 following elections that were probably rigged. An independent Muslim republic was proclaimed on 23rd November 1994. Chechenya had been conquered by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. Although the Russian Government decreed a state of emergency in the region at the end of 1991 and maintained an economic blocade against the self-proclaimed republic, refusing to grant it independence, it had, nevertheless, for a considerable time remained virtually silent, trying, without any real success, to establish an opposition government. It changed its policy at the end of June 1994 stating that Chechenya was the major destabilising factor in the northern Caucasus[11] and that the time had come to take definite decisions[12]. The government did not, however, specify the content of these decisions in detail, while ruling out Russian military action. On 8th August 1994, Mr. Dudaev declared himself ready to give up power if Russia and the international community recognised the Chechen republic's independence. So far, no country has recognised the break-away republic. Moscow seems to be supporting the provisional Council, an opposition group led by businessman Oumar Avturkhanov. He is to control a part of the territory of the Chechen republic, namely the Nachteretchni district. The Chechen Government has

10. For instance, the recent oil spill in Usinsk due to poor maintenance of an oil pipeline or the catastrophic shrinking of the Aral sea, now belonging to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, caused by the diversion by Soviet authorities of its feeder waters for irrigation purposes.

11. Le Figaro, 3rd August 1994.

12. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 4th August 1994.

tried to involve Turkey in this dispute by asking President Demirel to help the Chechen people in their struggle for independence and freedom [13]. Also of note is the independence claim put forward by the national Council of the Balkars people [14] and the intention Eduard Rossel, President of the Sverdlosvk Oblast Duma, has stated of creating an independent republic of the Urals [15].

29. There are doubtless limits, both theoretical and practical, to the pursuit of the process of federalisation in Russia. Firstly, although there are over 100 nations and ethnic groupings on Russian territory, these are numerically too few to constitute a true majority among the populations of the territories they claim under the right of self-determination of peoples. Only in Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Northern Ossetia, Chechenya, Tchuvachia and Tuva do such majorities exist [16]. How can these autonomous republics be prevented from again splitting up in response to demands from increasingly tiny and localised nations or ethnic groupings? It seems highly dangerous to combine the right of self-determination with that to secede. The suggestion of allowing all the inhabitants of a particular region and not just those of a given ethnic grouping to vote on its independence would not resolve the problem. This would ignore the deportations and displacement of populations carried out during the years of Soviet rule, which have substantially changed the compositions of the populations of such regions.

30. We have already noted that regions with abundant resources were the first to claim independence. Others could certainly not survive without " outside " support from Russia, not necessarily confined exclusively to those without a border with a third country. Does agreement on independent federal status not therefore depend more on a local concentration of a particular people than on a traditional demarcation of a region regardless of its inhabitants? For Russia, the reply to that question may become crucial to its survival. Analysis leads to one important conclusion: Moscow today fully controls only a part of Russian territory.

III. The foreign policy of the Russian Federation

31. Following the accession to independence of fifteen republics that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia experienced a degree of difficulty in deciding whether it should regard itself as a European, an Asiatic or a Eurasian country or quite simply as a power with global ambitions. The determining factors will be the evolution of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the way in which Russia interprets the purpose of this grouping, initially founded on 8th December 1991 by the Minsk accord, signed by the Presidents of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine.

32. On 21st December 1991, eleven of the fifteen former Soviet Socialist Republics (minus the three Baltic countries and Georgia) joined the CIS, envisaged as a voluntary association of equal and sovereign states, certain of whose structures have only gradually come into being. The major trends in its development are, as is often the case on this massive continent, contradictory, oscillating between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. However, the CIS has seen a remarkable strengthening of its rôle. Initially, it seemed very weak. After its foundation in 1991, the newly-independent republics joined the commonwealth only very reluctantly. They suspected Moscow of wanting to use it as a means of restoring the position of the former Soviet Union. They themselves viewed the CIS rather as the instrument of a peaceful and controlled separation from the former USSR. Consequently, unlike Russia, which has always sought to strengthen the CIS, the other countries were reluctant when it came to concluding agreements on important matters. The member countries could not, for example, reach in-depth agreement on security questions, economic and monetary co-operation or co-ordination of their reform policies. Additionally, the eastern republics of the old Soviet Union began to evolve in an opposite direction with their projected participation in the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO), originally founded by Turkey, Pakistan and Iran. Turkmenistan is much sought after by Iran and Turkey. Indeed, the latter is making enthusiastic overtures to all Turkish-speaking republics and the Gagauz minority, a people of Turkish origin in southern Moldova. At the second summit meeting of the Turkish-speaking republics – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – the heads of state affirmed their intention to strengthen their relations independently of Moscow. While, admittedly, some 350 agreements have been signed under the auspices of the CIS, no important agreement has yet been signed by all the member countries. Furthermore, the republics have often taken the liberty of amending or of ignoring the decisions of the Council of presidents or of prime ministers.

33. The basic CIS document is its Charter, signed on 22nd January 1993 in Minsk by seven countries: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. This stipulates, first, that the CIS is based on the sovereign equality of all its members and that it is not

13. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5th October 1994.

14. RFE/RL News Briefs, 20th-24th June 1994, page 2.

15. RFE/RL News Briefs, 16th-20th May, 1994, page 2.

16. Christoph Mick, Probleme des Föderalismus in Russland, Osteuropa, July 1994, page 612.

a state; nor does it include supranational elements. The Charter contains two important chapters on collective security and military co-operation and conflict-prevention between member countries; these chapters envisage the creation of a Council at heads-of-state level for defence and protection of the foreign borders of member countries. It also established a Council of Defence Ministers and a high command of the united armed forces. Finally, a CIS parliamentary Assembly was created, which sits in Saint Petersburg.

34. On several occasions, the member countries of the CIS have stated that they were prepared to create a defence union, but they have not yet concluded an agreement in this sense. Admittedly, there is the Treaty of Tashkent on collective security, but in May 1992, the treaty had been signed by only six members of the CIS: Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Later, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia followed suit. When Armenia attempted to invoke it, no reaction was forthcoming from the signatory countries[17]. Today, the treaty, which includes an article establishing a very restrictive assistance obligation, has still not been ratified by all the parliaments of the signatory states and it has still not been signed by Moldova, Ukraine and Turkmenistan. Moreover, the new republics, including Russia but excepting Kirgizstan, have created their own armies. They have abolished the Soviet army and replaced it by the " armed forces of the CIS " with a fairly weak joint military command and without any operational basis for the time being.

35. What are the factors that militate in favour of the evolution of the CIS and for strengthening its rôle? First, Russia has meanwhile succeeded in integrating all the new republics, with the exception of the Baltic countries, into the CIS[18]. Moreover, Russia has sought to make the CIS acceptable to the international community as a regional or international organisation and has requested financial support from the United Nations. The West's reluctance to become involved in the conflicts raging in the former Soviet republics, particularly in the Caucasus and Moldova, has encouraged Russia to try to assign itself a peace-keeping rôle, with or without the agreement of the United Nations, with or without the agreement of the CSCE or with the more or less willing agreement of the other members of the CIS. The fact that most of the latter refused to take part in peace-keeping operations with the Russians, in particular in Georgia or in Tajikistan, even strengthened Russia's rôle in peace-keeping in the territory of the CIS. If Russia were to succeed in convincing the international community to grant the CIS an identical status to that, for example, of the Organisation of African Unity, which has carried out numerous peace-keeping interventions, it would have an instrument that enabled it to conceal its international ambitions behind a respectable organisation.

36. At the institutional level, the Russian Government in January 1994 stressed the importance it attached to the CIS by creating a ministry for co-operation with its member countries. Both chambers of parliament created committees for CIS affairs – which had not existed under the previous parliament – that of the Duma also being responsible for ties with fellow countrymen. Vladimir Shumeiko, President of the Russian Federal Council and the interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS and close to President Yeltsin, requested on 29th July 1994 that co-operation between the member countries of the CIS be intensified. In his opinion, such co-operation would be followed by the creation of a confederation of CIS member states[19].

37. As regards co-operation in security matters, Russia has let it be known that it would be ready to go even further. It has put forward a proposal for a military alliance that could extend nuclear cover to the newly-independent countries, specifically by grouping countries in possession of nuclear weapons (Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine), but also the other CIS member countries nearest to Russia[20]. There are reasons for fearing that Russia is increasingly succeeding in dominating the CIS, while reinforcing and restructuring it as an international organisation. Thus it will find in the latter a very useful adjunct to its international ambitions.

38. However, Russia's interest in extending its influence over its neighbours has limits. In the face of the enormous economic difficulties the new republics, particularly Belarus and Ukraine, are experiencing and reacting to a proposal for monetary union with Belarus specifically, the Russian Government made quite clear that it would not be prepared to finance their budget deficits. This astonishing fact was apparent to all before the presidential elections in Belarus and in Ukraine, when all the major opposition candidates declared themselves in favour of the re-establishment of closer relationships between their countries and Russia. For similar economic reasons, Moscow continues to oppose the entry of Tajikistan into the rouble currency area[21]. The Russian Government is therefore aware that the cost of

17. Ramses 1994, page 104.

18. Moldova has never ratified the Treaty of Minsk, the founding document of the CIS, however, it participates more or less fully in CIS structures.

19. RFE/RL News Briefs, 25th-29th July 1994/1st-5th August 1994, page 10.

20. International Herald Tribune, 31st August 1994.

21. Demonstrating the struggle within the Russian authorities to agree on a coherent policy with respect to the CIS member states is President Yeltsin's harsh comment on those supporting a tough fiscal and monetary policy that so far has excluded Tajikistan from the rouble currency area. President Yeltsin strongly supported Tajikistan's wish to join the rouble zone. Financial Times, 22nd October 1994.

maintaining a traditional imperialist policy might be too heavy for the Russian people to bear. It is highly unlikely that Russia will succeed in establishing a thriving democratic state and a market economy if it continues to fritter a large part of its resources away outside the country instead of concentrating on reconstruction at home. It also seems clear that systematic destabilisation of the economies on the periphery of Russia would detract from this goal.

39. Nevertheless, efforts to create a new executive body of the CIS with the task of strengthening its economic union, possibly leading to financial union, have led to a decision by the member countries at the CIS summit meeting on 21st October 1994 to form an inter-state economic committee. The supranational body, in which Russia will control 50% of the votes while decisions are taken by an 80% vote, will be based, unlike other CIS structures presiding in Minsk, in Moscow. The ultimate goal of the committee is to create a customs union and a payments union within the CIS. However, many of the signatory states retained the right to opt out of the agreement and the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Mr. Vitaly Masol, immediately declared that Ukraine would not take part in the payments union[22].

40. Although Russia's interest in a stable CIS currently seems limited to the desire to see it develop for its own benefit as an effective economic entity, the last summit of the CIS member countries in Moscow proved the continuation of a trend which has been visible for some time now: Moscow is making itself more and more the centre of the CIS, its ulterior motive being that in future this may lead to full reintegration of CIS territory around Moscow. Such calls come not only from Russia but also from various CIS member countries.

41. In September 1994, Russia's head of foreign intelligence, Evgueni Primakov, published a report entitled " Russia – CIS, must the West change its approach? ", in which he considered that the CIS would be the only organisation capable of avoiding nationalist, authoritarian or fundamentalist tendencies among all the members of the CIS.

42. During talks the Political Committee held in Moscow in October 1994 with Mr. Medvedev, vice-Minister for co-operation with CIS states, he and his aides supported a proposal, initially put forward by the Kazakh President Nursultan Nasarbaiev, to form a Eurasian Co-operation Council with stricter rules of adherence and stronger political and economic ties. Membership rules would also include the provision of human rights standards and the condition that member states must be free of civil war. However, they admitted that respective plans were far from being achieved and that even Russia would have difficulties in meeting the proposed criteria.

43. The causes of CIS's evolution are still to be assessed, particularly in view of the fact that in certain CIS regions, centrifugal forces continue to present the Moscow leadership with difficult problems: for example, fighting has continued between Armenia and Azerbaijan for six years in Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave in western Azerbaijan whose population is roughly 80% Armenian. The Nagorno-Karabakh enclave and the Azeri enclave of Nakhichevan in Armenia, which Armenia has claimed since 1987, were created by the 1921 treaty between Turkey and the Soviet Union. The two parties to the conflict have committed atrocities which have cost thousands of lives. Today, Armenia occupies 28% of Azeri territory. Armenians living in Azerbaijan had to flee the country to Armenia while Azeris living in Armenia moved towards Azerbaijan. In December 1991, the Armenian region declared independence. Russia proposed deployment of its buffer forces, but Azerbaijan demanded that peacekeeping forces be sent that were drawn from the CSCE, particularly from the member countries of the Minsk mediators group. Azeri authorities have often accused Russia of backing Armenian forces. A Russian peace plan currently envisages independent status for Nagorno-Karabakh. The signing, on 20th September 1994, of an oil contract between Azerbaijan and a western majority oil consortium revived tension between Moscow and Baku after the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs made it known that he did not recognise the agreement[23]. Clearly, Moscow wishes to keep strategic control over trade in and transportation of oil in the region.

44. Several flashpoints exist in Georgia, particularly in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions where violent hostilities broke out in 1993. Until now, only the Ajaria region has remained at peace – albeit a very uncertain peace. Russia is suspected of having for a time supported the rebel regions to put pressure on the government of President Shevardnadze. President Shevardnadze replaced the first President of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia in 1992, under highly suspicious circumstances. Mr. Gamsakhourdia had been elected President of Georgia in May 1991. Russian forces took up positions close to the River Inguri, with the go-ahead, after the event, of the United Nations, to monitor a truce between the Abkhazian secessionists and the Georgian Government[24]. The conflicts in the Caucasus are threatening to extend to the Kuban region in the

22. Financial Times, 22nd October 1994.

23. Le Monde, 22nd September 1994.

24. On 21st July 1994, the United Nations Security Council requested the deployment of Russian forces for peacekeeping in Abkhazia.

North, which supplies Russia with a large part of its cereal consumption.

45. A bloody civil war broke out in Tajikistan in 1992. At the origin of this conflict was a confrontation between the representatives of the former Soviet régime and the opposition Islamic-democratic alliance, which has now taken refuge in Afghanistan. In September 1991, the opposition succeeded in taking control of the country, but was then ousted, with support from Russia and Uzbekistan, by the government of the President of the Supreme Soviet, Enomali Rakhmonov. Uzbekistan contributed to bringing the situation under control since it feared that the one million Uzbeks or so living in Tajikistan might take refuge in Uzbekistan. President Rakhmonov stands accused of subjecting the population to a highly authoritarian régime. The country is suffering from the chaotic way in which he handles economic policy. In May 1993, Tajikistan and Russia signed a friendship and co-operation treaty. The agreement included military assistance to the Rakhmonov government. Since August 1993, Russian forces with some support from troops from three CIS member countries, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan, have been helping the present government to protect Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan and avoid infiltration from Afghanistan. Negotiations carried out under United Nations' auspices to bring about a cease-fire between the opposing sides have been unsuccessful. The Tajiks, a people with language and cultural ties with Iran, account for roughly 60% of the population of the country.

46. In Moldova, the fourteenth Russian army, stationed in Transdniestr, in the east of the country, and led by the very General Lebed[25], sided with the Russian-speaking inhabitants of that area, when, in June 1992, the Moldovan Government tried to establish control over the territory by force. In September 1991, the Russian-speaking inhabitants had demanded independent status for the territory on the left bank of the River Dniestr in the east of the country (Dniestr Republic). Since 1990, skirmishes between Moldovan nationalists and Russian-speaking separatists, particularly in eastern Moldova, have become increasingly frequent. About 800 000 of the Moldovan population of 4.4 million live in the Transdniestr region. The rest of Moldova was part of Romania until the second world war. The main language there is Romanian. However, Russian- and Romanian-speaking groups live on both sides of the Dniestr river. The presence of several very important Russian military bases confers a major geostrategic interest on the region in the eyes of Russia, which is seeking to preserve a sphere of influence in the region between the Black Sea and the Balkans. The Moldovan Government is demanding the withdrawal of the Russian forces, but the majority of the soldiers of the fourteenth army who come from Transdniestr are opposed to it[26]. The agreement, signed on 10th August 1994, between the Moldovan and Russian negotiators, on the withdrawal within three years of troops stationed in eastern Moldova, where the majority of the inhabitants are Russian or Ukrainian, leaves open the question of the status of this so-called Dniestr Republic. The text of the treaty states merely that the withdrawal will be synchronised with definition of a special status for the Moldovan territory of Transdniestr[27]. Chances to unify the split country are weak. The Moldovan Government accuses Romania of further complicating the issue, referring to Romanian declarations that deny the existence of Moldovan nationality and claim that Moldova was a part of Romania[28].

47. As to the Caucasus region, in 1993 Russia succeeded in obtaining the accession of Georgia and Azerbaijan to the CIS, in return for support to the governments concerned. Georgia even accepted the presence of military bases on its territory. In June 1993, the Georgian President, Eduard Shevardnadze, after months of calls for intervention by international troops under United Nations auspices going unheeded, became so desperate that he yielded to Russian troops being stationed in order to control the border between Georgia and Abkhazia. As western nations took no interest in the issue, the United Nations Security Council decided, on 21st July 1994, to authorise Russia to keep the peace in this conflict. Moscow now hopes to obtain a similar mandate to deploy Russian peace-keeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States Government has already declared that it would not oppose this[29]. In Georgia, in particular, Russia has succeeded, with the unwitting help of western countries not only in justifying its military presence there but also in achieving other ends[30]: firstly, maintaining access to the Black Sea and the Georgian ports; second, accession by Georgia to the CIS and the retention of Russian military bases located on Georgian territory; third, protecting access to Armenia; fourth, stabilising its frontier with the Caucasus and, lastly, protecting the frontier between Turkey and Georgia.

48. Other neighbours of Russia are subjected to Russian political pressure by other means. The

25. See footnote 3.

26. In the New York Times of 24th October 1994, General Lebed said that " they were born here " and that " they will stay and call themselves the 'National Liberation Army' ".

27. Le Monde, 12th August 1994.

28. New York Times, 28th October 1994.

29. Le Figaro, 11th August 1994.

30. Allen Lynch, Der Einfluss des Militärs auf die Aussenpolitik Russlands, Europa-Archiv, Folge 15/1995, pages 441-442.

Baltic countries, Ukraine and Belarus, have often suffered from the fact that they were economically dependent on Russia. In regard to the Black Sea Fleet and the resulting dispute with Ukraine, Russia has openly pursued an arbitrary policy towards its energy supplies.

49. The problem of managing the various conflicts on CIS territory has also influenced Russia's attitude in the framework of the discussions within the United Nations and the CSCE on the rôle of regional organisations in crisis-prevention and management and particularly as regards peace-keeping and peace-enforcement. There is, at least theoretically, a basic rule at CIS level for peace-keeping operations. This is the collective security agreement signed in Kiev in March 1992, followed, on 28th September 1993, by the Tashkent protocol on collective peace-keeping forces. However, none of the current operations quite fits in the framework of these agreements. The Kiev agreement requires that a truce be signed and that all parties to the conflict accept the deployment of buffer forces. This was not the case when CIS forces intervened on Tajikistan's frontier with Afghanistan[31]. Furthermore, the Kiev agreement only allows the use of troops of countries that are not party to the conflict. However, until now, CIS peace-keeping forces have invariably been made up of nationals of countries parties to the conflict, among them Russia[32]. Indeed, peace-keeping policy is, for Russia, a means of preserving its influence over neighbouring countries. It is also an instrument for justifying the presence of troops and the maintenance of military bases in several new republics.

50. The Russian Government still regards the external borders of the member countries of the CIS as Russian borders. After the attack by the Tajik Islamic opposition against a border post in August 1994, leading to the death of four Russian soldiers, the chief-of-staff of the Russian border guard units described the situation as " no longer a domestic issue for Tajikistan " but rather " a gauntlet thrown down to Russia "[33]. And the Russian First Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, Anatoli Adamichin, has again described the Tajik-Afghan frontier as the border of both the CIS and ...Russia "[34].

51. In this context, Russian policy tends to promote recognition of the CIS (in which Russia feels impelled to play a driving rôle) as a United Nations regional organisation with the status described in Article 52 of the United Nations Charter. Its recognition as such by the United Nations could make the CIS relatively independent as regards peace-keeping on its own territory, and it is not insignificant that a CIS representative participated at a meeting that the United Nations Secretary-General organised in New York in early August 1994 with representatives of regional organisations, at which were also present, inter alia, representatives of the CSCE, the European Union, WEU and NATO.

52. In a joint declaration of the ministry for foreign affairs and ministry of defence of the Federation of Russia, issued on 29th March 1994, the Russian leaders stressed that peace-keeping actions undertaken in the CIS would fully accord with:

> " the provisions of the United Nations Charter, according to which a possibility of dealing with matters of peace-making on the basis of agreements of the states concerned not only is accepted but welcomed (Article 52 of the United Nations Charter). The only exceptions are enforcement actions, which, according to Article 53 of the United Nations Charter, should be taken under the Security Council's authority. But all current peace-making operations on the territory of the former USSR do not fall under this provision, because they do not involve enforcement and are taken with the consent of all conflicting sides. The United Nations and the CSCE are informed on these operations on a regular basis.
>
> Russia is consistently favouring the widest involvement of the United Nations and the CSCE in the settlement of conflicts in the CIS countries. There is no need, however, for any " permission " on the part of the United Nations and the CSCE to conduct peace-making operations in accordance with the abovementioned criteria, in which Russia and its neighbours take part. The operations are carried out on the basis of the sovereign rights of respective states enshrined in the United Nations Charter and do not require additional legitimisation. "

53. Should any doubt remain as to whether all Russian troop activities in the crisis flashpoints in the CIS are in line with the above statements, it is for western authorities to show greater interest and greater commitment in terms of pacification of the regions in question than they have to date. It is perhaps too soon to say whether the organisation of the first joint Russian-American manoeuvres undertaken in the Urals[35] in a peace-

31. Michael Orr, Peace-keeping – a new task for Russian military doctrine, Jane's Intelligence Review, July 1994, pages 307 - 309.
32. Michael Orr, Peace-keeping – a new task for Russian military doctrine, Jane's Intelligence Review, July 1994, pages 307-309.
33. Le Monde, 21st/22nd August 1994.
34. Le Monde, 21st/22nd August 1994.
35. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3rd September 1994 and International Herald Tribune, 7th September 1994.

keeping framework can be regarded as the first sign of increased interest by the West in possible participation in peace missions in crisis flashpoints in CIS territory. It would also be useful for Russia and Europe to enter into consultation on the division of peace-keeping rôles and tasks throughout the world; WEU would offer the most appropriate framework for this.

54. As to the attitude, rôle and rank to which Russia aspires in affairs of world policy, the country's position is not yet fully defined. Notwithstanding the infighting between the " isolationists ", " neo-Eurasists " and the advocates of rapprochement with the West, it is abundantly clear that Russia is determined to play a full rôle among the international ranks of the great powers. It is therefore interested in participating in the work of all the international bodies and in strengthening any international organisation offering it maximum opportunity of being associated in the decision-making process.

55. Moreover, account has to be taken of the fact that Russia, which regards itself as the principal heir to the former Soviet Union, has still not accepted the loss of major territories – both those belonging to the Soviet Union and to the former Russian empire – a loss which has, for example, brought the western borders of Russia to within a few hundred kilometres of Moscow. As Mr. Yeltsin stressed in late June 1994, in an address to students from military academies, given in the Kremlin, Russia was a Eurasian state with security interests to protect both in Europe and in Asia. Russia could not be exempted from its political and moral responsibility in relation to the destiny of the countries and peoples which, for centuries, had marched alongside the Russian state. Of course, your Rapporteur doubts whether such an explanation can justify for instance Azerbaijan being refused the right to exploit its oil resources, in other words, to exercise its sovereignty.

56. For a long time, there have been doubts about there being a consensus in political circles in the country regarding what was in the national interest. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, President Yeltsin initially pursued a policy very much directed towards the West. However, in face of political opposition that accused him of neglecting national interests – an ill-defined concept, even by his opponents – he started to define them in a more specific manner. It is now evident, at least since the Russian-American summit meeting in September 1994, that Russia considers the former republics as being within its sphere of vital interests. Addressing the 49th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, President Yeltsin considered that Russia's economic and foreign policy priorities were in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States[36]. He continued that when it was a question of maintaining peace on the territory of the former Soviet Union, the main burden was the responsibility of the Russian Federation alone. The army seems to share this view and military doctrine provides for the deployment of the army in countries abroad if national security or Russian citizens are threatened.

57. The rationale of the Russian approach requires the government to support the strengthening of the CSCE and NACC, while remaining extremely aloof from NATO, opposed even to any enlargement of that organisation to include the Central and Eastern European countries. Russia's attitude to the partnership for peace programme offered by NATO has, from the outset, been ambiguous and hesitant. It initially welcomed what it considered to be a means of preventing the accession of the Central and Eastern European countries to NATO. However, even though it finally signed an accession document to the partnership for peace, opinions on the usefulness of this undertaking are still hotly disputed in Moscow, and the arrangements for participation in the partnership, to which the Russians subscribed at NATO, have not even been made public.

58. Russia's thinking, recently formulated by its minister for foreign affairs, tends towards making the CSCE the main collective security organisation contributing to the maintenance of security and stability in Europe, with other organisations such as the CIS, NACC, the European Union, the Council of Europe, NATO and WEU subordinate to it. To achieve this, Russia has proposed creating a management body of the CSCE of the same type as the United Nations Security Council.

59. It seems clear that these ideas and proposals have no real chance of finding favour with the majority of Russia's partners in the CSCE, as already noted at one of the recent meetings, held in Prague, of the group of senior officials of the organisation[37]. If it appears that Russia's proposals to promote its rapprochement to European and Atlantic security and defence structures and to improve the quality of its participation in their decision-making processes have little chance of succeeding, there is a strong risk that Russia might feel increasingly isolated, which cannot be in anyone's best interest.

60. The problem of Russia's possible isolation is less acute in the area of economic co-operation at European and world level than in security matters and this requires examination, particularly in the CSCE, NATO and WEU frameworks, in order to develop guidelines according to which relations with Russia can progress towards a partner-

36. Le Monde, 28th September 1994.
37. Financial Times, 17th-18th September 1994.

ship based on information, consultative and even co-operative mechanisms. This presupposes in particular co-ordination between WEU and NATO, while taking account of the peculiarities of each of these organisations.

61. In order to achieve such an objective, it is necessary first to be aware of the political parameters and preoccupations of Russia in security matters. Such assessment should begin with a study of the Russian military doctrine adopted in November 1993 by the Russian Security Council and ratified by the President of the Russian Federation. Analysis of the provisions of this new doctrine, the published text of which is merely a summary of the fundamental principles set out in the document, and seemingly not a final text, reveals several passages deserving of attention.

62. It should be noted at the outset that the terms " vital interests of the Russian Federation " are used at least seven times in this document, without this notion being clearly defined. Thus the Russian Federation considers it essential to have armed forces to " defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity and the vital interests of the Russian Federation in the case of aggression against it or its allies; ".

63. The document refers, inter alia, to " territorial claims by other states on the Russian Federation and its allies; " as the main sources of danger, in military terms and from without, for the Russian Federation. This may apply specifically to on-going disputes with Estonia and Latvia because of the former's territorial claims on Russia, resolution of which must be sought around the " regional tables " of the conference on the stability pact.

64. The Russian military doctrine also inveighs against the danger of " suppression of rights, freedoms and legitimate interest of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign countries ", which can be applied not only to the problems of Russian-speaking nationals in Estonia and Latvia, but also in other " near abroad " countries where approximately 25 million Russian nationals live.

65. One crucial point is the severe criticism of any " expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the interests of military security of the Russian Federation ". It should be recalled in this connection that Russia continues to regard NATO as a military bloc and is therefore not in favour of an enlargement of this organisation to the East which would exclude Russia. Russia does not, however, take a negative position on enlargement of the European Union to include the Central and Eastern European countries, but it is more ambiguous when it comes to enlargement of WEU.

66. It should be recalled in this connection that when WEU granted the nine Central and Eastern European countries a status of association, the Russian minister for foreign affairs issued a declaration to the press on 12th May 1994 to the effect that this decision by WEU:

> " ... cannot be evaluated in a one-dimensional fashion. We see this as an attempt to find some new form of military and political co-operation within a defined area of Europe. This is in contradiction with the need to establish a truly pan-European system of security and stability. It is wrong to bank on co-operation where there is no place for a country like Russia. If this trend is confirmed, it will carry with it the danger of creating artificial barriers, of a new division of Europe.
>
> We are in favour of another way, one based on the principles of a truly broad co-operation between all European states. We are in favour of WEU becoming an in-prospect component of pan-European security structures under the auspices of the CSCE. We wish to stress once again Russia's earnest interest in developing constructive dialogue and practical co-operation with WEU and its member states. "

67. The contacts pursued on this subject in the meantime between the representatives of Europe and Russia seem to indicate that the latter might accept a gradual convergence between the countries in question and WEU on condition that this is not a pretext for bringing them into NATO by the back door.

68. Among the other sources of concern can be counted the dangers resulting from " the increase in contingents deployed on the borders of the Russian Federation to such a level as to destroy the established balance of forces " and " the introduction of foreign troops into the territory of states bordering on Russia (if not linked to peace-enforcement or peace-keeping measures in conformity with a decision of the United Nations Security Council or a regional collective security organisation with the agreement of the Russian Federation) ". It will be recalled that Russia had argued in this connection that any deployment of NATO forces in the territories of the countries of the former Warsaw Pact " 2 + 4" treaty on final settlement of the German question which prohibits NATO forces being stationed in the territory of the former GDR without authorisation from the German Government.

69. The significance must also be evaluated of the Russian military doctrine as regards the use of nuclear weapons and the use of Russian armed forces in the event of attack against Russian citizens, a large number of whom live abroad.

70. Morever, a large number of other questions will need to be clarified in the framework of a more intensive dialogue between the western authorities and the Russian leadership; these

include, first and foremost, the importance that Russia attaches to its relations with the United States, which has provided it with vital help, through a trilateral agreement, in resolving the problems of the military denuclearisation of Ukraine, a country that is still Russia's most important and difficult partner. Russian policy towards Ukraine is somewhat less than transparent to a western observer and the future evolution of Russian policies towards the Baltic countries is equally uncertain.

71. Many experts believe Russia's conduct towards Belarus, and in particular, Ukraine, reveals the imperialist or non-imperialist nature of Russian policy. Regarding the latter, which is a very important factor in Russian history, Russians on the whole have difficulty in realising that this territory where they find their roots and origins can become an independent and foreign state. It is therefore necessary to look closely at the Russian attitude towards the questions of the Black Sea Fleet, the autonomy of Crimea or the linking up of the eastern part of Ukraine, where the majority of the population is Russian and where the new President of Ukraine, Leonid Kutchma, obtained the most votes.

72. Regarding relations between Russia and the United States, in recent months a tacit agreement seems to have taken shape between the two countries, in particular at the last American/Russian meeting, on their respective zones of influence in the CIS, Latin America and the Caribbean. European countries, and in particular WEU, should analyse this tendency very carefully and prepare a response because inaction by Europe might encourage the idea in Russia that only the United States is a political partner of equal standing. Russian/American domination would then be inevitable.

73. Because of the conflicts in the Caucasus, Russia requested that the provisions of the CFE Treaty concerning deployment of troops on the southern flank should be amended; however, another major question remains outstanding, namely, how Russia intends in future to use its enclave in the Kaliningrad region, which it has declared a special defence zone, causing particular concern to the Baltic countries, primarily Lithuania as a transit country, and to Poland.

74. For Poland and, even more, for Lithuania, the question of an agreement with Russia on military transit to and from its Kaliningrad enclave is serious cause for concern about their national security[38]. If asked to monitor arrangements for this transit, the WEU Council would have to take such a proposal very seriously. It should be recalled that WEU had already shown its ability in such matters with its contribution to ensure respect for the resolution of the United Nations Security Council on the embargo on the Danube. Regarding relations between the Baltic countries and Russia, it should also be noted that with the Skundra radar station, Russia maintains a presence in Latvia although its troops left the country on 31st August 1994. Some territorial questions still remain to be resolved between Russia and Estonia.

75. Another subject of prime importance is Russia's rôle in relation to attempts at international level to find a solution to the conflict in former Yugoslavia, where Russia has played such an active part that it is inconceivable that this conflict can be resolved without its involvement. This is bound to have an effect on Russia's ambitions as regards settlement of future conflicts of the same type.

76. As to Russian policy towards the defence industry and armaments production and export, whereas concerns were previously concentrated on the conversion of military assets to civil use, it would appear that a new policy has since been adopted directed towards increasing exports, a policy which, according to Mr. Kozyrev, constitutes an essential component of Russia's foreign policy. Russia has some reason for concern when it sees the countries of the Visegrad Group and several other countries of Central and Eastern Europe turn towards NATO for their military procurement. Indeed, Russia has already lost a very large part of the armaments market.

77. The military-industrial complex including the Russian nuclear industry, is in a period of great change. This time of uncertainty in an industrial sector that was a major stake in the economic policy of the former Soviet Union is a threat to world security. First, it is increasing the danger of a black market in nuclear and military equipment. WEU should perhaps look more closely at this problem.

78. Regarding Russian commitments towards Asia, particular note should be taken of the arrangement recently reached with China with the aim of establishing a new partnership, one of the essential elements of which is the decision by the two countries to cease training their missiles on the other's territory. Relations with Japan are still difficult because of the unresolved problem of the Kuril islands, however, it is apparent that Russia is seeking to develop productive relations with several Asian partners, among which the ASEAN countries, and specifically with India, to which it provides aid, particularly in the area of ballistic missile production technology – regularly giving rise to negative reactions on the part of the United States. The impression is, however, that the centre of gravity of Russian policy remains Europe and the United States, which opens wide the door to the development of concepts for intensifying dialogue with Russia.

38. Atlantic News, 2659, 5th October 1994.

IV. Some guidelines for the development of relations between WEU and the Russian Federation

79. At present, matters are still at the stage of declarations of intent. Thus the communiqué of the WEU Council of Ministers, issued in Luxembourg on 9th May 1994, states that " ministers, in the context of the growing rôle of WEU in promoting peace, security and stability in Europe, agreed on the importance of developing dialogue and exchanges of information on issues of common concern between WEU and Russia. " Given the very meagre substance of this declaration, the Permanent Council in Brussels should be requested to give clarification. In particular, information should be given on the content of recent contacts between the WEU Secretary-General and the Russian Embassy in Brussels and/or on other contacts between WEU and the Russian authorities.

80. On the Russian side, several signs denoting an increasing interest by the authorities of that country in WEU are observable. First, representatives of the two chambers of the Russian Parliament participated in the colloquy organised by the Assembly on 17th October 1994 and then met with the Political, Defence and Presidential Committees in Paris. Moreover, the participation of a delegation of Russian parliamentarians at the next Assembly session seems virtually certain.

81. Regarding the policy of the Russian Government, the Russian Embassy has recently provided information about a document defining that country's policy towards WEU. This document, which would appear to have been approved by the Russian Head of State on 9th June 1994, may be summarised as follows:

Russia's aims would appear to be:

(i) to establish special partnership relations between Russia and WEU, the objective being to synchronise co-operation with WEU and the development of relations between Russia and the European Union in economic and political matters. It is not a matter of replicating the status of the associate partner countries of WEU but of a stable partnership with Western Europe in political and military matters;

(ii) to give more regular form to Russia's contacts with WEU through meetings between Russian foreign affairs and defence ministers and the Secretariat-General and the ministers of the countries holding the Presidency of that organisation;

(iii) to pursue further the institutionalisation of a consultation mechanism between Russia and WEU, parallel to that existing between Russia and the European Union. Such consultations would concern current problems relating to European and international security. A start could be made with discussions on peace-keeping matters, the Yugoslav crisis and the pact on stability in Europe. Moreover, possibilities might be raised of co-operation with Western Europe on defence matters, particularly co-operation on tactical missile defence;

(iv) bearing in mind that the WEU Assembly plays an important part in defining the future evolution of the Union, to contribute to developing stable links between the Russian Federal Assembly and the WEU Assembly;

(v) to establish contacts between Ros Voorongenie (the Institute assigned responsibility by the presidency for studying the problem of arms sales, chaired by General chaposhnikov) and WEAG;

(vi) to take measures towards establishing co-operation, on a commercial basis, between the Torrejón Satellite Centre and the Russian ministry of defence and other bodies working in this area;

(vii) to develop exchanges, including joint events, between Russian scientific centres and the WEU Institute for Security Studies.

82. It goes without saying that all of these suggestions should be examined with particular care. A basic factor of note, it would appear that the Russian use of the term " partnership " is entirely in the sense WEU would wish. The vital interest which the establishment of relations with Russia should present for WEU lies in the setting up of a regular political dialogue the purpose of which must be to exchange information in order to improve transparency and establish a climate of confidence.

83. The WEU approach is determined by the organisation's rôle as an integral part of the development of the European Union and European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. Its first objective must be confidence-building and the avoidance of a feeling of isolation on the part of the Russians.

84. As to the nature of the dialogue, a system of mutual information must first be established which might develop into one of consultation and even – depending on how matters progress – move towards co-operation in certain specific areas to be determined. A decision must also be taken in this context as to whether it is hoped to

the same degree to establish relations with Ukraine, Belarus and other CIS countries. Subjects for inclusion in the framework of the dialogue are those falling within WEU's area of responsibility on the basis of the modified Brussels Treaty and this approach should be in parallel with that of the European Union, and complementary to the relations which NATO is preparing to develop with Russia.

85. One of the main objectives of this dialogue with Russia should be to allay Russian fears by an assurance to the effect that the Central and Eastern European countries' moving closer to WEU and the enlargement of the European Union to the Scandinavian countries and Austria do not constitute any danger whatsoever for Russia's own interests and will not have the effect of establishing new demarcation lines across Eastern Europe. In fact, it should be made clear to the Russian side that stable and reliable political conditions in Eastern and Central Europe contribute to Russian security and are therefore in its own interest.

86. In order to achieve this, it would be useful to support every effort tending to give Russia the widest possible participation in decision-making in other forums; furthermore, the proposals Russia has put forward for the transformation of the CSCE should not be rejected out of hand, but should be the subject of consultations on the basis of counter-proposals developed in Western Europe, WEU having an important contribution to make in this area.

87. The Russian proposals to discuss peacekeeping matters, the Yugoslav crisis and the stability pact seem entirely acceptable, but should be supplemented by other subjects for discussion, for example, joint risk assessment, disarmament, the problems of dismantling chemical arsenals in Russia, the proliferation of nuclear material, armaments export policy, etc.

88. It should not be forgotten that in all the more specific areas proposed by Russia, such as for example anti-missile defence co-operation, co-operation with WEAG and the Torrejón Satellite Centre, a large part of this co-operation still takes place in WEU within fairly restricted frameworks, from which a certain number of associate or observer countries are excluded. It is therefore necessary to avoid giving Russia a more privileged position than WEU observer or associate partner countries. It should be recalled, however, that technical co-operation between WEU and Russia already exists in the framework of the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty. The WEU Council should consider if, and to what extent, bilateral co-operation of certain member countries with Russia might be developed in the area of defence equipment and the defence industry so as to offer it co-operation specifically in areas where WEU has developed initiatives.

89. The Russian proposal on the organisation of exchanges and joint events involving Russian research institutes, many of which are extremely prestigious, and the WEU Institute for Security Studies, seems especially useful and should be very warmly welcomed.

90. Regarding the modalities of the dialogue, consideration should be given as to how institutionalised it should be. It will be advisable, for various reasons, not to seek to make it too formal in order to retain a certain freedom of action and initiative, as circumstances demand. From another point of view, it is important not to give the Russians the impression that they are being held at a distance; a degree of institutionalisation could therefore be useful, both at parliamentary level and in intergovernmental relations. Within the framework of the European Union's agreement with Russia, it has been decided to create a " parliamentary co-operation committee " which would determine the frequency of its own meetings. There are also provisions for holding summit meetings twice yearly between the President of the Union and the Russian President, and for the creation of a co-operation council which will meet annually. There will also be regular meetings of top civil servants.

91. The Russian proposals dealing with the institutionalisation of the mechanism of consultation between Russia and WEU should be studied carefully, however, at the present stage the time for reaching definitive conclusions does not as yet seem ripe. However, it would appear essential at the very least to establish regular meetings between the Russian Parliament and the WEU Assembly.

V. Conclusions

92. The Political Committee's impressions during its recent visit to Russia are varied: on the one hand it heard Mr. Churkin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, express the conviction that the 21st century would be Russia's century. Again, it was struck by the silence among the students of the Institute for International Relations in Moscow when a member of the committee asked them for their views on the future evolution of Russia and the CIS as a whole.

93. Furthermore, its meetings with the various bodies revealed that Russians still knew very little about the rôle and duties of WEU and its Assembly in the European and transatlantic framework. The feelings that emerged from most of the meetings were fear of isolation and being sidelined by the European institutions, persistent mistrust of NATO and hostility to the enlargement of NATO towards Central Europe and the wish to make itself better known in the West.

94. Reverting to more specific questions, one must take very seriously the information provided by Russian parliamentarians on the difficulties of the Russian authorities, despite their goodwill, in tackling the destruction of enormous arsenals of chemical weapons. In the framework of the development of relations between WEU and Russia, the Council should examine the question of the extent to which its member countries might offer the Russian authorities their assistance in this matter. Furthermore, it appears that several member countries of WEU have concluded or are negotiating bilateral agreements with Russia in various areas of military co-operation, although the Assembly has not been informed of this. It would be essential for the WEU Council to ensure co-ordination between these various initiatives and keep the Assembly informed. Any strengthening of relations between WEU and Russia should replace the lack of knowledge by information, mistrust by confidence and the feeling of isolation on the Russian side by the building of a European security architecture in which Russia might find a place commensurate with its importance.

APPENDIX

Maps [39]

39. Keesing's, 1994, page 39969 (Russia) and the Economist, 6th August 1994 (Caucasus).


KRASNODAR
K U B A N
ADYGEI
STAVROPOL
R U S S I A
KARACHEVO-CHERKESS
KABARDINO-BALKARIA
CHECHNYA
Caspian Sea
CAUCASUS
Vladikavkaz
Grozny
ABKHAZIA
INGUSHETIA
NORTH OSSETIA
DAGESTAN
Sukhumi
Black Sea
SOUTH OSSETIA
MOUNTAINS
AJARIA
GEORGIA
Tbilisi
AZERBAIJAN
ARMENIA
Baku
Yerevan
NAGORNO-KARABAKH
T U R K E Y
NAKHICHEVAN (Belongs to Azerbaijan)
I R A N
0 Km 200

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