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ANALYSES

The international objectives of Russia's historical campaign

The intensive historical campaign which has been ongoing in Russia in recent weeks, in connection with the seventieth anniversary of World War II, culminated on 31 August and 1 September with statements by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The main message of these statements was that any attempts at building security in Europe without Russia as a key player were doomed to failure. This suggests that – unlike in the case of the previous propaganda exercises of this kind – one of the aims of the present campaign is to convince the West of the necessity to build a new security order in Europe, and to neutralise the resistance of those European states which are critical of Russia (especially Poland and the Baltic States).

The message from Putin and Lavrov

On 31 August, Poland's *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article authored by the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Moderate in tone, the message of the text was addressed both to Poland and to European public opinion. Addressing the Poles, the Russian PM suggested that we should not concentrate on difficult history, and instead follow the example of France and Germany and give a "pragmatic" dimension to policy towards Russia (for example, by being open to co-operation in the energy and transport sectors, etc.). This would constitute a positive breakthrough in Polish-Russian relations. However, Putin's letter also contained another message, addressed to the European public: *The entire experience of the interwar period – from the peace of Versailles to the outbreak of World War II – proves that it is impossible to create an effective collective security system without involving all the states in Europe, including Russia.* The Russian prime minister made a similar point on 1 September in his speech during the ceremonies in Gdansk, where he said that before the war European states failed to build a collective security system, and history showed that co-operation with extremists at the expense of the security of other states was a source of tragedy.

A similar message, though expressed at greater length and more aggressively, was presented by the Russian head of diplomacy Sergei Lavrov on 1 September in his article published by the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* newspaper, and in his lecture to students of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) on the same day. In the article, Lavrov emphasised that the lesson of World War II was still valid today because (as then) the main systemic defect of European security consisted in *"the absence of an open system of collective security that would extend across the Euro-Atlantic region."*

In his lecture, the Russian minister criticised the West for having opted to expand eastwards after the end of the Cold War, instead of building a new collective security system with Russia. Lavrov also accused the West again

(the first instance being his address to the OSCE in Vienna on 23 June) of having encroached on the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the Russian head of diplomacy praised the change in US policy under the Obama administration as being a manifestation of “constructive pragmatism”. He also suggested that Russian-American co-operation could become an important element in the global order, and that co-operation between Russia, the United States and the European Union could lay the foundation for a new Euro-Atlantic order. Finally, Lavrov said he hoped that Russian initiatives concerning a new order of European security would be accepted.

The Russian minister also strongly criticised those who expressed disappointment with the USA’s new policy. He directly attacked the authors of the letter sent by members of the Central and Eastern European elites to President Obama, accusing them of having attempted to persuade Washington to resume the policy of confrontation with Russia. He also once again accused certain NATO members (without naming them) of anti-Russian phobias, and repeated the allegations concerning the falsification of history. He said that Russia would actively oppose this, and that any attempts at “taking away our victory” would be regarded as stepping over a “red line” in politics.

Conclusion: The international objectives of Russia’s historical campaign

In the current historical campaign, which relies on clichés of Soviet historiography, the Russian authorities are drawing clear analogies between the situation in the 1930s and the current situation in Europe. By defending the Soviet policy of that time, the Russian leaders are implying that the European powers and certain states in Central and Eastern Europe were co-responsible for the outbreak of World War II, because they allegedly refused to create a collective security system with the Soviet state. This is meant as a lesson for Europe, the message of which is that Russia must not be ignored, and that a new security order should be created in which Russia would be a key player. In practice, this would mean recognising the CIS as a Russian sphere of influence, and that Central Europe would be considered as a partly demilitarised area. In this context, one of the aspects of the current Russian campaign appears to be an instrument for pressure on the West (which is a new phenomenon), as well as a measure to neutralise the objections of those European countries who are critical of Russia (especially the Baltic States and Poland) and stand against such a new European order. The latter group of countries is therefore to be forced, by pressure from Moscow, to revise their policies along the lines of ‘pragmatism’ and stop opposing Russia’s proposals, or – given the change in US policy – to be left in a kind of political isolation in the Euro-Atlantic area, and discredited as Russophobes struggling with long-standing historical problems with Russia.

Marek Menkiszak

EVENTS

Russia's new energy strategy

On 27 August, the Russian government adopted a new energy strategy to run until the year 2030. The text of the document has not been published yet, and is only known from fragmentary accounts in the media. The strategy envisages a substantial increase in the production and export of energy resources and a thorough modernisation of the energy sector. It also announces an increase in Russia's share on the global energy market as a means of strengthening its political role on the international stage. This strategy's ambitious objectives will require enormous investments, and will be very difficult to implement.

The document replaces the 'Energy strategy of Russia to 2020' plan, adopted in 2003. The new version of the strategy is to be implemented in three stages. During the first one, to be completed by 2013–2015, the critical tendencies in the energy sector (such as decreasing production) are to be overcome, and "conditions created for faster development and modernisation of the sector". During the second stage, to be completed by 2020–2022, the energy efficiency of the Russian economy is to be enhanced, and the new oil and gas production centre in Eastern Siberia and the Far East made fully operational. Finally, by 2030, the energy intensity of the Russian economy is to be reduced by half, and the proportion of nuclear and renewable energy in the electricity generation increased from the current level of 32% to 38%. The strategy envisages investments in the energy sector totalling US\$1.8 – 2.1 billion by 2030. These are intended to achieve an increase in gas production by 33.2–41.5%, by 8.6–9.7% in oil production, and by 17% in electricity generation capacity. These plans will only be feasible with a substantial contribution from foreign investors, and only if tax conditions for energy companies change. <Wojk>

New Russian gas pipeline to South Ossetia

On 26 August, the anniversary of the recognition of South Ossetia's independence by Russia, the Dzurikau-Tskhinvali gas pipeline was launched, through which Russian gas will be supplied directly to the breakaway republic. It will end South Ossetia's reliance on gas supplies via Georgia. The Ossetian and Russian authorities have openly admitted that the character of the project was political rather than economic. The new gas pipeline will increase South Ossetia's dependence on Russia.

163 kilometres long, the gas pipeline has been built and financed (at a cost of US\$500 million) by Gazprom. The construction started in late 2006; the pace of works accelerated following the Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008. The pipeline is technologically unique, in that more than half of its route lies at altitudes over 2,000 meters above sea level. The project's main objective was to end South Ossetia's dependence on gas supplies via Georgia (the Agara–Tskhinvali pipeline).

Because of the high costs involved in the construction, the project was not justifiable from an economic point of view. During the opening ceremony, the South Ossetian prime minister Vadim Brovcev stated openly that Gazprom “was involved in political, rather than economic projects in the republic”. The price of gas supplied via the pipeline will be US\$15 per 1000 m³ (Georgia pays US\$225). Gas will only be supplied from Russia to Tskhinvali, because no gas distribution networks exist in the remaining parts of South Ossetia. <WojK>.

The IMF may withdraw from co-operation with Ukraine

Max Alier, the IMF’s representative in Ukraine, has warned the Ukrainian authorities that the Fund may suspend co-operation if the Ukrainian government fails to implement the programme agreed with the IMF. This would mean suspending the fourth tranche of the loan, but would not critically aggravate the situation of the Ukrainian government as it has already received US\$ 4.7 billion in assistance for budget purposes.

In last week’s interview for the *Kontrakty* weekly, the IMF’s representative warned Ukraine against taking any decisions which would violate the arrangements made with the Fund. This was a reference to decisions to increase the budget deficit and decisions by the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) to finance this deficit by printing money. The IMF expects the Ukrainian government to implement the decisions increasing the gas price for households, which were to be put into practice on 1 September, and wants to see positive results of the programme to strengthen the banking sector. Meanwhile, the situation concerning the gas price increases is unclear. During the IMF’s last mission to Ukraine, it was decided that the prices would be increased; however, PM Tymoshenko announced on 25 August that prices would not be raised this year, and on 31 August the district administrative court in Kyiv ruled that the price increases would be illegal.

Prime Minister Tymoshenko is thus gambling that the payment of another US\$3.8 billion under the stand-by loan may be suspended until the end of the year. However, with the funds obtained before (US\$10.5 billion), and especially with the possibility to use the US\$4.7 billion from the second and third tranche to support the state budget, Tymoshenko has averted major budget problems. At this moment, it is more important for her to avoid increasing the prices of gas, which could lose her popularity before the presidential elections in which she will stand. <AnG>

Moldova: Communists give up power and hope for a fresh election early next year

The Moldovan president Vladimir Voronin has announced that the Communist party (PCRM), of which he is the leader, is going into opposition, and he himself is going to step down as president. At the same time, the PCRM has refused to recognise the election of the speaker of parliament by the coalition of the four opposition parties, which gained a total of 53 out of 101 mandates in the early election on 29 July. This means that the deep political conflict in Moldova will continue, and will probably lead to another early election at the beginning of next year.

Having failed to persuade at least one of the opposition parties to move over to his side, Voronin's decision means that he has shifted all political responsibility onto the opposition. On 8 August, the opposition formed the Alliance for European Integration, and elected Mihai Ghimpu, the leader of the Liberal Party, as the speaker of parliament during the new legislature's first meeting on 28 August. Since the Alliance is eight votes short of electing a new president who, in turn, could designate a member of the new coalition as prime minister, the PCRM may block the election of the president (as a result of which another parliamentary election would have to be held early next year), in the hope that the electorate will blame the deepening economic crisis on the new coalition and once again put all the power in the hands of the PCRM. <wrod>

CES

The Centre for Eastern Studies

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