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▶ The Image of Russian National Security Policy in the Near Abroad after September 11

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Introduction

In the decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian national security policy has been influenced by a variety of factors, including geopolitics, nationalism, economics and the actions of political elites. Throughout these years, two approaches simultaneously formed Russia's national security policy. First was the "rivalry joint fear approach" (RJFA), which was motivated by the U.S.'s "near abroad" presence in relation to Russia. The second approach was referred to as the "cooperation joint award approach" (CJAA), which was motivated by one of Russia's key goals of deepening its international influence by broadening its interactions with the U.S. and Europe. Russians have utilized one or both of these approaches based on a cost-benefit analysis that weighed the political requirements (both internal and external) for ensuring their national interests. In fact, the "rivalry joint fear approach" illustrated Russian concerns for security, while the "cooperation joint award approach" reflected their economic concerns.

In the post-Cold War years, Russia's policies towards the "near abroad" have been overshadowed by the resolute U.S. presence in a number of former Soviet republics as well as NATO's "Partnership for Peace" plan. As a result, Russia's military power has been gradually dwindling in CIS countries. The U.S. has exerted significant pressure on Russian security policymakers by deliberately influencing "near abroad" countries through colored revolutions, investments in energy industries and transfer routes, and struggles against terrorism that expand and deepen its authority in Middle Eastern countries that border Russia. As a result, Russians have developed an integrated missile defense and preemptive attack plan to confront the new U.S. national security policy formulated after the 9/11 attacks. On the other hand, the "cooperation joint award approach" can be illustrated through Russia's cooperation with the U.S. in Afghanistan and other struggles against terrorism, nuclear negotiations with Iran and North Korea, and other dealings with Western powers.

Russian National Security Doctrine and Strategy

Many factors have historically played a role in Russia's national security policymaking, but factors such as nationalism (a substitute for communist ideology) and the attitude of political elites are increasingly shaping its new national security policy. Because nationalist views and the will of political elites are effective in shaping foreign and security policies, many thinkers and theoreticians have focused on these two factors when presenting their theoretical views. These theories are mostly related to the attitudes, perceptions and mentalities of leaders and statesmen. The two aforementioned factors, particularly Russian nationalism, are influencing policymaking.^[1] We can therefore claim that, Russia's national security doctrine and strategy after the collapse of the Soviet Union changed partly because of the changing attitudes of both political elites and the policymaking of the security apparatus; these changes intensified after 9/11. Meanwhile, geopolitical factors have remained intact.

In fact, RJFA and CJAA are two technical and functional methods of the new image of Russia's national security policy after the 9/11 event. RJFA results primarily from the deliberate presence of the U.S. and the West in Russia's near abroad and rim-land, especially the Near East, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and South Asia. This aggressive presence has led Russia to increase its military budget in order to produce the new generation of missiles that are capable of passing the U.S.'s national defense missile system. Within this framework, Russia conducts joint military maneuvers with China, sells modern military equipment to India and some countries in the Middle East, and promotes strategic partnerships with influential Asian powers.

On the other hand, the CJA approach in Russia's new national security policy seeks to expand and deepen bilateral and multilateral interactions, which includes participation in the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, G-8, UN, etc. Although Russia's level of interactions in light of this approach suggests cooperation with the goal of receiving awards, only two of the four stages of

the approach have been undertaken: confidence-building and cooperation. The other two stages, partnerships and coalitions, have yet to be undertaken. The only prerequisite for the realization of alliances and coalitions is mutual understanding and willpower. Yet, Russia has not moved beyond the first two stages. For instance, it is still in the stage of cooperating with NATO as defined in the framework of the Atlantic Council, but Russians lack the right of veto in this Council.

From a historical point of view, the era that promised a full convergence of security cooperation between Russia and the West has been replaced by a new era fraught with doubts and mistrust about the membership of some East European countries in NATO as well as NATO's enlargement further east. These concerns increased after Turkey's support of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh crisis and Turkey's subsequent adoption of the West's critical view regarding Russia's behavior in the Chechen conflict. However, Russia tried to prevent the deterioration of its security relations with the West by boosting the role of the OSCE in resolving regional differences, which Russia supposed could be effective in marginalizing NATO. At that period, Russia was still hopeful about receiving aid from Western financial institutions. Along these lines, Russia accepted the mediatory role of the OSCE in the first round of the crisis in Chechnya. On the other hand, it joined NATO's "Partnership for Peace" plan and participated in its program, which included joint military exercises in Central Asia. Russia's aim was apparently to influence the process of "NATO's expansion to the East," despite its official opposition to it. These policies continued with some minor fluctuations until the emergence of the Kosovo crisis and NATO's direct involvement. The crisis mad the conflict between Russia's and NATO's security policies public.[\[2\]](#)

During Putin's presidency, the RJFA was adopted in formulating security policy, especially in the use of strategic weapons. Among the most important attempts made along these lines is the ratification of the "START-2" treaty and proposing a common European antimissile defense system in response to US antimissile defense system. Regarding the latter, Putin made a speech addressing German businessmen in his first European tour after assuming the presidency. In his speech Putin said, "Cooperation between us could be in the form of the construction of a non-strategic antimissile defense system covering all of Europe from Atlantic Ocean to Ural Mountains." He said that Russia is ready to cooperate.[\[3\]](#) Putin, however, in his official visit to Washington emphasized that "if we allow ourselves to upset current balance of power and to hurt existing interests in world security, this would have grave consequences. [\[4\]](#)

Role of the Military in Foreign Policy

Public opinion, historical background, and elites that include military commanders and security officers have had a very important and determining role in shaping Russia's security policies. The Russian army and militarism have had a deep-rooted effect on furthering Soviet and Russian security policies.[\[5\]](#) The military has traditionally played a special role in formulating and explaining the former Soviet military doctrine and foreign policy. Among the important factors which allocated the Soviet Union's foreign policy to the military were phenomena such as the Cold War, existence of military alliances like NATO and the Warsaw Pact, political groupings like world level and military support of Soviet satellites, the existence of a large military-industrial complex, the necessity of selling their military products in world markets, and most importantly, protecting the security of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. At the present time Putin and his surrounding generals have maintained their influence in the power structure. With the election of a new president, Putin will be appointed as prime minister. Following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, many problems exist, such as disputes in Soviet territories, inconsistency in foreign policy, Foreign Affairs Ministry mishandling of developments in the CIS and other places like Bosnia, the necessity of presence in the world arms markets, and the expansion of NATO to the East. These are important factors that contribute to the continuation of military involvement in foreign policy.

With the formation of an independent army in Russia and the establishment of related bodies, the army continued its role in the process of Russian foreign and domestic political decision makings. Yeltsin properly used military forces in critical situations. Apart from their effective support of Yeltsin during the Parliament's insurgency in October 1993, military forces were successful in the landing operation in the port of Puti for supporting Schwarznadze against Gamsakhordia, in their battle in Tajikistan in preventing the power acquisition of an Islamic government in Dushanbe, and also in the events of Denister river bank in Moldova. Pavel Grachev, former Russian Defense Minister, frequently criticized the function of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during different periods, especially during the crisis in Bosnia and Tajikistan. In the crisis, the Ministry did not coordinate activities with the Defense Ministry, which was led by Kozyrev; instead, it directly reported to the president. Many events, like the appointment of military forces in Russia's Foreign Affairs Ministry and their presence in the Security Council and foreign policy council, particularly suggest that Russian policies regarding developments and disputes in the former Soviet sphere are formulated based on militaristic tendencies. For example, so far Russia's army has taken determinant steps to protect Russia's political and security interests, relying upon concluded agreements between Russia and the former republics. Russian military experts need the republics under the conditions that no regional and international organization will intervene or play a role in conflicts in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

By exploiting the presence of the fourteenth division in the Denister region in Moldova, Russia could neutralize the idea of Moldovan officials who want to ally with Romania and instead force it to join the CIS. The technical and military support of Abkhazian rebels by Russian soldiers in their battle with the government of Georgia, forced political leadership in Tbilisi to accept the continuation of Russia's military presence and accession to the CIS, despite its reluctance. After that, Russian weapons were made available to Georgian forces. Blitzkrieg attacks on Abkhazia began and Russian forces returned to their previous bases. In Tajikistan, Russia's 201st division acted in support of the central Rakhmanov government and took control of the situation after the fall of popular Islamic government in Dushanbe (with the help of Russian

military forces).

Russian Security Policy in the Near Abroad

In Russian security policy in the near abroad, the RJFA is more prominent than the CJAA. A glance at Russia's position on a map is enough to realize that this vast country is located in several different geographical regions, which requires a special security policy.

The regions which constitute Russia's security zones are as follows:

1- Europe

2- The CIS

3- The Caspian Sea basin

4- Central Asia and Afghanistan

5- The Caucasus

6- The Far East

Out of six Russian security zones, three relate to former Soviet regions; therefore, it is clear that these republics are of great importance and priority for Russia.

Russia's behavior and military-security policy are influenced by several essential factors:

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The Concept of "collective security" and military integration in the "CIS".

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Russian military doctrine.

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Russia's security interests and threats in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

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The role and influence of the military in Russian foreign policy.

Concept of "Collective Security" and Military Integration from Russian Perspective:

The theory of collective security and the belief in the concept of military-security integration form the basis of policy taken by Russia and the former Soviet Union. This theory, in fact, theoretically justifies the conclusion of the Tashkent Security Collective Pact, which is another one of Russia's practical steps. The Tashkent Collective Security Pact concluded on 15 May 1992 during the summit meeting of the CIS countries. The initial members of this pact were Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Armenia. Later the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus joined them. The three countries of Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Moldova are not members of this pact.

One of the characteristics of the theory of "collective security" from the Russian perspective is that none of the republics of the former Soviet Union is solely capable of guaranteeing its security, and a coordinated move led by Russia is necessary for guaranteeing the security of all countries. Of course, Russian military observers hold the view that not all the republics of the former Soviet Union are at the same level in terms of Russia's security and strategic interests. Therefore, pursuing collective security with some of the republics is less difficult, due to the existence of a common enemy and similar threats; however, they believe that military integration is a product of political and economic integration and depends on establishing an equal co-partnership among CIS members. Yet, due to the existence of crises in most of these republics, a Russian security policy aimed at integration and collective security is the best way for guaranteeing military security.[\[6\]](#)

In practice, the CIS ratified the Collective Security Pact on February 10, 1995 in Almati and signed the draft that implemented documents regarding military cooperation between republics on May 26, 1995 in the CIS summit meeting. This sanctioned the theory of collective security and the essential orientation for developing military cooperation among the member countries. They also ratified documents related to the establishment of the Secretariat of the Collective Security Council (the main working body of the Council) in the joint meeting of Defense and Foreign Affairs ministers on April 14, 1994. However, these documents have yet to be put into effect for several reasons. In fact, concerns about instability in the former Soviet republics, regional developments, and the emergence of new actors in the US and NATO has led Russia to adopt the RJFA in its security policy in the near abroad and to pursue alliance-coalitions with the former republics around the topic of collective security.[\[7\]](#)

2- Russia's Military Doctrine

According to Russia's military doctrine, the country regards the foundation of its new military policy to be the establishment of peace and stability in its neighboring area and in its allies' territories, as well as the confrontation of ethnic and religious conflicts. The existence of religious, ethnic and cultural ties between these countries and Iran, Turkey and Pakistan are among its suggested justifications. The doctrine predicts that any attack on Russia or its allies by any foreign country, with even the use of conventional weapons, will be confronted with nuclear weapons.

Russia's military doctrine states that: "Guaranteeing military security of the Federation of Russia and its vital interests depend, in the first place, on the following issues":

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In the scope of domestic policy: solving economic, political and social problems; implementation of reforms.

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In the scope of foreign policy: establishing ties with our surrounding world and, firstly, with our neighbors and super powers.

Russia's military doctrine considers the most important potentials or actual sources of military danger to be territorial claims made by some countries against it and its allies, and local wars and armed conflicts, most importantly those that occur close to its borders. Also, according to military doctrine, Russia attaches priority to the CIS in order to defend international peace and security. Additionally, it focused on cooperation with its members for the settlement of problems regarding defense and collective security, as well as the agreement on military policy and defense structure.[\[8\]](#)

The near abroad plays a strategic role in Russia's security policy. For this reason, Russia has developed the use of all of its military and security instruments in this region. In fact, the near abroad is considered the red line of Russia's security policy. [\[9\]](#) Based on security and geopolitical considerations, the adoption of these policies in military doctrine originates from the RJFA.

3- Interests and Threats in Russia's Security Policy towards the CIS

Russia's security policy in the near abroad identifies goals and interests, means for obtaining the goals, relevant strategies and, most importantly, threats. In fact, the RJFA, adopted for the "near abroad," considers security interests and threats very important.[\[10\]](#) The "Russian Foreign and Defense Council" classified Russia's interests in the former Soviet republics into three categories: vital, important and less important interests. In the field of military and security issues, the guidelines of the abovementioned council are as follows:

Vital Interests:

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The government must use every available means including military force for protecting these interests:

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Protecting the territorial integrity and independence of Russia and securing its citizen's freedom and welfare;

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Preventing the military-political dominance of other powers in the sphere of the former Soviet Union;

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Preventing the formation of any hostile coalition against Russia, including coalitions formed in response to Russia's efforts in the sphere of the former Soviet Union;

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Preventing the creation of local and military conflicts in neighboring countries;

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Creating more political-economic convergence and political-military union with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Important Interests:

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Joint use of borders, territories of neighboring governments and their military equipments (such as an air defense and warning systems) to prevent any military threat against Russia and to prevent endangerment of its internal stability by drug smuggling and the trafficking of criminals, illegal weapons, raw materials, nuclear materials and dual use technologies;

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The use of political, economic, military and other potentials of the former soviet republics to strengthen Russia and other republics in order to enhance their international political situation;

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Preventing the transformation of these republics into a leverage to exert political pressure to contribute to an imbalance against Russia;

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Boosting cooperation in its political-military fields. Russia, however, is not very interested in the formation of a serious and costly defense union which would be considered a military threat by other neighboring countries.

Less Important Interests:

- None of Russian interests in the military sector are among less important interests; they are only placed in the first two categories.

Some Considerations Regarding other Topics Suggested by Russia's Foreign and Defense Policy Council

In regards to military affairs, the "Foreign and Defense Policy Council" advised that due to the lack of a common enemy among the republics, the establishment of a common defense system is unnecessary; cooperation should instead focus on missile and air defenses as well as border controls. According to this view, any "military alliance," regardless of its costs, reduces Russia's military capabilities, making it a threat for the security of the republics.

Accordingly, the "Council" believes that in its present situation, it is necessary to take strategic alliances into consideration from all perspectives. An alliance with Belarus could lead to a quick expansion of NATO; an alliance with Armenia may endanger Russia's interests in Azerbaijan; and, the alliance with Kazakhstan may create some concerns for China. Also, it must assume that military-political commitments may oblige it to spend its economic and military resources to protect allies, which is not to the benefit of its interests. The Council, however, has defended Russia's peacekeeping operations in current conflicts in the CIS and has employed every effort for undermining the aforementioned role as being in contradiction with Russia's actions.

Finally, the "Council" states that the following problems must be urgently resolved in regards to the protection of Russia's national security:

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Terminating some agreements concerning the common defense of foreign borders and military cooperation;

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Devising some guarantees for protecting Russian citizens;

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The formation of a collective security council within the CIS along with institutions related to a collective security system.

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Dangers and Threats against Russian National Security

According to Russia's Foreign and Defense Policy Council, foreign threats posed against Russia in its military-security arena are as follows:

- Existence of potential and actual regional wars and conflicts in areas close to Russian borders;
- International terrorism and developing relations with political groups in Russia and former Soviet republics
- Proliferation of nuclear weapons and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction and the potentials for their future use;
- Possible establishment of powerful military groups in the countries near its borders and the increase in their combat effectiveness through technological enhancements in weaponry;
- Possible upset of strategic stability as a result of a breach in international agreements, a reduction in weaponry, and the quantitative and qualitative expansion of weapons in other countries;
- Attacks on its military facilities in foreign countries;
- Ethnic conflicts in surrounding regions.

Russian Military – Security Principles and Goals in the Near Abroad

The military-security principles and goals of Russia are numerous; but, the most important of these goals could be enumerated as follows:

- - Willingness to consolidate the military presence in the republics;

- - Consolidating Tashkent Collective Security Pact;
- - Common protection of borders;
- - Prevention of military-security influence over the republics by other international and regional powers.

Russia has implemented policies to consolidate its military presence in the republics by signing contracts concerning the presence of its troops in those countries.

The numbers of Russian military forces in the republics are as follows:

In Belarus, there are 25 to 30,000 troops. In Ukraine, 15000 Russian troops serve in the Black Sea fleet. In Moldova, 7000 troops serve in Russia's 14th Army. In Georgia, 5000 troops are deployed in five military bases and three ports. In Armenia, 9000 Russian troops are present in the border regions of Iran and Turkey. In Azerbaijan, 500 troops defend oil facilities and some troops protect radars and warning systems in the "Qibleh" base. In the territory of Turkmenistan, 15000 Russian troops protect its borders with Iran and Afghanistan. In Tajikistan, 24000 troops protect the borders of this country with Afghanistan as well as the government in Dushanbe. In Kyrgyzstan, 3500 troops, in Uzbekistan 5000 troops and in Kazakstan 1000 troops guard nuclear missiles and the Baikonor space center.^[11] Of course, the presence of Russian forces has faced opposition in some of the republics. Yet, Russia still persists on its military presence in neighboring republics.

From an official point of view, the Tashkent Collective Security Pact has deterrent effects for some southern neighbors of Russia and other countries seeking to expand influence in Central Asia. Russian officials have so far paid special attention to the Tashkent Collective Security Pact because they believe it is necessary to form a defense accord based on the pact along with making other bilateral agreements with the republics. Protecting the borders of the former Soviet Union is important in two respects. On one hand, Russia considers the sphere of the former Soviet Union as its vital interest zone; on the other hand, due to the lack of official borders between Russia and many of these republics, protecting former foreign borders is regarded as protecting Russian security.

As a result, Russia has created concerns about border insecurities among the republics with the aim of extending its activities over former Soviet territory. These implications coerce governments to sign border cooperation agreements with Russia. Also, Moscow tries to dictate its policies through the ratification of agreements and the adoption of measures in meetings of the CIS defense minister's council. Agreements for the joint protection of borders have been signed with many of these republics. In December 1993 in Ishqabad, the heads of 5 central Asian states signed a cooperation document that called for the protection of shared borders. Also, some agreements were signed regarding the legal status and conditions of the activities of Russian troops in Georgia, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, with these countries.

So far, Russia has signed bilateral border agreements with Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. At the present time, the foreign borders of these republics are either completely or partially protected by Russian border troops. Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakstan assume all responsibility over their borders, but have agreed to take Russian interests and security concerns into account. Russia has not yet signed border agreements with either Uzbekistan or Azerbaijan. Another way that Russia implements its border policies is by holding meetings with the CIS council of border guard commanders.

Russia full heartedly pursues the following general goals through the adoption of policies that protect former Soviet borders:

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Guaranteeing Russian security interests along the CIS borders with the aim of the transferring existing threats to the regions beyond its borders.

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Preventing the labor and financial costs of establishing new border posts along the borders which would cost 2 billion dollars per km.

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Protecting the 25 million Russians that live in CIS countries, half of which live in Central Asia.

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Protecting strategic and vital economic, political and military interests by ensuring that former republics maintain their technical, industrial, and financial dependencies while Russia continues to extract their mineral resources; the republics are the main supplier of raw materials to Russia.

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Filling the security gap along the former Soviet borders, especially along the southern borders.

In regards to the prevention of foreign security-military influence, despite its apparent indifference about foreign and Western economic presence in the in former Soviet territories (and even, in some cases, welcoming it), Russia has shown its opposition in different forms when facing military expansionism. One example to support this claim is Russia's clear opposition to former Soviet republics joining NATO. Of course, following the September 11 events, Russia changed its policies regarding the US military presence in some Central Asian countries, like in the struggle against Al -Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan; this is a subject which will be discussed later.

Russia's Approach to Central Asia Following September 11 Event

Following the September 11 event and the subsequent US attack on Afghanistan, military and security conditions in Central Asia underwent transformations. Security issues became very important. The US came to the conclusion that direct presence in Central Asia is necessary for supervising regional developments and conducting war in Afghanistan. In light of international and regional security circumstances, Russia abandoned its usual opposition to U.S military presence in Central Asia; instead, it contributed directly to US efforts in attacking Afghanistan in the struggle against terrorism by exchanging information and making its air space and bases in the region available. At the time, Russia's pursued goal was not an improvement of relations with the US; rather, it had serious concerns about Al-Qaeda, terrorism, and obvious vulnerabilities in being able to confront Islamic fundamentalism within its territories. Hence, it decided to help the US in its military efforts.

In a general view, Russia's approach has been to use the opportunities presented by this crisis to improve relations with the US and thereby enjoy its influence in order to benefit from the advantages of financial and monetary organizations. Accordingly, Russia declared its cooperation with the international coalition for confronting terrorists in Afghanistan. Russia's approach regarding its interaction with the US based on cooperation had been established a long time before the September 11 events, and these events merely accelerated the process. In other words, following September 11, the preconceived approach based on cooperation replaced the rivalry approach.

Effective Variables in Creating the New Situation Based on Cooperation between the US and Russia in Central Asia:

Following the September 11 events in Washington and New York and the subsequent US and British attacks on Afghanistan leading to the overthrow of the Taliban government, the US completed its War on Terror strategy and deployed US and British troops into Central Asia (around the general area of Forghaneh valley and in areas neighboring Afghanistan where Islamic radicalism has many proponents) and into bases in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The deployment of these forces, which were under NATO leadership, in an area considered to be Russia's "near abroad," with great strategic value in Russian foreign policy, was a surprising event. Furthermore, when the US deployed forces in Georgia to train Georgian military on strategies of how to struggle against terrorism, Russia adopted a moderate stance, suggesting that the new Russian policy has been formulated by a cost-benefit analysis.

Vladimir Putin defined Russia's new status in the international system by adopting realistic policies, leaving out ideology in foreign policy, giving new defining national interests, and ratifying new doctrines in economic, political, security and military policies. Accordingly, the best option for Russia was to avoid competition, to allocate resources to economic development and reconstruction, to get a desirable (not ideal) share from international economy structures that include the energy economy, world trade, and new technologies.[\[12\]](#)

Russian Priorities, Goals and Interests in Interaction with the US

US-Russian relations cover different geographical zones, specifically Eastern Europe, (in the far abroad) an area that comprises of issues such as the defense missile shield in both Poland and Czech Republic and the new arms race. But, this section will only address their relationship with regards to the CIS.

Russia's essential goals in Central Asia in its interaction with the US in the existing relative stability era could be summarized as follows:

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Russia's revenge on Taliban movement; one of the main intentions of Russia and its allies in Central Asia was preventing the spread of the Afghan crisis into Russian security space. It is clear that enough justifications will exist for the continued presence of Western forces in the region until this threatening element is eliminated.

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Formulating a new time frame for the repayment of Russia's debts and also exempting some of the loans obtained by Russia from international financial and credit institutions.

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Delaying decision-making on whether some of the CIS countries should join NATO, particularly the Baltic Sea countries such as Ukraine which have common borders with Russia.

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Maintaining its military and strategic bases in Central Asia.

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Quick and easy confrontation with any Islamic movement within Russia, given the fact that this country has more than 20 million Muslims.

Suppressing Chechen militants^[13] by using unconditional international support while struggling against the sources of the intellectual and logistical support of Islamism which have created numerous concerns and problems for Russia in the Chechen crisis.

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Defending the rights of Russians in the former Soviet republics.

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Reconstruction and improvement of the economic situation.

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Maintaining leadership in the CIS.

Russia believes that the realities of the region has taught the US that it cannot remain in the region for a long time, because the ethnic-cultural and political structures of these countries has many potential sources of conflict; so, the US long-term presence could provide concerns for these countries and make the US believe that it should withdraw; in this case, the first country which is needed by these republics would be Russia. According to this analysis, having benefited from cooperation with the US in attacking Afghanistan and struggling against terrorism, Russia gradually changed its policy towards Central Asia and used every opportunity to limit US forces and military bases.

The US and the West in general supported the colored revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan as well as opposition groups in Uzbekistan; in order to emphasize the observance of human rights in Central Asian countries, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) urged the US to withdraw its forces from the region. Subsequently, the Uzbek government urged the US to withdraw its military forces from Uzbekistan. Also, Russia believes that the deployment of a missile defense system in Poland and Czech Republic would be a threat against its national security. Although the last meeting between US and Russian leaders on 6 April 2008 in Suchi was supposed to address Moscow's concerns, its primary concern regarding the deployment of the missile defense system has not been resolved. Russia believes that the deployment of US missiles in the "far abroad" (Central and Eastern Europe) could trigger a new round in an arms race that would influence Russia's regional policy in the "near abroad." For example, Lavrov warned that if the US and Russia could not agree on the US missile defense system issue, a new arms race would develop. Vladimir Putin, who was recently appointed as prime minister, made a speech in Parliament on 8 February 2008 that stated that closure of the former Soviet military bases coincides with NATO building bases in Romania and Bulgaria, the possible membership of Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova in NATO's Partnership for Peace Plan, and the US deployment of a missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic. While expressing his discontent with a new arms race with the West, Putin maintained that Russia is ready to confront these threats through the production of advanced weapons. One of the issues discussed in NATO's session in early February 2008 in Bucharest was the increase of the number of NATO forces in Afghanistan. The leaders of 26 NATO member countries emphasized escalating NATO's presence in Afghanistan. It was agreed that Russia would make the necessary arrangements for NATO to access Russian airspace, roads and railways in order to make logistical activities easier.

Russia's Strategic Options in the Near Abroad

This section will briefly address Russia's strategic options in the framework of the RJF and CJA approaches in consequence of the following developments: Putin's appointment as prime minister; the increasing arms race between Russia and the West, especially the deployment of a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic; and most importantly, the expanded prominence of NATO forces in Afghanistan and its subsequent opportunity to confront the Taliban and Al-Qaeda; Russia's agreement to assist NATO's mission through making its territory available for logistical activities; and, the impact of these developments on Russia's regional policy.

Putin's unprecedented remarks on 17 August 2007 are of great importance. He spoke about the new mission of Russia's strategic bombers that carry strategic missiles to safeguard Russian borders, and the bases of some of these bombers are located in the east of Russia. Although Putin did not name any specific enemies, political observers believe that US activities led Putin to address the issue. The serious impact of these policies can be observed in Russia's regional policy in the near abroad including military exercises carried out by members of the Shanghai treaty. Russia and China, along other members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held a joint military exercise in early September 2007 with the aim of maintaining a strategic balance against the West and the US. Although they avoided the use of such language in their official statements, the news sources in Russia and China widely used critical language in their analyses. Additionally, on August 2007 news sources in Georgia stated that a Russian airplane had entered Georgia's airspace and shot a rocket which did not explode. Russian leaders have appropriated 200 billion dollars to the production of new strategic air planes, advanced cruise missiles and modern ships.[\[14\]](#)

Putin, as Russia's new prime minister, is still seeking to maintain a tight political circle on the national level while he also strengthens his relationships with leaders of powerful regional countries like China. To illustrate his continued grip on power, Western news sources still speak about the new Putin's regime, even after he has stepped down as president. Undoubtedly, the US is the main adversary in the new round of strategic games in Central Asia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Central and Eastern Europe. US and NATO's military presence in Afghanistan provides an opportunity for Russia to confront Al-Qaeda while Russia faces security challenges in Chechnya. Meanwhile Russia's revenues from energy and arms sales are considered an important tool in its new military and diplomatic rivalry with the US. Any military conflict between Russia and the US is currently out of the question, and it is expected that the two sides will expand their future connections and exchange of viewpoints. But Russia will continue its anti-Western and anti-American policies, especially through selling advanced weaponry to countries located in the security sensitive regions of the new abroad like the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria, China, and India. For example, in order to express its opposition to Kosovo's independence, Russia will continue its support of Iranian policies, intermittently interrupt sending gas to Ukraine, impose sanctions against Georgia and escalate disputes in Abkhazia.[\[15\]](#)

The rivalry joint fear approach (RJFA) has prevented Russian leaders from making an allowance for the existing common interests between Russia and the US. Following the presidential elections, the new political arrangement in Russia could be evaluated along this line. In the view of Russian statesmen, the new picture of regional security is one in which Russia restricts its cooperation with the US against the Taliban (active near Russia's borders as well as in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) and instead focus on a zero-sum strategic game. This view formulated after the deployment of the missile defense system in Europe, increasing criticism of Russian domestic politics and the new round of arms race. For example, Russia has put pressure on Uzbekistan to expel US forces that are deployed there to confront the Taliban in Afghanistan.[\[16\]](#)

On the other hand, the revival of the RJFA could make Russia's policies toward the "near abroad" similar to Tzarist imperialist policies, something detestable in the historical memory of the former Soviet Republics. Russia prefers to be more active in the eastern wing than in the western wing of its near abroad. To maintain a geopolitical balance of power vis-à-vis the US and NATO, Russia focuses its policy on an east-oriented approach that includes China, SCO, India, ASEAN. NATO currently has an unprecedented presence in Afghanistan. With China and India as its main pillars, Asia's growing economy has attracted the attention of Russians. In fact, Russia is seeking to further economic and commercial relations with Asia. Among Russia's other goals are conquering regional markets, accessing the digital facet of strategic science, strengthening arms diplomacy and selling fuel to the growing economies of Asia. In other words, Russia considers the increasing influence of NATO and the US in the East to be inevitable; therefore, it tries to contain these forces through cooperation with countries that have similar concerns. China is not necessarily a strategic ally, but rather, it is a strategic partner for Russia notwithstanding the existing differences between the two countries. Undoubtedly, the continued friendship between Russia and China is a long-term asset. The realist geopolitical strategy pursued by Russia and China is a striking reflection of the balance of power approach to the West and the US. Russia officially named the year of 2007 as the year of China. Meanwhile, Russia counts on India. It uses arms diplomacy and energy as tools in its relations with India. In addition, Russia is interested in expanding its security periphery in the near abroad through the development of its economic and military relations with countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria, and other Arab countries in the region. Russia believes that an expansion of its relations with these countries will help its efforts to boost its bargaining power vis-a-vis the West and the US.[\[17\]](#)

Increased trade of machinery between China and Russia is a telling example of their improved relationship. In 2007 machinery trade was at 6.33 billion dollars; 6.1 billion dollars of which was Chinese machinery exported to Russia and 230 million dollars was Russian machinery exported to China. There is no doubt that Russia pursues important interests in its east-oriented policy and regards Central Asia as a

springboard in the eastern wing of its near abroad. Russia primarily pursues this policy within the framework of the SCO.[\[18\]](#)

Conclusion

During Yeltsin's era, West-oriented elites pursued the cooperation joint award approach (CJAA), while East-oriented elites tended to favor the rivalry joint fear approach (RJFA) in their dealings with the West and the U.S. However, conflict between domestic and foreign policies led to a weakening of government performance and finally to Putin's rise to power.[\[19\]](#)

There is a fundamental difference between these two approaches under the Yeltsin and Putin regimes. In Yeltsin's era, the two groups of elites challenged each other over their preferred approach; however, in Putin's era, Russian national interests have come first and have been measured in terms of the two approaches on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. In order to manage the aforementioned security approaches, Putin has sought to simultaneously further defense and security policies with Eurasian countries while also cooperating with the West in Middle East affairs.

Therefore, the new image of Russian national security policy after 9/11 is primarily reflected in the two abovementioned approaches. These approaches have been implemented to attain national goals in light of the shifting international situation, particularly in the Middle East. Relying upon these two security approaches, Russia considers itself a great and determining power in Eurasia and the Middle East rim-land. It also views itself as a power equal to European countries and able to effectively cooperate with the West. Therefore, Russia simultaneously attempts to use these two approaches to pursue a more active and effective foreign policy with the aim of deepening its influence in the Middle East while gradually recovering its position on the international stage.

Vladimir Putin's book, entitled "Change in Russian Foreign Policy," mentioned these two approaches and addressed Russian identity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. At the same time, he discussed cooperation with the West and US. In some parts of the book, Putin studies the traditional role of Russia in regard to its new policy functions— founding institutions such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense and Economy, establishing security organizations, and supporting big businessmen, legislators, think tanks and religious institutions.

Putin, in his book, attaches priority to improving relations with the West in the economic, commercial and investment fields through a diplomacy based on cooperation. In sum, Putin focuses on security and geopolitical considerations in the RJFA and focuses on diplomacy and economy in the CJAA. In order to pursue the latter, Putin attempts to accumulate a greater share of the global economy through membership in the G-7, the Paris Club, APEC, and the WTO, while also integrating into a globalized economy. He therefore formulates Russia's foreign and security policy in relation to economic considerations.

Some experts believe that these two security approaches are primarily based on rationality, self-consciousness and national interests. Therefore, these two approaches can explain Russia's foreign policy perception and behavior in Europe, the Middle East and even East Asia. Consequently, the new image of Russian national security policy has two faces: an East-oriented face and a West-oriented face. The latter is mostly based on rationality and awareness of Russia's position in the international equation; the former seeks to focus more attention on the traditional role of Russia in Eurasia.[\[20\]](#)

In fact, Russia's new military doctrine, which was ratified on 2 October 2003 in Russia's Supreme National Security Council, devised a plan for the transition of its military forces (similar to that of the U.S. military for the 21st century). In this plan, policies, tactics, techniques, and new military technologies have all been formulated in line with preparing a preventive attack in the framework of the RJFA. Russian military and security experts have comprehensively formulated a new military doctrine. Experts say that this plan is a draft of Russia's new national defense doctrine post-9/11.

According to this document, Russia can resort to a preventive attack to safeguard its vital interests in its near abroad, rimland and vital periphery, including the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. Russia's military doctrine has been formulated based on the RJFA because of Russia's fear of the West, NATO and the US's presence in its near abroad. In other words, the planning of a preventive attack and RJFA reflect Russia's vital and strategic goals. The Ministry of Defense should attain these goals in a planned and purposeful framework. Even the Russian government has agreed to increase its military budget to modernize military equipments and expand military activities in order to

realize the abovementioned goals. To achieve this end, the Russian army needs to be reorganized based on redefined functions.

The new military doctrine and security approach can be evaluated using logical analysis in a defense-security formulation. Such a formulation is based on three possible actions: the preparation for a probable war in the near abroad, preventing the occurrence of a war, and carrying out a war (in Afghanistan with the cooperation of NATO). Therefore, a part of the RJFA is devoted to new sources and methods of warfare; meanwhile, another part of it is confined to establishing a balance of power with great powers and regional actors in the "near abroad." Holding joint exercises between Russia and China and selling modern weaponry to other countries reflect its national defense and regional military posture.

Obviously, its national-defense stance centers on the readiness of its military forces to defend territorial integrity and sovereignty. Concurrently its regional military posture attempts to maintain a balance of power alongside regional actors vis-à-vis extra-regional powers. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has been seeking security and geopolitical advantages within the frameworks of the new defense preventive doctrine and the rivalry joint cooperation.[\[21\]](#)

Notes:

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