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Russia's invasion, occupation, annexation of Crimea and ensuing threats to attack or detach Eastern Ukraine represent acts of war and have sent shock waves throughout Europe. Naturally and probably correctly most attention has focused on potential threats to the Baltic States and Poland. But we ignore or underestimate threats to the Balkans as a whole and to Moldova in particular at our and their peril. The Balkan Peninsula and particularly Moldova are in no less danger than are Poland and the Baltic States and there is an equally lengthy record of Russian imperialism in the Balkans. Moldova was not just the first example of Moscow's use of the ethnic card to incite a military takeover of territory that it covets. It also is strategically a gateway to the Balkans. Indeed, historically Ukraine's incorporation into the Russian empire has been the logistical and strategic precondition for Russian imperial adventures in the Balkans that have led to so many European wars, including World War I. Thus the Balkans in general and Moldova in particular are clearly prime strategic territories for Russia. Since war is no longer unthinkable in Europe another "damned foolish thing in the Balkans" this time triggered by Russia, cannot be ruled out.

Here we must remember that Moldova, like the Black Sea is for Russia a gateway to the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The fact that Russian planes repeatedly buzzed American ships in the Black Sea clearly indicates that Moscow views that sea as a closed Russian lake, intends to block foreign navies from entering it, and will use it to project power beyond Russia's borders. Indeed, the Black Sea Fleet regularly rehearses amphibious operations and was instrumental in creating the basis for the takeover of Crimea. Moreover, such incidents, in and of themselves could ignite a chain of misunderstandings and actions that could conceivably trigger a war.

But at the same time Moldova was also the template for intervention in ethnically tense regions with armed forces who are then used to sustain unresolved or "frozen conflicts that make it impossible to stabilize the area. Thus it is also a model and precedent for the unresolved conflicts throughout the Balkans, Georgia's conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia that led to the Russo-Georgian war of 2008 and to Russian policy in the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Moldova as Precedent

Moldova in particular has ample reasons for alarm. It was Moscow's first experiment in playing the ethnic card of saving Russians as a pretext for dismembering a sovereign state and

creating a rump satellite of Moscow on the conquered territory. Thus Transnistria, a criminalized Russian enclave that could not survive without Russian military protection now urges Russia to incorporate it into its territory, Putin has attacked the supposed Ukrainian and Western blockade of Transnistria, and Russia has attempted energy coercion and military threats to stop Moldova from looking westwards for security and growth. Moldova's Prime Minister Iurie Leanca has even urged President Obama to come as mounting rhetorical threats are made against it. Similarly Representative Mike Rogers, (R-Michigan), Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee has announced that he saw a level of Russian activity there that equaled if not surpassed what occurred in Crimea before Moscow's invasion there.

Putin already tried in 2003, through the so-called Kozak Plan, to impose an earlier version of the federalization he now espouses for Ukraine. That plan would have effectively destroyed both Moldova's territorial integrity and its de facto sovereignty but was blocked by the EU. An assessment of the Kozak plan observed that its Institutional features were designed to provide Transnistria a veto over any legislation that would threaten the leadership.

Ultimately these multiple loci of vetoes would make it impossible for the federal government to operate. In addition, the Kozak Memorandum included clauses that could be interpreted to easily dissolve the federation. For example, the Kozak Memorandum allowed for subjects of the federation to have the right "to leave the federation in case a decision is taken to unite the federation with another state and (or) in connection with the federation's full loss of sovereignty. --- [thus] Moldovan integration with international organizations such as the EU could be used as a basis for the dissolution of the federation under this clause.

Indeed Putin's current stance on Ukraine was already evident in 2000, his first year in office, with regard to Moldova. Similarly, in regard to Moldova, Putin in 2000 invoked the Russian diaspora there and other ethnic minorities in an effort to gain more influence over Moldova and its frozen conflict. His justification could have been written by Catherine the Great or for that matter Hitler and Stalin.

Russia is interested in Moldova being a territorially whole, independent state. But this cannot be achieved unless the interests of all population groups, including Transnistria population, are observed. Russia is prepared to participate in creating the conditions in which all residents will feel secure in Moldova. The political treaty must firmly ensure the rights of all those who reside on the territory of Thus in many ways Moldova served and could serve again as a laboratory wherein Russia experiments with its plans for dismembering sovereign European states to prevent their free European choice.iii In other words Moldova is a linchpin in what has evolved into a deliberate policy of inciting and perpetuating ethnic conflicts in order to frustrate European integration, and liberalization from the Western Balkans to the Caucasus. Transnistria has not only called for incorporation into Russia but intends already to introduce Russian law into the territory. Neither are Russian threats only military ones. Russia has periodically imposed sanctions, blockades, oil and gas shortages and price hikes to force Moldova to renounce its European choice to no avail. President Putin falsely told President Obama that Ukraine and Moldova were blockading the Russian province of Transnistria. Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin openly threatened Moldova if it moved to sign an

Association Agreement with the EU. Moscow also apparently fomented a referendum among a minority people, the Gagauz, A Christianized [people of Muslim origin, in Moldova that voted to join Russia's proposed customs union, thus creating a precedent Moscow could use for a future military intervention there. Russia I also exploiting the tensions between Transnistria and Moldova to block any solution of the problem before the Parliamentary elections later this year that the pro-Russian Communists are expected to win. The Crimean crisis has also allowed Russian officials like Rogozin ot warn that if Moldova signs an agreement with the EU this would complicate the Crimean situation.

Moscow may desist form moving directly to Moldova for the time being but it has clearly crated a climate of alarm in Moldova and in neighboring Romania that is now increasing defense spending. And Russia retains the power at any moment to initiate an operation I against Moldova like that it mounted in Ukraine.

And it has done and continues to impose similar threats upon Georgia in order to coerce it to renounce Westernization and its territorial integrity. Although some sanctions were lifted by Russia in 2013, it continues to conduct regular overflights of Georgia that violate its airspace, kidnap Georgian journalists, and refuses to loosen its grip on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.v Similarly the Russian commentator, Stanislav Belkovsky has stated that h believes that after Ukraine Putin will “have to recognize the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh.” and then achieve the victory of pro-Russian forces in Latvia.

In like fashion the winter of 2013 Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin demanded that Moldova not initial and sign an Association Agreement with the EU and when it refused to surrender to his threats he said that he hoped you have a warm winter. Instead Moldova initialed an Association Agreement with the EU at Vilnius in November 2013 despite Russian threats. But now, given the tepid U.S. and European response to Ukraine's crisis, it has every reason to need and seek reassurances. And again in the Caucasus the reaction to the weak Western response to the Crimean crisis and the preclusion of Georgian membership in NATO by President Obama has had a negative reaction among the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Meanwhile in the Balkans Moldova is hardly the only place in the Balkans under Russian threat. Moscow has sought a base for so called humanitarian operations (a definition that includes the Ukrainian operation) in Nis (pronounced Nish) in Serbia and a naval base in Montenegro at Bar. It has also threatened Montenegro if it continues to seek NATO membership. Moscow is also obtaining an air and naval base in Cyprus and has repeatedly used its Black Sea Fleet and revived Mediterranean Squadron for purposes of gunboat diplomacy in the Eastern Mediterranean. With total control of the Black Sea, not only will Russia further upgrade its regional naval and air capabilities, but it will also increasingly be able to threaten amphibious and other operations against the Balkan states and project power into the Mediterranean and Middle East as it is already trying to do. And its purpose there is no different than its goals in Europe, namely thwarting US and European policies. These gambits also represent Moscow's continuing effort to frustrate European integration and democratization, to preserve conflicts in the Balkans or at least obstruct conflict resolution

there and threaten Europe and the Balkans. These threats involve not only the prospect of energy boycotts, cutoffs, and price hikes but also the use of Russian money, much of it obtained from opaque and actually harmful energy deals to corrupt and criminalize Balkan politicians, businesses, and public institutions.

Even if Moscow refrains for now from trying to annex Transnistria or from doing in Moldova what it has done in Ukraine, neither the Moldovan government nor the West can rest on its laurels or afford complacency. President Putin has made clear on many occasions, going back years, that he regards neither Moldovan sovereignty or integrity as something deserving respect. Nor is Moldova unique in this respect. Speaking in 2012 Putin admitted that the war with Georgia in 2008 had been planned for two years with the conscious use of separatists to foment it should remind everyone as well that security throughout Eurasia cannot be taken for granted.

viii Putin's admission also should have reminded us then that Russia still refuses to accept the finality of the territorial settlement that occurred in the wake of the Soviet disintegration and perhaps even more importantly, there is abundant evidence, including this admission that Russia does not really believe in the genuine and full sovereignty of the post-Soviet states in the former Soviet Union. The evidence in favor of this assertion is overwhelming and worse, long-lasting.^{ix} Neither does it accept the sovereignty and integrity of the states that comprise Eastern Europe from Poland to Bulgaria as numerous statements by Russian officials and ambassadors illustrate.

In this context Putin's speech of March 18, 2014 to the Duma in this respect represents a landmine under the sovereignty and integrity of every state from Poland east and south to Central Asia. Therefore Russian policy should evoke much greater public concern and responses from the U.S. Europe, and these governments in the former Soviet Union. This is not just one scholar's views. As James Sherr has recently written, while Russia formally respects the sovereignty of its erstwhile republics; it also reserves the right to define the content of that sovereignty and their territorial integrity. "Essentially Putin's Russia has revived the Tsarist and Soviet view that sovereignty is a contingent factor depending on power, culture, and historical norms, not an absolute and unconditional principle of world politics."

Indeed, Moscow has set for itself the task of destabilizing states in the Balkans to prevent the progress of European integration and democratization whether in Kosovo where it has consistently played a role in obstructing a rapprochement with Serbia and the unification of Bosnia. Using the instrument of arms sales, energy inducements and threats, intelligence penetration, subversion, and corruption of political parties and leaders, economic penetration of key business sectors, and the threat of military force, Moscow not only seeks to frustrate European integration but also to project its power into the Balkans and beyond. Most importantly in the Moldovan case as in the Western Balkans and beyond it resolutely blocks all efforts at resolving ethnic and other conflicts. Instead it incites them.

Susan Stewart of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Germany has thus written that, Russia is more than willing to tolerate instability and economic weakness in the neighboring

countries, assuming they are accompanied by an increase in Russian influence. In fact, Russia consciously contributes to the rising instability and deterioration of the economic situation in some, if not all, of these countries.

As Gerhard Mangott has similarly written, Moscow's chief aim is converting Central and East European countries accept a subordinate role as catalysts for Russia's dealing with individual Western European powers above their head.^{xiii} In this framework "Russia is most interested in keeping regional cooperation, let alone integration, at a very low level. Historically, Russia has always profited from intra-regional divisions, rivalries, and disputes."^{xiv} This, of course, is another reason for eschewing a policy based on working through the EU or multilateral structures in preference for a bilateral modus operandi where Russian power's full capabilities may be more effectively brought to bear vis-à-vis smaller Balkan states.

Towards these ends Russia is prepared to exploit all the fissures in the Balkans and anywhere else, e.g. the Caucasus, where it can operate in this fashion. In regard to the Caucasus, other analysts have reached this conclusion too.

In the case of Azerbaijan, the government of Azerbaijan needs to understand that as long as President Putin sees no personal benefits for him and his government in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict's resolution, Moscow will retain the policy of status quo, which is best for its own interests. The other two parties, namely the co-chairs of the Minsk Group- France and the US – will do nothing to change the situation as long as it cannot change in their favor. The situation of Armenia compared with that of Azerbaijan and Georgia is even more precarious. The control of Russia over Armenia and Russian leverage in the case of the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are like tentacles that provide life support to the Armenian patient. Russia's policy in the south Caucasus at this stage leads Azerbaijan to drift, with Georgia, toward the West with the hope that the US and EU can be more reliable partners than their "great and mighty" northern neighbor. Hope alone may not be a sufficient factor to lead Azerbaijan's drift toward the West. The West may not be sufficiently interested in partnering with Azerbaijan, despite Azerbaijan's interest and desire to wean itself for Russia's grip.

This Western absence from conflict resolution is striking because it applies to all the countries of the South-Caucasus and opens the way to Russia to interfere with these states by exploiting its monopoly over the conflict resolution process to strengthen its neo-imperial drive. In regard to Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow has obtained a base at Gyumri in Armenia until 2044 and undertaken a major buildup of its armed forces in the Caucasus, allegedly in fear of an attack on Iran, more likely in response to an imaginary NATO threat and to enforce its dominion.^{xvi} Ruslan Pukhov, Director of the Moscow Center for the Analysis of Strategies and Technologies (CAST) also observes that this military buildup signifies that Moscow has acted to remain "in the lead" militarily in the Caucasus and invoked US and Israeli military assistance to Azerbaijan as an alleged justification for this posture.

Both Baku and Tbilisi have good reason to worry about this buildup that now includes Russia's dual-use Iskander missile based at Gyumri which puts both countries and their capitals within range of a strike. And the powerful radar installations there also enable Russia

to monitor the entire air space over all three South Caucasus countries.

But beyond this and the sale of weapons to Armenia at concessionary prices, Moscow revealed in 2013 that it has sold \$4 Billion of weapons to Azerbaijan in the past few years. Moreover, Russian elements aligned with organized crime are using Montenegro, a notorious “playground for Russian organized crime” to run weapons covertly to Nagorno-Karabakh. Since 2010 the arms tracking community has recorded 39 suspicious flights leaving Podgorica airport in Ilyushin 76s for Armenia’s Erebuni military airport in Stepankaert with arms intended for Nagorno-Karabakh where there has been a wave of border incidents since 2010.^{xix} The use of these Russian planes and the link to the long-standing large-scale arms trafficking between Russia and Armenia immediately raises suspicions of Russian involvement if not orchestration of this program. Thus Russia openly and clandestinely arms both sides in this conflict that has become steadily more dangerous with increasing numbers of incidents between both forces. Russia does so to keep both sides dependent to a greater or lesser degree upon it and its 2011 “mediation” efforts here also revealed its unremitting focus on undermining local sovereignty.

Armenian political scientist Arman Melikyan claims that in that “mediation” in 2011 on Nagorno-Karabakh that Russia ostensibly “brokered”, Moscow was to arrange for the surrender of liberated territories, thereby ensuring its military presence in return and establishing a network of military bases in Azerbaijan to prevent any further cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO. While Armenian authorities reportedly accepted this plan; Baku refused to do so and saved Armenia, which clearly wants to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh, from relinquishing the territory to it in return for a further compromising of its sovereignty and Azerbaijan’s security.

Armenia furnishes an outstanding example of what happens to a state that allows Moscow a monopoly over conflict resolution. In September 2013 Moscow brutally demonstrated its power over Armenia and the hollowness of Armenia’s claims to sovereignty by publicly forcing it to renounce its plan to sign a DCFTA with the EU and instead join the Moscow based Customs Union or EURASEC, even though it has no common border with any other signatory.^{xxi} Armenia may have espoused a policy of “complementarity”, seeking to bridge East-West conflicts by maintaining close contacts with Russia, and Iran and expanding them with the West.^{xxii} But Moscow decisively ended that by threatening to withdraw support for Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh if it signed an Association Agreement with the EU.

Thus Armenia has been shown to have become a prisoner of its own success in the earlier phases of the Nagorno-Karabakh war and is being dragged even further against its will into what looks like a satellization process vis-à-vis Russia. This is all the more striking when one reads the recent statement by the Commander of Russian troops in Armenia who told an interviewer that if Azerbaijan sought to restore control over Nagorno-Karabakh by force the Russian military group at the base in Gyumri, Armenia might join the war on Armenia’s side in accordance with Russia’s obligation as a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).^{xxiii} And this posture is despite the fact that Russia has sold to Azerbaijan \$4 Billion in high-tech weapons, indicating that while Russia exploits both sides,

neither one of them can count on Russia to reliably protect their interests.

In this context it is not surprising that Georgian commentators now openly worry that Russia will unleash its economic power against Georgia as it did against Ukraine for gravitating towards the EU or that if it is not stopped in Crimea it will come next for Moldova and Georgia.^{xxiv} The Russian threats to Caucasian and by extension European security are not merely confined to Russia's forcible integration of states into its union. It also includes the creeping annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and continuing pressure on Georgia.^{xxv} Georgia's new Prime Minister Irakly Garibashvili, may boast that Moscow will not and cannot put much pressure on Georgia by repeating the "Ukrainian Scenario" in Georgia although Moscow has previously waged bitter economic warfare against Georgia. Georgia is not as dependent on Russia as is Ukraine, but the military instruments, and creeping annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would seem to belie such arguably misplaced optimism.

If anything Moscow is steadily moving forward on incorporating those areas into its formal political structure. In 2013 Izvestiya reported that Moscow was pondering the creation of a defensive perimeter for the Sochi Olympics along the borders of both Abkhazia and Kabardino-Balkaria that would appear to put them on an equal administrative footing under Russian control. Such actions are not lightly taken in Russia who fully grasps their significance.^{xxvi} Tbilisi may be setting its sights on a NATO membership action plan rather than membership but neither is likely anytime soon, especially if the Abkhaz and South Ossetian situations are not overcome and resolved, something Moscow fully grasps. Neither is NATO likely to take much stock in Georgian claims that failure to gain even a plan could undermine domestic stability in Georgia or to give it a MAP until those conflicts are resolved, a situation that only encourages Moscow in its obduracy and neo-imperial policies while doing nothing for Georgian security.^{xxix} Meanwhile Moscow shows no sign of relenting on its territorial grab and insists that it is up to Georgia to reopen relations, a precondition of any conflict resolution. But such "normalization" is inconceivable in Georgia as long as Moscow occupies Georgian territory. Hence we have a standoff that only benefits Russia, prevents conflict resolution and leaves open the recurrent possibility of a new Russo-Georgian war.

But Russian machinations against the integrity and sovereignty of the South Caucasian states do not end here. In 2008 Vafa Qulluzada observed that President Medvedev's visit to Azerbaijan was preceded by deliberate Russian incitement of the Lezgin and Avar ethnic minorities there to induce Azerbaijan to accept Russia's gas proposals.^{xxxii} Such policies appear to be systematic on Russia's part. It has intermittently encouraged separatist movement among the Armenian Javakhetian minority in Georgia and all but taken control of the Crimea for potential use against Ukraine. And, as noted above, it admitted using separatists to plan the war against Georgia in 2008. Russia states that it has no claims on Azerbaijani territories but articles in the Russian press have advocated government action to protect these Azerbaijani minorities as Russian citizens to punish Azerbaijan for flirting with NATO. Thus in both word and deed Moscow has shown that war in Eurasia is neither inconceivable nor impossible. And European governments know full well that a revitalized Russian empire represents a fundamental threat to European security as such. Nether should we lose sight of the fact that Russian law permits the president to dispatch troops abroad to defend the "honor

and dignity” of other Russians (a group who can be fabricated out of thin air e.g. by means of Russia’ preexisting “passportization” policy) without any Parliamentary debate or accountability.xxxiv Putin did not even need the legislative farce of a request or law calling for intervention in Crimea and in any event probably preempted it by ordering troop movements on Feb. 26-27. Moscow may now claim to have new ideas about resolving Nagorno-Karabakh but it is doubtful that they will really facilitate conflict resolution although they could be sure to further extend Moscow’s hegemonic drive here.

Today the Russian Duma is ready to enact legislation making it easy for foreign nationals to become Russian citizens or for Russia to invade neighboring states’ territories.xxxvi Nonetheless a law permitting invasion of these states to defend the “honor and dignity” of Russians has been on the books since 2009 and its implications, as noted above, are lethal. In 2009 President Dmitry Medvedev urged the Duma to pass a new law amending the previous Law on Defense which it subsequently has done and which he signed into law. Specifically he urged it to revise the existing laws to pass a new law, The draft law would supplement Clause 10 of the Federal Law On Defence with paragraph 21 specifying that in line with the generally accepted principles and provisions of international law, the Russian Federation’s international treaties, and the Federal Law On Defence; Russian Armed Forces can be used in operations beyond Russia’s borders for the following purposes:

- To counter an attack against Russian Armed Forces or other troops deployed beyond Russia’s borders;
- To counter or prevent an aggression against another country;
- To protect Russian citizens abroad;
- To combat piracy and ensure safe passage of shipping.

The draft suggests that the Federal Law On Defence be supplemented with Clause 101, setting, in accordance with Russia’s Constitution, the procedures for decisions on use of Russian Armed Forces beyond the country’s borders. Not only would this law provide a “legal” basis for the offensive projection of Russian military force beyond Russia’s borders and thus justify the war of 2008 and any subsequent attack against Georgia in response to alleged attacks on “the Russian citizens” of the supposedly independent states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It also provides a basis for justifying the offensive use of Russian force against every state from the Baltic to Central Asia on the selfsame basis of supposedly defending the “honor and dignity” of Russian citizens and culture from discrimination and attack. Since then, as we have seen in Ukraine numerous statements by Putin, Duma resolutions and a new law on citizenship have reaffirmed Russia’s right to use force beyond its borders to “rescue” alleged Russian citizens. Indeed, on the basis of this law Moscow could plausibly send troops to defend the interests of its citizens in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, New York!

Conflict Resolution and Sovereignty issues in the Caucasus and Balkans

We find the same things in the Caucasus. Thus here again Moldova is not atypical of Russian policy but rather epitomizes it. Here we should look carefully at two particular phenomena, Moscow's approach to conflict resolution and the territorial integrity of the South Caucasian states. Indeed, the West's failure to advance on European integration or to foster conflict resolution in the Caucasus aggravates the European crisis and gives Russia much greater opportunities for advancing its view that ostensibly is a Europe without dividing lines but which essentially means leaving Russia as an unlimited integrator of the CIS against many of its states' will and an unchecked factor supporting disintegration or at least preserving trends towards disaggregation in all of Southeastern Europe. Essentially Russia's position is one favoring regional bipolarity and preserving the state of siege in world politics that Lenin introduced in 1917 in regard to Russia for bipolarity and simmering or frozen conflicts are a precondition for the continuation in power of this regime. This 2006 assessment of Russian policy towards the frozen conflicts of the South Caucasus highlights the problem.

Russia, however, has been gradually forced to retreat from this region. In countering this, one of Russia's tactics is slowing down Western advance by keeping the so called' frozen conflicts' intact. --- If this is indeed the case, disputes – harmful to the economic development of the South Caucasus – are likely to continue until the time that (some of) these countries are consolidated into Western structures.

The Western failure to seize the moment invalidated the concept of a Russian retreat but the prognosis here was spot on. The recent revelations of Russia selling Azerbaijan \$4 Billion in armaments even as it stations troops in and sells weapons to Armenia and continues to upgrade its military power in the Caucasus highlights the continuing analogy of this policy towards conflict resolution across Eurasia. Richard Giragosian observes that, Russia is clearly exploiting the unresolved Karabakh conflict and rising tension in order to further consolidate its power and influence in the South Caucasus. Within this context, Russia has not only emerged as the leading arms provider to Azerbaijan, but also continues to deepen its military support and cooperation with Armenia. For Azerbaijan, Russia offers an important source of modern offensive weapons, while for Armenia, both the bilateral partnership with Russia and membership in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) offers Armenia its own essential security guarantees.

Unfortunatly, this remains the case today. Eugene Kogan recently reached the same conclusion as did Giragosian. Moscow remains determined to block conflict resolution as conflict resolution would eliminate much of its leverage and pretexts for militarizing the area even though it is increasingly clear that Moscow has not arrested the disintegration of the North Caucasus by these forceful policies.

As Susan Stewart recently wrote, Russia's coercive diplomacy undermines any pretense that this integration project is based on anything other than Russia making other countries "an offer that they cannot refuse." Furthermore its coercive behavior shows its own nervousness about the viability of these formats and the necessity to coerce other states into accepting it. Stewart

was writing about Russia's integration project embodied in the Eurasian Union. We have already seen that Armenia was essentially pushed to the wall to join this union that makes no economic sense for it as it is not even contiguous with any of the members of the union. But while this may be an offer that Armenia and small Central Asian states cannot refuse, it also is an intrinsically compromised effort to impose security on shifting sands. It already is clear that it provides little economic benefit and has yet to provide for anyone's security. Rather it is an instrument for destabilization of governments as we can plainly see from the foregoing discussion. Thus Moscow, due to its successful pressure on Armenia, can announce that Nagorno-Karabakh will not prevent Eurasian integration. Indeed, as an instrument of pressure on both Baku and Yerevan it is, if anything a factor for promoting this "integration." Thus the Russian Duma recently approved a 2012 agreement to drop customs duties between Russia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia, effectively including them in the Customs Union. Similarly Armenia's Parliament has ratified gas deals giving Gazprom 100% ownership of ArmRosgazprom, an Armenian-Russian joint venture, and Gazprom will control all Armenian gas imports until 2043.^{xliv} Thus Armenia's vaunted policy of "balance" is effectively terminated and will remain so for a long time to come.

What Is To Be Done?

The multiple military, energy, subversion, corruption, and ethnic incitement threats sponsored by Russia from Bosnia to Moldova must concentrate the minds of NATO policymakers in Brussels, Washington, and leading European capitals to intensify the acceleration of Balkan integration into the EU and NATO. At NATO's forthcoming Cardiff summit it should take in Montenegro despite or perhaps precisely due to Russian threats against it, resolve conclusively the issue of Macedonia's name, take it into NATO, and offer Bosnia and Serbia membership action plans on condition that they overcome the debilitating legacy of ethnic strife that Russia is trying in every way to prolong. The answer to Russian threats must be more European integration and proportional and increased contributions by both new and old members to the deterrence of further threats, the containment of Russian power, and the democratization of their own domestic governance. But the existing members must therefore give credible, not merely symbolic signs of enhancing their own capacity to deter these Russian threats and sustain Balkan governments as they move forward.

Neither Balkan governments nor NATO can accept that the sovereignty and integrity of European states remain at risk, that treaties count for nothing, that past conflicts remain unresolved due to Russian obstruction, that the Black Sea, in violation of international treaties become a closed Russian lake and that corruption and threats of economic or actual warfare be accepted parts of the daily discourse of European international affairs. By expanding to the Balkans NATO and the EU have affirmed the principle decided in 1989 that European security is indivisible. If we fail again to uphold that principle as we have heretofore done in Ukraine then neither the Balkans nor anywhere else in Europe will be safe. For if there is anything true about the Balkans' role in European history it is the ongoing fact that Balkan crises invariably become crises of the European state system. Such crises admirably suit Russia which has no stake in the progress made since 1980 but can that either suit us or the Balkans or more importantly provide for our common security?