Editorial

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Sixteen years ago, I had the good fortune to travel to Gurzuf, Ukraine on a study abroad trip. It was a visit that sparked my interest in Central and Eastern European politics, started me on the path to learning Russian and instilled in me a desire to study international relations. In the late 1990s Europe was still aflutter with the idea of a continent at peace. The Balkan wars were traumatic, but by and large, the ‘big’ conflicts were resolved; as Francis Fukuyama put it, it was the end of history. Many people told me that I was silly to study European history and politics with German and Russian. I was told on numerous occasions that I should learn Chinese or Arabic or Farsi.

Sadly, peace in Europe still seems a far-fetched idea and the end of history seems a long way off. Even if the Euro-Atlantic area conforms to the concept of the security community and is a space of ‘postmodern politics’, Europe’s neighbours remain mired in modernity. For the second time in six years Moscow used military force to change the *status quo* in Europe. The revisionist politics of Putin’s Kremlin do not care much for EU or US sanctions. Indeed it seems that when Putin looks West, he sees weakness in Brussels and Washington.

As the crisis in Ukraine plays out, *IPR* looks back to the last time Russia changed the *status quo* in Europe, offering in our pages an autopsy of sorts on the international diplomacy around the Russo-Georgian War of 2008. Hans Mouritzen and Ander Wivel’s book *Explaining Foreign Policy: International Diplomacy and the Russo-Georgian War* offers both methodological advances as well as information from a range of sources on the actual conflict and it seemed an opportune time to review their work. In the forum, Cambridge’s Christopher Hill provides us with an excellent discussion of the theoretical issues surrounding foreign policy analysis and the unique explanatory framework that Mouritzen and Wivel use in their book. Else Toje and

Flemming Splidsboel Hansen offer analysis of how the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 fits into theory, as well as the implications for the practice of international relations. The forum provides evidence to substantiate the claim that a near total lack of response from the international community in 2008 certainly emboldens Russia with regard to its annexation in Crimea. As the authors note, ‘the future world order is likely to be more to Russia’s liking than it has been at any time in the post-Cold War years’.

Although Western Europe likes to think itself a post-modern power, Putin’s lack of concern over sanctions from Europe illustrates the challenges that the EU faces in wielding power. For over a decade now numerous studies have discussed the EU as a ‘normative power’ (Manners), a ‘civilian power’ (Duchene) and an actor with immeasurable amounts of ‘soft power’ (Nye). But how effective can such a power be on the world stage? And the conceptualization of the EU as a normative power is largely reflexive – how does the rest of the world see the EU? This question is the focus of Henrik Larsen’s examination of the external perception literature focused on the EU.

Within the literature, Larsen identifies a large gap between how the EU presents itself and how external actors perceive the EU. Larsen contends that this perception gap is problematic for the EU as it seeks to become a more influential and coherent international actor. This conclusion raises in my mind Hedley Bull’s (1982) early critique of Europe as a civilian power. Bull argued that civilian power was linked to the state’s military power and that only through military self-sufficiency could the EU be a civilian power. Looking at the current state of affairs between the EU and Russia, one cannot help but think that perhaps Bull was right.

Although Russia's occupation of Ukraine is causing headaches in Europe, there are also global dimensions to the problem for the US president to consider. Although hawks are calling on President Obama to strike back against the Kremlin, the President's seemingly slow and cautious response is due in part to the linkages of the Ukraine problem with other issues of critical importance. Most worryingly, the United States relies on the use of Russian airspace to supply US and NATO troops in Afghanistan. Russia is also a major supporter of Assad in Syria and, last but not least, Russia is involved in the P5+1 talks on the Iranian nuclear programme.

President Obama has defied expectations and many of his detractors at home to forge ahead with his programme of outreach to Iran, and he must want to maintain the positive momentum. Only a couple years ago the thought of the American and Iranian presidents talking on the phone was pure whimsy. Today, not only have both men have spoken to each other, but their diplomats speak on a regular basis. Mr Obama does not want anything to jeopardize this progress, but he should be careful in thinking that by giving Putin a pass on Ukraine, the Kremlin will not upend the boat in Tehran. Russia is only important in the Middle East so long as Iran and Syria are problems. The Kremlin's leverage stems from their connections to these governments, so a rapprochement between Tehran and Washington will reduce the Kremlin's importance in the Middle East. No matter what the President decides, the situation is fraught with challenges, not in the least from the Iranian

side as Occidental College's Huss Banai explores in his piece 'The Wages of Enmity'. Banai provides an insightful review of three recent books looking at the long history of US-Iran relations that illustrates why overcoming the legacy of the past is just so hard to do.

Finally, many critics of Obama's 'reset' with Russia contend that the President got little in return for his sell out to the Kremlin, but these commentators overlook Russian cooperation with the United States on counter-terrorism issues. As the recent revelation of US National Security Agency spying continues to reverberate through the international community, it is evident that Washington remains extremely concerned about preventing terrorist attacks, even if the rhetoric of the war on terror ended some time ago. Sam Mutter in his article, 'US Counterterrorism Measures Since 9/11: The Politics and Morality of Law and Exception', deconstructs the challenges at the heart of counter-terrorism policies and the challenges that these policies have entailed in balancing civil liberties and security. Mutter's piece raises concerning questions as to whether or not our fear of terrorism and the blurring of terrorism with identities leads to the criminalization of any individuals of which people are frightened.

The editorial team and editorial board hope that you enjoy this issue of the journal and as always we welcome your feedback and submissions for consideration!

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