

"Windows for peace: why the West and Russia could not create more robust structures for peace in three major opportunities?"

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The West and the Russia Federation had opportunities, since the end of Cold War, to work along in develop peace. Some of those opportunities create a few mechanisms to promote and better consolidate peace between the sides. However, those were not enough to establish a new path, for the old Cold War rivals. Three moments in post Cold War presented themselves as milestones for creating this new way for promote peace. The three events here studied occurred in different periods of time and under different administrations. This study propose to debate, the windows created in the Yeltsin administration with the “zero conflict policy”, under Putin`s and the “anti-terror speeches” and with Medvedev and the negotiations for the Libyan civil conflict. All those presented great opportunities for the parts to construct a more robust path to peace, so why were they not taken? Is the same reason for all three cases?²

Keywords

Foreign Policy; Russia; Peace Agreements

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² As a work in progress, this paper does not touch all the points proposed.

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War the Russian Federation and the West have been trying to establish a new relation. This idea that Moscow and the West could create a relation based in the modern world, without the shadows of the Cold War, has inspired many attempts, from both sides, to build more robust structures to promote peace.

The 90's first years, presented a new international agenda. This agenda was not based in the bipolar world, but in a more open and democratic one. The fallen of the Soviet Empire, created space to rethink a great amount of themes that gained the international scenario. The concept behind rethink those themes was simple, since the world had changed from a bipolar one to a new one, those themes could be taken to the international agenda and be debated without the Cold War logic.

Many delicate themes surfaces at this point, the world was in position to deliberate the majority of those themes. But one seemed to be trapped into the Cold War logic. The Russian Federation and the West relation. For over 60 years the world had created international structures to deal with the bipolar system and those did not ended with the Cold War.

The Cold War logic that this paper will explore represent the logic established after the end of the Cold War. This logic that continues to oppose Russia from the West, or the West from Russia, is not the same as the one sustained during the Cold War. The lack of ideologies, alone, have changed this logic, adding the transformation of USSR into Russia and the growth of the West ideological power, since it was the winner of the Cold War, we have a different kind of logic that will be separated from the original as the ideas of this paper are explained.

These structures will be treated as a complex and elaborated gama of politics, institutions, economics agreements, ideas, not the classic definition. The objective of this paper is not to define what is an structure that can generate peace, but to analyses how some of those aspects where used to reinforce peace in the West and why the Russian Federation was enable to be a part of those structures.

With this goal in mind, this paper will explore concepts of the constructivism theory to better analyses moments when the possibility to created such structures seemed more concrete. The theoretical tool will be used as a support to the ideas, not a

cage of pre-determined concepts. The theoretical approach will be better explained in further moments

In order to understand the dichotomy relation between the two major actors in this paper, is better to provide a definition of those two.

The “West” stands for the European countries and US, where a great amount of peace structures were created and are in use since the end of the second World War. Structures in a economy way with the democratic liberalism, or capitalism, in a political way, the creation of G7, a military way, the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty.

All those are examples of a large framework that was consolidate trough 60 years of cooperation and debates. This framework is the conjunction of several structures that help to sustain peace between the Europeans countries and the US. The West is, for this paper, not only the antagonist for The Russian Federation, but also the north of what could be done to solve the problem between the parts.

Rising from the debris of Soviet Union the Russian Federation created a new identity for itself. The “new” country was the primary heir of the USSR in terms of material capabilities, the nuclear arsenal, the permanent seat at the UN Security Council, the great warfare instruments and so one. These material heritages came at a high cost, the Russian Federation became the target of the institutions and politics of the Cold War. The Federation would be treated as the USSR, in a defeated enemies logic.

The West institutions, like NATO, International Bank, International Monetary Fund to list a few, would continue to implement the politics from passed years. This politic towards Moscow would not change regardless of the attempts to consolidate a new, more pacific, way. Russia was facing a singular problem in approaching the West. The politics to bring the ex-Soviet countries closer to the West did not aimed Moscow.

This moment represent a attempt to create more robust structures of peace. It was selected not by there singularity or importance, this paper is not trying to define the most important moment, but for bring a different attempt with different ideas to promote peace. In this moment an infinite number of structures could have been created, and some were indeed created, but none was strong enough to sustain peace between the actor.

A robust structure of peace could not be created, in this point the present study will focus on the changes in Yeltsin's Foreign Policy and acts. The present paper will not analyses the attempts made by the West. This movements promoted by Moscow seems to better illustrate the difficult from both side to construct a new, more pacific, path.

Yeltsin and the “Zero Conflict” policy

The end of the Cold War and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, would make Russia go through an adaptation process within the international system and its own domestic political system . The transition of the country that had been the decisions center of the USSR to capitalism and democracy, occurred both in the domestic sphere and in the international.

Russia began its transformation process to shaping itself into a country in the Western mold, but the impact of these changes would have different connotations from what was expected by those that lead then. At first, Mikhail Gorbachev and later Boris Yeltsin.

Boris Yeltsin is appointed to the position of president in 1991 with the primary mission to adopt an economic plan that would allow Russia a quick and painless transcription to capitalism, " Shock Therapy ". An aggressive economic plan that end up as a catastrophic error by Yeltsin administration. (COLIN , 2007)

In this process, the USSR dismantling , Russia would inherit the USSR privileges in the international arena , as the permanent seat in the Council of the United Nations Security the right to possess a nuclear arsenal and a zone of influence , especially among former members of the USSR. However, Russia also inherit the consolidated image , for over half a century, the common enemy to Western countries, particularly European countries (COLIN, 2007)

Domestically, the idea of Yeltsin , which materialized with the economic policy, from Yegor Gaidar , named " Shock Therapy " , a transition carried out as quickly as possible had disastrous results . Inflation, in 1991, before his economic plan, was 150 %³ a year, became a runaway inflation of 2580 %⁴ and 840 %⁵ in 1992 and

³ Retirado de Segrillo, 2000, p. 145

⁴ Idem, ibidem

⁵ Idem, ibidem

1993, respectively. The Russian economic collapse generated a wave of protests, the transition from a planned economy to a hyperinflation, was a hard blow to the popularity of Yeltsin (SEGRILLO, 2000).

To alleviate the economic crisis, Yeltsin had to seek help in the West. First, with US support and the G7⁶, the former enemies, Russia got a loan of 24 billion dollars to the International Monetary Fund⁷. Second, in the field of trade, Yeltsin sought new markets in the West for Russian goods, particularly weapons and energy (SERVICE, 2009).

Yeltsin attempts approaching the West have also been made in the field of international politics. Russia accepted the creation of a NATO-Russia Council, to improve dialogue, especially in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), formed by the former Soviet republics. This advice was aimed at defusing tension between Russia and the countries of Western Europe, and developing common policies to address potential problems in Eastern Europe (THORUN, 2009).

Yeltsin's Russia worked for coining a new image in the international arena, considering that Russia emerged as an extremely dangerous war power to Western countries. It was necessary to change this to seek for economic help and friendlier relations, aiming to improve trade and political relations, in search of an economic and political stabilization in the domestic scenario (THORUN, 2009)

The Yeltsin's actions on the international scene reflected his internal trend of construction of a new liberal way for the new Russia. In addition, the economic opening Russia sought greater interaction with other states for the construction of a new identity. Proof of this movement was the request made to the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the new state to become a member, request made in 1992 (SEGRILLO, 2000)

This transition process, a common external enemy for the Western countries to an ally, was not well accepted by most of the western states. The attempt at

⁶Retirado de; acessado em 07/10/2010 : <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1992munich/communique/>.

⁷Retirado de; acessado em 07/10/2010 <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/1992munich/communique/russia.html> parágrafo 40.

rapprochement was seen as a political move to a new Russia weakened to deal with the issues of the international scene as did the USSR. For the West , the new Russia looked more like a third world country in a desperate search for help from the great power of the past (THORUN , 2009).

Applying the theory of Wendt (1987) , we can see that Russia has inherited not only the main privileges of the USSR, military / nuclear arsenal and the permanent seat in the Council UN Security but also the identity of a conflicting agent to others States. This pragmatic thinking adopted mainly by Western countries that Russia represented an external threat did not consider the internal movement of the Russian state itself. Seizures that led to the collapse of the USSR and created a new Russian state are, according to the thought of Wendt (1987) , the main changes in Russia as agent front structure (WENDT , 1987; COLIN 2007) .

The political assumptions adopted during the Soviet period built a strong logic between Russia as an agent counter systemic and structure having to embarrass the state to the maximum, making it impossible thus their advancement or growth (WENDT , 1987). Moreover, the relationship between the states during the period of the Soviet Union, particularly during the Cold War , embodied a story and created a framework of behavior and expectations with respect to Russia. The rival states of the USSR developed over time a way to interpret Russia and its behavior. This process is contained in the theories of Wendt (1987), Fierke (2007) or even in an analysis of the interpretation of Carlsnaes (1992).

In short, we here also need to reconsider the *empirical* ramifications of the agent-structure issue for foreign policy analysis-the fait that the discursive categories that inform foreign policy actors also help to shape international institutions and other structures, in the sense of either reproducing or changing these over time, and that the latter in turn have effects on the former(Carlsnaes, 1992, página 262).

The Russian identity would become with time. The output of an external policy of confrontation to an assertive with major rivals was strengthened largely by internal demands of the population. Yeltsin reshaped the thinking of foreign policy of Russia and thus cast a new identity for his country from the former rivals. The thought

of Fierke (2007) explains how this is possible and why this movement, since Yeltsin had interest in change and could promote this change

At first, these changes were received in a friendly way and won the support of former international rivals. The new identity coined with liberal assumptions pleased the international scenario. However, as highlighted by Kubàlková (2001) , identity is formed not only by the way the state behaves in front of the other , is also constructed from an analysis of its capabilities and Russian's capabilities were still too big to not be calculated in your new identity proposed by Yeltsin (COLIN , 2007; THORUN , 2009).

The difficulty of the international system countries, particularly Westerners, to see the new Russian identity, is based in the old Cold War logic. This maintenance of the way of understanding the Russian behavior on the part of these countries can be understood using an analysis of the Russian nuclear arsenal, its conventional military forces and its permanent seat in the Security Council. While there has been a change in Russian behavior, in order to alter the front identity towards the international system, there was no change in Moscow capabilities.

Fierke (2007) fits in explaining how and why they occurred liberal or pro-western changes made by Yeltsin, and the thoughts of Kubàlková (2001) reveal the reason for non- acceptance of this new identity.

What we have here is not a fundamental change in framework but a shift from a stress on the capabilities of states, or the distribution of powers as a structural property of the system, to a stress on the identity of states (Kubàlková, 2001, página 33).

Interpretations given by the most important states in the international arena, this movement , were those employed by realism as we can see by denying Russia's entry into international organizations to promote free trade and peaceful resolutions of disputes commercial WTO (WALTZ , 1959) . Russia as heir to the USSR would not be interpreted as an ally but as a weakened state that tried to regain their conditions and capabilities to once again become the enemy of yore (THURON, 2009).

The international scenario pushed Yeltsin to make decisions that broke with the liberal logic implemented by him. At the same time, on the international scenario, Yeltsin met resistance from the former Soviet Union's enemies to embrace and support the changes promoted by Russian President (SEGRILLO, 2000; THORUN, 2009).

The policies pursued by Western countries against Russia would not suffer so many changes from the policies of the Cold War period. The most important is the lack of a ideological speech. Some of these policies went beyond the limits of the Soviet period heading toward threatening the areas of Russian influence, as in the case of NATO expansion to the east in 1991/92 and 1993/94 (THURON, 2009). These policies were considered aggressive and reckless and established a dichotomous relationship with the creation of the NATO Russia debates committee, the official declarations of interests of the Russian state in joining the treaty, or even with the proposals of economic aid to Russia by the G7.

Although there was an effort from the West to start creating structures of peace. Those did not had the appropriate importance or significance to make a large change. Russia also did not to those efforts as a symbol of changing, Yeltsin was expecting to gain more from the West.

This change is clear in the Russian behavior , but as we have already seen in Fierke (2007) and Kubàlková (2001) as the other states react the change of the Russian state depends on multiple factors and not only the Russian change. The story continued to be added among the factors to determine how former enemies would see the new liberal Russia of Yeltsin, as well as military power and Russian capabilities. The other states of the system, mainly Westerners, were faced with a dilemma in dealing with Russia.

These processes of change in relations between Russia and the West escalated on international security issues. The expansion of NATO adding states that once belonged to the Russian's zone of influence, was an extremely sensitive issue and involved several factors. Highlighted the Russian dissatisfaction, perceived that this movement a threat to its security and its objectives in the region (THURON, 2009).

This problem led to Russia, especially Russian diplomacy, the limit during the war in Bosnia in 1994. In the period before the conflict, Yeltsin had adopted a zero-conflict foreign policy with NATO or the policies of Western countries, this policy was based hope for greater integration of the Russian state in the international system of economic and commercial point of view (THURON, 2009).

But the crisis in Bosnia, considered by Russia a strategic region for national defense, pressed Moscow to act more independently. In 1994, after a massacre in Sarajevo, NATO decided by an ultimatum to and stop the conflict in a radius of 20 kilometers from Sarajevo or NATO would bomb the area. At first Russia consented, not in order to support the decision, but releasing the airspace for bombing (THURON, 2009).

However, with the imminent bombing and lack of a peace agreement and forwarded by the West, Moscow decided to act independently. Negotiations for a ceasefire were sent by Russian diplomacy without NATO's consent. Although Russia has achieved an agreement between the parties to the momentary end of the conflict, NATO ignored this agreement kept the ultimatum in February 1994 the weapons were dropped, however, to what extent Russian influence or the ultimatum of NATO, were determinants is difficult to ascertain. Maintaining the ultimatum was rejected by Russia and caused major disruptions in the background of Russian politics (THURON, 2009).

Yeltsin argued in February 1994 that 'unlike the NATO bloc, which gave the Serbs an ultimatum, Russia had asked the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons [. . .], this was in psychological terms a subtly calculated move that worked.' Similarly, Churkin argued that the crisis was solved because firstly, the 'phrase "a request from Russia," had a powerful psychological effect [. . .]. Secondly, the letter was signed by the Russian president'⁸

The conflict in Bosnia had shown that liberal policy was being too costly for Moscow and in return the West would not be willing to change your thinking and logic of the Cold War as expected. The Russian identity marked by greatness and for its objective of acting as a power on the international scenario, saw his efforts for change

⁸Churkin, Interview with Churkin on St Petersburg Channel 5 TV', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 2 March 1994. In THORUN, C. p 177.

were almost ignored and their sphere of action on the international declined dramatically.

Alignment movement to the West for international security issues was in line with the liberal thought implemented by the Yeltsin government, but the consequences were not in accordance with historical thinking and the traditional aspirations of the Russian state . Capacity issues as a way to build the identity of the state proposed by Kubàlková (2001) , can be seen at this point . Russia being one of the largest military powers in the world and holds the second largest nuclear arsenal, their opinion should be heard and not ignored, on a matter of importance as the conflict in Bosnia.

The government of Yeltsin, from this episode, started forward a more independent Foreign Policy and not always assertive with Western interests. The way the system constrained Russia and as ignored to some extent, your changes embodied changing a Russia with closer policy of the former USSR than helped the new liberal thought to consolidate (THURON, 2009).

Despite the lack of international aid to recover Russia economy, Yeltsin's government had to deal with another type of international issue , the advance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in its areas of influence. Between 1992 and 1993, the government of Yeltsin supported all the decisions taken in the major Western military advice to the Council UN Security and NATO decisions. However, this policy, motivated by a process of liberal ideas , was interrupted in 1993 (THORUN , 2009).

Opportunity appears During the Bosnian War of Independence. Although Russia had supported all measures as UN PROPOSALS and NATO, in February 1994 a NATO drafted hum ultimatum to all forces next to Sarajevo to drop there weapons throw otherwise, NATO Would start an aerial offensive against. The Russian Foreign Ministry countered this movement articulating an accord to cease-fire between Croats and Muslim Bosnians (THORUN, 2009)

The agreement was accepted by the parties and the established ceasefire. Although it is difficult to define what generated the agreement between the parties, the

Russian diplomacy or the threat of NATO, this was the first Russian independent movement for resolving external disputes since the Soviet era (THORUN, 2009)

Conclusion

During Yeltsin's first administration, the West and Russia had many opportunities to create structures of peace. The changes in Russian identity and Foreign Policy and the reactions of the West shows how difficult it is to create such structures.

The first opportunity appears when Yeltsin was trying to engage Russia into the west economic structures. The WTO was a strong institution at the time and could have been the bridge between an economic instable Moscow and the West. However Russia was only accepted into this organization 20 years later.

In the economic arena Russia tried a loan with the IMF. The loan was negotiated in the G7. Here we have two other institution that could have been used to create structures to promote peace. But this time the Russian insatisfaction for has been treated as a third world country desperate for help was clear. That sort of treatment would only be tolerated by Russia in order to achieve the economic goal. No further policies or structures could be born in such arena.

In addition, the International Security issues, especially the Kosovo situation, Russia was cast aside from the decision makers, after collaborating in The UN Security Council. The decision of taking Russia out of the big players, in a matter that was taking place in very strategic region for Moscow was not only a hit for the diplomacy and military staff, but to the nation.

The lack of a clear identity definition in Yeltsin's Russia is one of the components that impossibilitated the criation of more robust peace institutions. In one hand, Russia wanted to be respected as a great power in the internacional arena, as in the kosovo crisis, but in the other, the plea for a loan from West,financial and monetary intitutions, made Moscow adopted a Third World role. This dichotomy, that was a reflexion from the confusion inside Russia, took a high price on the dilogues with the West.

In conclusion, from 1992 to 1994, Russia and the West seemed to not been able to create structures to sustain peace between the sides. Even with the difficulty that

Moscow had in the economic and social fields and the attempt to reach out the West from institutions. It seems that troughs this negotiations not only the parts were unable to create structures of peace, but demonstrated that in big arenas they still can not understand each other, this time without ideology to blame.

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