



NATO & the Evolving Relationship With Russia

[Πληκτρολογήστε τον υπότιτλο του εγγράφου]

The decision to transform relations between Russia and NATO into a new quality partnership is correctly perceived by millions of Russians. The starting point here is a clear understanding that neither nuclear missile capability nor Cold War obligations can be panacea for contemporary threats.

Dimitrios G. Kliatsis
[Επιλογή ημερομηνίας]

University of Macedonia

Topic of Dissertation

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Student's Name

Dimitrios Kliatsis

Research Supervisor

Karagiannis Emmanuel

Balkan Slavic & Oriental Studies

MA in Politics & Economics of Contemporary Eastern and Southeastern
Europe

Russia is a part of European culture. Therefore, it is with
difficulty that I imagine NATO as an enemy.

Vladimir Putin

I would like to thank my family
and my friend Leonidas Fotiadis
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Abstract

NATO's essential purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.

POLITICAL - NATO promotes democratic values and encourages consultation and cooperation on defence and security issues to build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.

MILITARY - NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - NATO's founding treaty - or under a UN mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. NATO is an alliance of countries from Europe and North America. It provides a unique link between these two continents for consultation and cooperation in the field of defence and security, and the conduct of multinational crisis-management operations. Strategic Concepts lay down the Alliance's core tasks and principles, its values, the evolving security environment and the Alliance's strategic objectives for the next decade. The 2010 Strategic Concept defines NATO's core tasks as: collective defence, crisis-management and cooperative security.

In this paper the main circles that we will be lead in is the relations between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization initially under Boris Yeltsin presidency and then under Vladimir's Putin. The relations will be discussed in the prism of the end of the Cold War and the expansion of NATO but also concerning the changes in Russia's domestic scenery after the fall of the Soviet Union and under the International umbrella reforms. Summarizing in what the international relations theories would declare on such "fluidizing" theme.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1989 on the 9th of November the people of East and West Germany joined together in an unprecedented and unforeseen insurrection, at some stage in the literal and symbolic bulwark of Communism, the Berlin Wall was torn down.¹This event directly precipitated the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which as a result brought about the end of the Cold War.²As 40 years of constant, albeit, low-level conflict faded into memory, the bi-polar international structure that had colored and characterized all aspects of international relations was transformed. Not surprisingly, predictions regarding the nature of the new international order were numerous and contradictory. One organization in particular stood at the center of the debate on the shape of the international system in the post-Cold War era: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Realist and neorealist international relations scholars, such as John J. Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz, were pessimistic regarding both the future of NATO and the nature of international relations in the post-Cold War system. Mearsheimer argued that the bi-polar configuration of power had held states natural tendency towards conflict in check; he predicted that without this stabilizing force the new international system would be characterized by decreased cooperation and increased conflict. Both Mearsheimer and Waltz perceived the dissolution of NATO as a particular manifestation of this eventuality because, according to the

¹ Grant 1991

² Pryce-Jones 1995

realist paradigm, cooperation between states generally only occurs when a strong motivating factor such as a threat to state survival, is present.³

Adherents of the comparatively more optimistic school of thought, liberalism, argued that a conflictual post-Cold War was not inevitable and that NATO could and should play a vital role in preserving peace in Europe within the new security environment. This is consistent with their paradigm because while realists argue that institutions are merely a reflection of the contemporary power configuration and operate according to the whims of the great powers of the day, liberals believe that institutions can take on a life and influence beyond that instilled by the founding states.⁴ Furthermore, as the Cold War came to an end, realists still viewed NATO as a military alliance, although a nontraditional one. Given that the vast majority of the international relations theory tells us that alliances exist for the sole purpose of countering a specific threat it was logical for the realists to predict the demise of NATO as a corollary to the demise of the organization's *raison d'être*, the Soviet Union. Most liberal scholars, however, have long argued that throughout the Cold War that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization developed into more than a military alliance:

*...NATO is about much more than just coordinating military policy to deter and defend against a common enemy. From its inception, NATO has had the broader goal of enhancing its members' security, which includes promoting stable civil-military relations within member states, as well as preventing security competition between them.*⁵

Consequently, it was consistent with their paradigm for neoliberal 'institutionalists' Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane to argue in the early 1990's that although the Alliance could not have been created in the security environment of the late 1980's, it would and could continue to exist in the post-Cold War system as it had proved itself to be a valuable international institution of the past four decades.⁶

³ Mearsheimer 1990, pg. 35&42, Waltz 1993, pg. 75-76

⁴ Mearsheimer 1994, pg. 7

⁵ Rauchhaus 2001, pg. 13-14

⁶ Nye & Keohane 1993, pg. 104-106

While, the predictions of liberal scholars certainly seem to be more accurate than those of the realists', not even the most optimistic among them anticipated the level of integration and partnership that has been cultivated among NATO member states and their former adversaries in the years since the fall of the Soviet Union. Few, if any, predicted that less than a decade after the end of the Cold War, NATO would have expanded into the former Warsaw Pact territory or that Russian troops would be working side-by-side with NATO ones in peacekeeping operations in former Yugoslavia.

This latter occurrence clearly demonstrates that, since the end of the Cold War, NATO has reformulated itself into a body that includes Russia in a mutually beneficial, albeit occasionally awkward, quasi-partnership. As the 21st century progresses all signs indicate that NATO and Russia will continue to co-exist despite their turbulent past and sometimes rocky present. As the Alliance expands ever closer to Russia's borders, the notion of peaceful co-existence between these two former adversaries is becoming more and more important.

In brief, the purpose of this dissertation is to assess the impact that NATO had/have on Russia. The following pages will demonstrate that the Alliance expansion had a detrimental impact on Russia throughout Boris Yeltsin's presidency. Yet, President Vladimir Putin had been more successful than his predecessor. This is, at least, in part due to the terrorist attacks of the 9/11th at the United States. Since the beginning of his political career, Putin had demonstrated that the contemporary threat to Russia's national security is terrorism, not an attack from the West under the auspices of NATO. Putin does not view NATO as an adversary, and is thus able to recognize the necessity of transforming the NATO-Russia relationship into an alliance which would more effectively combat the terrorist threat. The 9/11th attacks did not change Putin's beliefs regarding threats to his country, but they have helped him enlist and sustain support for his administration's anti-terrorist, Western oriented policy. As Russia's threat perceptions shift from the West to terrorism, the likelihood of fundamental reform in Russia will grow.

Prehistory

Since 1942, the Soviet Union has been associated with the United Kingdom and the United States as part of an alliance treaty coalition, which subsequently joined by France and a number of other governments at the time occupied by the Third Reich states. After the allied

victory in World War II political structure of Europe and its security was organized by the decisions of the Teheran and Potsdam conferences of great powers.

However, after the “cold war”, the death of Joseph Stalin and the change of leadership in allied countries need new solutions. Back in 1949 the British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin proposed to the Soviet Union to discuss the scope of the interaction with the planned organization of the defense of Western Union, the predecessor of NATO - and the Soviet side expressed interest in negotiations.⁷

Conversely, the creation of a separate Western Union of countries the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) in 1949 was seen by Moscow as a threat to its national security and “undermining the United Nations.” In early 1954, at a meeting of foreign ministers of the U.S., UK, France and the Soviet Union in West Berlin, the Soviet Union ensured that NATO tasks purely defensive, and invited to cooperate.⁸

The Soviet government under the guidance of Nikita Khrushchev in March 31, 1954 sent a proposal to unite NATO and the Soviet Union in a treaty on collective security under the “umbrella” of Europe involving the United States. But on May 7 the U.S., France and Britain refused, saying that "unrealistic nature offers are not worth discussing".⁹

Moscow put forward the claim: the demilitarization of the Soviet occupation zone of Germany, de-occupation of Austria, the rejection of foreign bases in Mongolia, China and Korea, etc. A year later, on May 14, 1955, the Soviet Union and its East European allies signed the Warsaw Pact. It provided a unified military command, with headquarters in Moscow, and the deployment of Soviet troops in the participating countries.¹⁰

Thus, in Europe and the world were formed two opposing military-political blocs. Warsaw Pact de facto collapsed of the world system during the liquidation of the socialist countries in the late 1980s and was formally dissolved with the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹¹ NATO bloc exists till today.

⁷ Лозуцько, С. 50 лет нашему плану вступления в НАТО. Еженедельник 2000, № 13 (214), 26 марта ,1 апреля 2004 года.

⁸ Лозуцько, С. 50 лет нашему плану вступления в НАТО. Еженедельник 2000, № 13 (214), 26 марта ,1 апреля 2004 года.

⁹ Лозуцько, С. 50 лет нашему плану вступления в НАТО. Еженедельник 2000, № 13 (214), 26 марта ,1 апреля 2004 года.

¹⁰ Лозуцько, С. 50 лет нашему плану вступления в НАТО. Еженедельник 2000, № 13 (214), 26 марта ,1 апреля 2004 года.

¹¹ Взаимоотношения Москвы и НАТО. «Коммерсантъ», № 215/П (4515), 22 ноября 2010 года.

Chapter 1

NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP UNDER BORIS YELTSIN **(1991-1999)**

Harmonization of relations with Russia has been a top priority of NATO officials since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. A concerted effort was made by the Alliance, since the early 1990's, in order to bear out to Moscow's government that it is a solely defensive organization with a mandate to promote the principles of liberal democracies and, per se, does not pose a threat to Russia's national security.¹² The majority of the Russian political elite were resistant to NATO's largely friendly overtures throughout the greater part of Boris Yeltsin presidency.¹³ In particular, the military bureaucracy which was fervently opposed to the reformation and professionalization of Russia's Armed Forces cited NATO's expansionary plans as evidence that the West continued to pose a threat to Russia's national security. Hence, NATO enlargement provided justification for military officials to stymie military reform efforts all the way through the 1990's.

1.1 The Ups and Downs of the "Honeymoon"

NATO Summit at 1990 held in London, Great Britain, was a key event not only for the Alliance itself, but for the world's history. At the time of the Summit the very structure of the international system was fundamentally restructured in a way almost utterly unexpected by scholars and politicians globally. Naturally, as the threat that have given rationale to the Alliance faded into oblivion, voiced raised to question NATO's future importance. The Alliance was not

¹² NATO-"NATO Today" 2002 pg.20-21

¹³ Asmus 2002 Book 2 section 2, Book 3 section 3.

ready to admit that NATO had completed what it set out to accomplish. Consequently London Summit was used in order to declare the importance and relevance of the Alliance in the evolving international system.

...it must continue to provide for the common defence...Our Alliance must be even more an agent of change. It can help built the structures of a more united continent, supporting security and stability the strength of our shared faith in democracy, the rights of the individual, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.¹⁴

In order to prolong the life of the Alliance, its Leaders decided that NATO had to be altered in order to meet with the new shape of the international system. The viability of the Alliance was based on the former Warsaw Pact countries and the argent reformulation of the relations with them. London Summit was used as a platform to issue a formal invitation to Russia and the other Soviet Socialists Republics to penetrate into a new, constructive relationship with the Alliance, *“come to NATO not just to visit but to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO”*.¹⁵

Over the following year, NATO officials and bureaucrats gave their best efforts to develop a positive relationship between Russia and other Warsaw Pact Countries. At the NATO-Rome Summit in 1991 these efforts culminated in the formation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), comprised of all the NATO states, the CIS, the Baltic's, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. Even though some IR experts argued that NACC, which was strictly a counseling body, did not have an adequately expansive mandate, the creation of the Council was of high significance as it represented the first institutionalized body with the capacity and mandate to assemble the Alliance and its former adversaries.¹⁶

The eagerness with which NACC was accepted by the member-states, over and above the cautious overtures on behalf of the Russian side indicating interest in eventual inclusion into the Alliance, fostered optimism concerning the future of the European security and NATO-Russia

¹⁴ NATO 1990 “The London Declaration”

¹⁵ NATO 1990, “The London Declaration”.

¹⁶ NATO 1991 “The Rome Declaration”; Solomon 1998, pg. 15-17.

relations at the pick of post-Cold war era.¹⁷ “Honeymoon” is the period from 1991 to 1993 that is often refers to the NATO-Russia relations, in which essentially productive and harmonious dealings have been settled. Arms limitation and reduction talks were progressively made. American and Russian leaders were conducting regularly in person, and President Yeltsin’s closest advisors advocated Russia’s augmented relations with the West as the newly founded country struggled to find its ground on the constant chancing world order.¹⁸

Atlanticists was a school of thought that discarded isolation and argued that Russia’s global place could only be achieved through cooperation and cordial relations with the States and the European Union. That school of thought was followed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev and Yeltsin’s advisor Sergei Stankevitch. They dominated Russia’s political discourse throughout that period and it is salient in order to understand Boris Yeltsin pro-Western behavior at the time.¹⁹

By 1993 several different schools of thought had arrived in Russia’s domestic political scene and inevitably the influential position of the Atlanticists was diminished and questioned. Some argued that Russia should focus on budding ties with the East and South rather than the West. Others advocated an imperialistic anti-American/Western strategy based on ultra-nationalistic and communistic sentiments. The crux of the matter was unfortunately that *“the Atlanticists, once the majority, now rapidly losing strength”*.²⁰

Lose of autonomy and flexibility by president Yeltsin was an outcome of the rightward shift of Russia’s domestic political environment. Criticism to the president was increasing in particular for his pro-Western policies. On October 4th 1993 the pinnacle came when Duma was took over by factions opposed to Yeltsin’s policies in order to cast him out from power. It was thanks to his formidable personality, an amount of luck and the loyalty of the military that Yeltsin was able to keep hold of the reigns of power.²¹ He was no longer free to govern without taking under consideration his opponents. Although the coup attempt was sustained, the incident highlighted the instability of Yeltsin’s position.

In December 1993, just three months later, Yeltsin’s government was further unsettled by the Duma elections. Taken ‘Yeltsin’s family’ and international observers by surprise, Vladimir

¹⁷ Solomon 1996, pg. 15; Sergounin 1997, pg. 58

¹⁸ Kugler 1996, pg. 27-29.

¹⁹ Kugler 1996, pg. 28-31.

²⁰ Kugler 1996, pg. 30-32; Sergounin 1997, pg. 57-64.

²¹ Kagarlitsky 2002, Part 1, Chapter 3

Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), won about a quarter of the popular vote, making LDPR "the most important and right radical organizations and the largest function in the Russian Duma from 1993 to 1995".²² ²³The increased opposition to Yeltsin policies was a clear outcome of the October coup attempt and the December elections; with a result of a hard-line approached of the West, in order not to appear weak to the public and the other parties.²⁴

1.2The 'Birth' of an Idea

While Russia was moving rightwards, to a less pro-Western more statist's path, the States were meeting a domestic political realm. Democrat Bill Clinton entered the White House in 1993 as an outcome of an election large winning through his inward looking platform of stabilizing and rebuilding US economy.²⁵ However, America's new role in the post-Cold War environment became the pole of his planning soon after his inauguration. Clinton's first term in Office was defined by the idea of NATO's expansion and became a critical issue under his presidency.

President Bill Clinton attended the opening of the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC in April 1993. A day marked as leaping stone for the future of the Alliance. The ethnic slaughter occurred at the Balkan region at the time, gave the opening of the museum a somber and political load. The leaders of Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary; respectively Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel and Arpad Goncz, attended the museum opening because of the significance that their geostrategic role gave them in the World War 2. Beyond their respects paid at the Holocaust victims these men had another reason to be there the fear for their countries and their region's future because of the instability in Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War. Their goal was to conduct a message of necessity in ensuring peace and democratic stability in their region, and no better time and place was better than the museum opening.²⁶

The three Eastern European leaders met President Clinton upon a request to become NATO members, the lack of time and the importance of their request was crucial:

²² Sergounin 1997, pg. 66

²³ For more for the elections see McFaul 2001

²⁴ Kugler 1996, pg. 33

²⁵ Asmus 2002, pg. 20

²⁶ Asmus 2002, pg. 23

*The feared Russia; they did not trust the major West European powers. They trusted America. They wanted to join NATO to ensure that their countries would never again fall victim to the twin evils of nationalism and geopolitics that had produced so much tragedy at their part of Europe-and that were rearing their ugly heads in the Balkans.*²⁷

Even though in the immediate aftermath of the museum opening no decision of the Alliance enlargement was taken, a seed had been planted in fertile soil: *“NATO enlargement resonated with two of Clinton’s core convictions-a commitment to expand and consolidate democracy and his belief in the importance of modernizing America’s alliances in a globalized world.”*²⁸

One of the most intensive debated in the history of international relations was an outcome of the request made by the three Eastern European leaders and Clinton’s eagerness. The notion of NATO’s enlargement provoked a fierce argument inside and outside the States. The ones in favor of the enlargement had two main divisions: on the one hand that NATO’s expansion would constrain Russia’s aggressive tendencies and on the other hand that it would promote democracy, freedom and security. Those against the expansion had numerous arguments. The most serious was concerning Russia’s isolation and a potential government takeover by anti-Western extremists.²⁹ Once these arguments were pronounced the and by the summer of 1993 the debate had spread to all corners of the globe.

1.3Russia’s Response

On the spring of 1993, while the debate was intensified Russia was still governed by Yeltsin who was pro-Atlanticist. Hence with no surprise that Russia or at least the President reaction on NATO’s expansion plans bordering on acceptance.³⁰ On August 1995 President Boris Yeltsin and the Polish President Lech Walesa signed a communiqué stated that Moscow

²⁷ Asmus 2002, pg. 23

²⁸ Asmus 2002, pg. 25

²⁹ Asmus 2002 and more details Daignan 2000;Hugland 1996;Szyanna 2001

³⁰ Kugler 1996, pg.62; Solomon 1998, pg 22-25

had no objection to Poland's prospective entering NATO. According to the communiqué, Moscow recognized Poland's sovereignty and stated:³¹

“The days were over when Moscow would dictate to Warsaw what it should do” Boris Yeltsin.

Wide criticism was made to Boris Yeltsin for showing tolerance on NATO's expansion. The coup attempted and the December elections came as a result of the communiqué and declared how undermined Yeltsin's government was. As a result of the criticism and the shift in the domestic political field Boris Yeltsin chose or one can say forced to adopt a stricter and less tolerant approach to NATO's expansion.

Over a year of discussions and behind the scenes debate was needed to unveil NATO's enlargement on the public agenda on January 1994. During that month two key steps were taken to commence the concept of the expansion. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme of the NATO-Brussels Summit was the first to be officially unveiled; the programme was in the agenda in lots of forms since 1991. A group of NATO experts deemed this programme as a path leading to full NATO membership, on controversy another group characterized it as an extension of NACC as to avoid the thorny membership debate.³² PfP members are required to match to the following goals: democratic control of their militaries; contributing to the UN and/or operations; plus establishing cooperative relations with the NATO troops and eventual interoperability with them. PfP affiliates receive a security guarantee from NATO (albeit weaker than the one of the NATO members) as well as assistance to modernize their militaries from NATO headquarters in Brussels; all these as a return for carrying out the changes needed.³³

The question of NATO enlargement was no longer *‘whether’* but *‘when’* and *‘how’* that was the formal statement that President Clinton made in Prague after the Brussels Summit. That conducts the second key step on NATO's expansion.³⁴

By this time, the political elite of Russia had converged on the issue of NATO's expansion. Russian politicians, bureaucrats and officials with surprisingly few exceptions came

³¹ Asmus 2002, pg. 37

³² Solomon 1998, pg. 26-30; Duignan 2000, pg. 57

³³ Solomon 1998, pg. 37-40.

³⁴ Asmus 2002, pg. 59; Duleba 2002, pg. 154

united to their opposition to any form of NATO's enlargement. Alexander Sergounin puts it: *"there was a sort of anti-NATO consensus in the Russian domestic arena"*.³⁵

Due to the widespread opposition to NATO's expansion, Russian domestic political elite welcomed PfP as they deemed it as an alternative to the enlargement of the Alliance. Soon became clear that the programme was a corollary to the expansion of the Alliance and opposition raised to that point when in August 1994, Vladimir Lukin (chairman of the committee of Foreign Affairs in Duma) correlated the programme to the rape of Russia.³⁶ Over a year had delayed Russia to enter the programme this strict opposition. Eventually in 1995 Moscow signified Russia's acceptance to become a member of the PfP.³⁷

Russia's delayed but in the end welcoming membership of the PfP, was like a watershed effect on NATO-Russia's relations; on many levels failed to diminish Russia's concerns about the expansion of the Alliance. In December 1994, at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Boris Yeltsin warned President Clinton and all his counterparts that the further expansion of the Alliance could spark a *'Cold Peace'* instead of a Cold War.³⁸ President Yeltsin continued to propound dire prognostications like this for almost three years.³⁹

Russia's government had realized by 1995 that the expansion of the Alliance was inevitable whether Moscow acquiesced or not. Consequently, for the next two years President Yeltsin and his Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, attempted to slow, stall and maintain some control over the enlargement process, all the while reluctantly accepting the inexorableness of expansion in one form or another.⁴⁰ For all intents and purposes, Russia adopted a pragmatic approach to the enlargement issue in hope of mitigating its negative ramifications for the country.

In 1996 Russian troops began to cooperate with the Alliance in the Balkans, this was an outcome of the new pragmatic approach and a historical spot.⁴¹ Needless to say, that this occurrence was lauded as both a concrete and symbolic demonstration of harmonious NATO-Russia relations. However it was not until May 1997 that the real political watershed occurred,

³⁵ Sergounin 1997, pg. 57

³⁶ Kugler 1996, pg. 35

³⁷ Kugler 1996, pg. 65

³⁸ Williams 1994, A1.

³⁹ Kugler 1996, pg. 37-38.

⁴⁰ Kugler 1996, pg. 38; Sergounin 1997, pg. 68

⁴¹ NATO, "NATO Today" 2002, pg. 20.

when Russia signed *the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation* in Paris.⁴²

The Act was a dual track process advocated by President Clinton, in which NATO could expand without alienating Russia.⁴³ Thus, the vital purpose of the Act was to assure Russian Federation that expansion of the Alliance was not an attempted to isolate or offend the country, but rather to foster a stable climate in which democracy could flourish throughout Europe.⁴⁴ The most significant accomplishment of the Founding Act was the creation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). The PJC was designed:

*With the central objective...increasing levels of trust, unity of purpose and habits of consultation and cooperation between NATO and Russia, in order to enhance each other's security and that of all nations in the Euro-Atlantic area and diminish the security of none.*⁴⁵

To this end, the Founding Act established regular PJC meetings at virtually all government and military levels. Notably, the Act specified that the PJC would not be strictly limited to regular sessions, but rather allowed for impromptu meetings to be held when necessary. Despite the fact that, the NATO-Russia Founding Act signified by all accounts a breakthrough in the mutual relation, Alliance leaders set some limits on the mandate of the PJC.⁴⁶ For instance, the Act expressly prohibits intervention in the “internal matters” of both bodies as well as “the right to veto over the actions of the other”⁴⁷

The Founding Act was strong enough to overcome the remaining hurdles blocking NATO expansion. In July 1997, just two months after the Act was signed, the Alliance members voted unanimously to invite Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to join.⁴⁸ The Act *“paved the way for NATO to celebrate its 50th anniversary with the addition of the three new members.”*⁴⁹ While the government in Moscow ostensibly remained opposed to the expansion

⁴² Mehrotra 1998, pg. 1

⁴³ Asmus 2002, pg. 210-211.

⁴⁴ NATO 1997, “Founding Act”

⁴⁵ NATO 1997, “Founding Act”

⁴⁶ Mehrotra 1998, pg. 2-3.

⁴⁷ NATO 1997, “Founding Act”

⁴⁸ NATO 2002, “NATO Today” pg.14

⁴⁹ Mehrotra 1998, pg. 2

policy of the Alliance even after the Founding Act, the document and the creation of the PJC provided sufficient domestic political leverage to sustain Yeltsin's and Primakov's grasp on power over their opponents in Russia.⁵⁰

For the following two years relations between the Alliance and Russia remained relatively harmonious and constructive, and the three new members were welcomed at a ceremony held in Independence, Missouri on 12 March 1999 only with a mild protest on the part of the Russian government.⁵¹ Unfortunately another roadblock laid ahead for the Alliance and its new 'partner'.

NATO- Russia relations were seriously damaged in summer 1999, when NATO's Kosovo campaign was carried out without the consultation or the approval of the United Nations. In fact, relations deteriorated to the lowest level since the Cold War due to the widespread perception in Russia that its legitimate claims regarding its 'Serbs Brothers' were being ignored.⁵² Russian fears regarding the nature of an expanded Alliance, mitigated by the Act in 1997, returned into full force with the Kosovo campaign. The PJC, apparently a mechanism of consultation and conflict avoidance, was unable to help the two sides reach a compromise and was thus severely undermined.⁵³

Alexei Arbatov, deputy chair of the Duma Defence Committee and director of the Center for Political and Military Forecasts at the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, declared: *"the use of NATO aircraft and missiles against Serbia on March 24th 1999 ended the post-Cold War phase of international affairs"*.⁵⁴ A dramatic increase of anti-American sentiment was provoked by the bombings throughout Russia and Cold War-era suspicions and stereotypes were revived. In a nutshell, NATO through the Kosovo Campaign was made once again one of the top perceived threats to Russia's national security.⁵⁵

By the fall of 1999 relations were marginally improved, but the NATO- Russia association was severely damaged by the Kosovo Campaign. For all intents and purposes, the Campaign negated the progress achieved by the establishment of the Permanent Joint Council

⁵⁰ Mehrotra 1998, pg. 2; Dannreuther 1999-2000, pg. 146-147.

⁵¹ Duleba 2002, pg. 153

⁵² Duleba 2002, pg. 170-173.

⁵³ Antonenko 1999-2000, pg. 126-135.

⁵⁴ Arbatov 2000, pg. 1

⁵⁵ Arbatov 2000, pg. 1, 2 & 9

and the Founding Act. As one scholar puts it, at the end of 1999, Russia and NATO had *“returned to their pre-Founding Act state”*.⁵⁶

Boris Yeltsin, on an international political level, helped to bring about significant advances in the NATO-Russia relations during the post-Cold War era. Under his leadership, Russia’s relations with the Alliance did not degenerate to the point of violent conflicts at its low points, and the high points involved the permanent codification of consultation mechanisms. These accomplishments are commendable and should not be underestimated.

⁵⁶ Antonenko 1999-2000, pg. 137

Chapter 2
NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP UNDER VLADIMIR PUTIN
(2000-2003)

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin became President of the Russian Federation in January 2000, and had to face an overwhelming array of problems. The country's economy were in shambles, faith in governmental institutions was at an all time low, crime and corruption were rampant, the military were in a sorry state, and relations with NATO were still suffering in the wake of the Kosovo crisis. Although it would have be difficult to make the conditions any worse and even though Russia still faces numerous problems, during his presidency Putin has managed to bring about a marked improvement in many areas. On specific concern for this thesis, Russia's President has already coordinated a fundamental and positive shift in NATO-Russia relations.

2.1 Putin's 'Pick'

It has been a trend among journalists and some academics to point to September 11th, 2001 as the turning point in Russia's relations with the States and with the Alliance. This, however, is not entirely accurate. In actual fact, President Vladimir Putin, decided in his early days in the Office, that the most undeviating route to re-establishing Russia as a respected and powerful country was through engagement with the West. The 9/11 incident did not change his stance; it merely made it more politically feasible for him to pursue this type of a Western oriented agenda. Correspondingly, President Putin had already demonstrated his certainty that the primary threat to Russian national security was not an assault from NATO or the Western countries, but rather terrorism, stemming from secessionists movements and fundamentalist Islam in Russia's troublesome southern regions and Central Asia. Conversely, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States by Al Qaeda's operatives have helped Putin convince the general Russian populace, more than the military bureaucracy, that the Cold War is truly over and that the Russian Federation faces a new and radically different threat. Obviously, this view has been substantiated by the terrorist attacks that have occurred in Russian territories, including the citizens held in hostage at Dubrovka Theater in Moscow in October 2002 and the suicide bombings at a rock concert in Moscow the July of the following year.

By March 2000, President Putin had expressed his pro-NATO tendencies, when in an interview at the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) he stated: ***“it is hard for me to visualize NATO as an enemy”***. Furthermore, during that interview he mentioned the possibility of Russia becoming a full member-state of NATO at some point in the future.⁵⁷ In July 2001, just few months later, he indicated that Russia’s opposition to the expansion might be surmountable, offering hope that the perennial conflict between Russia and the Alliance leaders could be resolved or at least dismissed:

As for NATO expansion, one can take another, an entirely new look at this...if NATO takes on a different shade and becoming a political organization...They keep saying that NATO becomes more political than military. We are looking at this and watching this process. If this is to be so, it would change things considerably.⁵⁸

These comments were confirmed during a visit from the President at Helsinki when he made a public statement that to the effect that Russia would not only violently oppose to the admission of the Baltic States into the North Atlantic Alliance.⁵⁹ Collectively, these statements indicate that Vladimir Putin had ***‘chosen the West’*** long before September 11th, 2001.

President Putin had realized the ***‘real threat’*** to Russian security and he made a concomitant commitment to military reform prior to the terrorist attacks on the United States. Even though initially some observers dubbed Putin’s anti-terrorist stance a cynical ploy to increase his popularity within the Russian electorate, the general consensus nowadays is that the president genuinely and passionately believes that the primary threat facing Russia is terrorism. ***“His hypersensitive responses to Western media questioning of Moscow’s conduct of the Chechen war point to sincerity of conviction and purpose that goes well beyond the call of political pragmatism”***.⁶⁰

Back in 2000, Russian scholars Pavel Baev and Bryan D. Taylor argued that Putin’s stance on military reform was sincere, and that his behavior indicated a deeper commitment to

⁵⁷ Vladimir Putin quoted Herspring & Rutland 2003, pg. 245; Glinski Vassiliev 2002, pg. 2.

⁵⁸ Vladimir Putin quoted Jones 2001.

⁵⁹ Herspring & Rutland 2003, pg. 245

⁶⁰ Lo 2003, pg. 84.

reform than either of his predecessors, Boris Yeltsin or Mikhail Gorbachev.⁶¹ This commitment can be seen in Putin's revival of the conscription debate early in his presidency as well as his appointment of a civilian, Sergei Ivanov, as Defence Minister in order to replace Igor Sergeev.⁶² By and large, many respected experts such as Dmitri Trenin- Deputy Director of the Moscow Carnegie Center and Celeste Wallander of the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) have argued that Vladimir Putin had made a commitment to establishing a constructive relationship with the United States and the Western Countries, as well as professionalizing the military, before the tragic events of the 9/11.⁶³

2.2 Ramifications of the 9/11

The 9/11 attack did not affect a fundamental shift in the President Putin's way of acting. However, it provided him a valuable window of opportunity that enabled him to entrench a Western oriented, anti-terrorism policy and deepen the relationship with the States.⁶⁴ Vladimir Putin did not hesitate to take full advantage of that opportunity.

It is of great significance as practical as symbolic that President Putin was the first international leader to offer condolences and support to President Bush in the aftermath of the attacks.⁶⁵ Shortly thereafter, Vladimir Putin overrode opposition from both his Defence Minister and several senior military officials by declaring that the United States could have access to bases in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in order to facilitate their military campaign against Afghanistan's Taliban government.⁶⁶

Given the historical, symbolic and geopolitical significance of Central Asia for Moscow, it is not surprising that the majority of government and military officials were opposed to an American presence in the area. Just days after the attacks on September 11th 2001, both the Minister of Defence Ivanov and the Head of the General Staff GEN Anatoly Kvashnin, stated that sympathy for the Americans would not extend to material assistance in Central Asia.⁶⁷ By no surprise, the domestic reaction to President Putin permitting a US presence in Central Asia was

⁶¹ Baev 2000, pg.4; Taylor 2000, pg.5

⁶² Herspring 2003, pg. 170

⁶³ Trenin 2002, pg. 1; Wallander 2002, pg. 4

⁶⁴ Jackson 2002, pg.10

⁶⁵ Kaufman 2001, pg. 1

⁶⁶ Jackson 2002, pg. 19; Warren 2001

⁶⁷ Colton & McFaul 2001, pg. 47

negative. One Russian General declares: ***“we are clearly not impressed with the establishment of NATO bases in Central Asian states ”***.⁶⁸

Putin’s decision to grant the US to the airbases in question speaks not only to his considerable political power, but also to his determination to use the 9/11 attack as a mean to forge better relations with the West, in particular with the United States.

President Putin’s pro-Western tendencies were much more than the significant one of granting American access to Central Asia territory. According to a *Financial Times* report on October 2001, Putin approached NATO: ***“for assistance in restructuring its defence ministry and armed forces”***.⁶⁹ Since September 2001 onwards President Putin has fostered an intensified cooperation between Russia and the Alliance with regard to combating terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass distraction.⁷⁰

While the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks against Washington D.C and New York did not foster a dramatic change in President Putin’s administration foreign policy agenda, they did open up a window of opportunity which Vladimir Putin skillfully manipulated in order to further his Western oriented policies. Russia expert and journalist Robert Kaiser summarizes:

Within nine months after September 11th, Putin took a series of steps that would have been unthinkable just a short time earlier. He signed up Russia for the US war on terrorism, welcomed the establishment of US bases in once-Soviet Central Asia, acquiesced to US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, accepted US terms for a new treaty to reduce strategic arms and brought Russia into a relationship with NATO. In sum, he cast Russia’s lot with the West.⁷¹

These moves are not overly surprising when one considers the overall direction of Russian foreign policy since Putin’s accession to power. Vladimir Putin’s behavior, as both prime-minister and president, has indicated that he deems Russia to be a European state. In one of his interviews he stated this belief quite bluntly: ***“In terms of its geography, history, culture,***

⁶⁸ GEN Konstantin Trotsky quoted in Jackson 2002, pg. 19.

⁶⁹ Dempsey 2001

⁷⁰ NATO “NATO Today” 2002, pg. 23; Krauthammer 2002, A41

⁷¹ Kaiser 2002, B1

*mentality, Russia is a European country...*⁷²In accordance to this outlook, President Putin ceased to view the Alliance as an adversary early in his political career. Consequently Putin's desire to forge closer ties with NATO and the West after 9/11 did not signify shift in Moscow foreign policy agenda. Somewhat, it made this stance more publicly acceptable.

Russia's widespread sympathy for Americans in the wake of the attacks has combined with a sense of understanding borne of its own firsthand experience with terrorism. In turn, this has created a more favorable domestic climate for President Putin's government to push for a better relationship with both Europe and the United States. Surveys have indicated that the majority of Russians have overcome the mentality of the Cold War years and are capable of viewing old enemies as potential new allies. As the results of a public opinion poll carried out in October 2001 shown, 58% of the population supported strengthening ties with the Alliance. From this one can deduce that *"even Russian public opinion is abandoning its perception of NATO as enemy and is beginning to see it as a possible ally for the protection of Russian security."*⁷³

In tandem to Vladimir Putin's realization that the Alliance no longer poses a threat to his country is recognition of what actually **does** pose a threat. The President has deemed terrorism to be the greatest threat Russian national security throughout his presidency. Kimberly Marten Zisk a Russia expert succinctly explains: *"it is not aggression by stable, economically comfortable states that Russia need to fear today...Instead Russia needs to fear aggression by unconventional means from those who wish to undermine Russian control on its geographic and ethnic peripheries."*⁷⁴In the post-9/11 security environment Vladimir Putin understands that Russian Federation and the United States face the same primary threat. For that reason he understands the value and even the necessity of Russia's participation in America's War on Terror.⁷⁵

Yet, Russia's military persists in viewing domestic security concerns through an outdated lens; despite the fact that Russia's most powerful political leaders have recognized the contemporary threat to their security, despite the fact that the Cold War ended more than a decade ago, and despite the fact that Russia has been the victim of numerous terrorist attacks

⁷² Frost 2003

⁷³ Jackson 2002, pg. 26

⁷⁴ Marten Zisk 2002, pg. 4

⁷⁵ Herspring 2003, pg.17

over the past years. The military bureaucracy continued to view the Alliance and its expansion as a threat and, hence, was stalwartly to all talks of Russia's increasing cooperative programmes with NATO, let alone Russia's potential eventual membership into the Alliance:

*Many members of Russia's military elite object to Russia's full entry to NATO...would strip Russia of its independence and relative freedom of maneuver. As first Deputy Chief of Armed Forces General Yury Baluyevsky explains: "As a military person I see without a doubt that there is no need for Russia to join NATO military structures...all previous Russia-NATO relations were a waste of time".*⁷⁶

Military officials also persisted in using this misguided threat perception to argue that Russia has continued need for a vast conscript force and a large arsenal of nuclear weapons. *"The Russian military approach to NATO continues to prevent a major restructuring away from the Cold War preparations for war with NATO toward a modern, more capable that can cope with instability and terrorism in Eurasia."*⁷⁷

To varying degrees, the President, academics, and society agree that the international system and security environment have changed since the days of the Cold War. The events of the September 11th 2001, helped facilitate this acceptance and understanding. Incongruously, the military was one of the few remaining bodies that have yet to overcome the Cold War mentality and recognize the religious and separatist terrorism, not NATO, poses the real contemporary threat to Russia's national security.

2.3 The Rome Summit & the NATO-Russia Council

President Putin has been able to orchestrate a '**new and improved**' relationship with the Alliance, despite all the military persistent dislike and fear of NATO and especially its expansion. This was made clear in the Rome Summit on May 2002, just six months before that the Alliance planned to issue invitations to prospective member-states. The Summit was

⁷⁶ Jackson 2002, pg. 35

⁷⁷ Wallander 2001, pg.1

organized partly as a result of Putin's post-9/11 rapprochement with President Bush and the United States and to a degree as a way to mitigating Moscow's negative reaction to the Alliance's second round of enlargement.

The Rome Summit was predominantly significant for the relations between NATO and Russia as it not only codified certain cooperative measures which have been taken since the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, but also since it created the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).⁷⁸The Rome Declaration, the document establishing the NRC, was signed on May 28th 2002 at Practica di Mare Air Base in Italy.⁷⁹The NATO-Russia Council was designed to replace the Permanent Joint Council (1997-2002) and differs from its predecessor in one fundamentally important way: it is an executive, not a consultative body and, as such, will operate on the principle of consensus.⁸⁰ This means that *“for the first time Russia will have an opportunity to participate on equal terms in developing and implementing collective decisions...”*⁸¹The PJC was essentially a forum for NATO officials to inform Russia of predetermined Alliance policies; the NRC is a medium where NATO and Russia will develop, at least some, policies together.

The Rome Declaration delineates several areas where Russia and NATO can cooperate within the framework of the NRC including: the fight against terrorism, combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control issues and search and rescue at sea. What is more, the Rome Declaration's mention that the NRC would *“explore the possibility of establishing an integrated NATO-Russia military training center for missions to address the challenges of the 21st century”* was another noteworthy initial for the NATO-Russia relationship.⁸²This was the first official announcement that Russian and NATO troops might work together in a permanent, rather than mission-specific, setting.

While the military bureaucracy may not have been exaggeratedly pleased with the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council and the possibility of a closer relationship with the Alliance, the government in Moscow warmly welcomed the initiative stating that it signified a new era in the mutual relations. President Putin also used the signing of the Rome Declaration to further emphasize his belief that Russia could not combat terrorism without international support:

⁷⁸ NATO “NATO Today” 2002, pg. 20

⁷⁹ Markushin & Sumbaev 2002, pg. 1

⁸⁰ NATO “NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality” 2002, pg. 1

⁸¹ Markushin & Sumbaev 2002, pg. 1

⁸² NATO “NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality” 2002, pg. 3

*The decision to transform relations between Russia and NATO into a new quality partnership is correctly perceived by millions of Russians. The starting point here is a clear understanding that neither nuclear missile capability nor Cold War obligations can be panacea for contemporary threats.*⁸³

A key element for the establishment for the NATO-Russia Council was the continuation of the **‘dual track’** approach to the expansion of the Alliance. This approach, advocated by Bill Clinton, called for expanding NATO eastward while simultaneously augmenting Russia’s role within the Alliance in order to avoid aggravating this important and potential dangerous country.⁸⁴ The **‘dual track’** approach worked quite well during both the first and the second round of expansion.

Experts writing during the 2001 period predicted a serious rift in relations between Russia and the Alliance during the second round of the expansion, especially if anyone, let alone all three of the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia) were invited to join NATO.⁸⁵ A journalist for **The Economist** explains: *“few years ago, the Balts were widely thought impossible to wrap into NATO; the Russians would have been too angry for the West to dare mention the idea.”*⁸⁶

Yet, in November 2002 at the NATO Summit in Prague seven new countries, including the three Baltic States, were invited to become full NATO members and the response from the government in Moscow was barely audible. As it has been stated, in contrast with the Madrid Round, this round *“appears almost anticlimactic.”*⁸⁷ And in other words, *“the fact that has elicited nothing but yawns is a measure...of how radically the world has changed.”*⁸⁸

The hush of the Russian part does not mean that there was no longer any opposition to the enlargement on the contrary: *“bulk of Russia’s political establishment, particularly the foreign, defence and security communities, still resent what some refer to as NATO’s ‘eastern march’ because it eats away at their self-esteem and the traditional notion of Russia as a great*

⁸³ Vladimir Putin quoted in Markushin & Sumbaev 2002, pg. 1

⁸⁴ Asmus 2002

⁸⁵ Duleba 2002, pg. 150-164

⁸⁶ The Economist 2002, “Nastase Shock”

⁸⁷ Trenin 2002, pg. 1

⁸⁸ Krauthammer 2002, A41

power".⁸⁹ All the same, from the establishment of the NRC to the issuing of membership invitations, President Vladimir Putin has been successful in quashing vocal domestic opposition to NATO expansion as a part of his pragmatic Western oriented foreign policy.⁹⁰

2.4 Georgia (South Ossetia)

The relations between NATO and Georgia have been an issue of great interest, during the last years. After its independence from the Soviet Union, Georgia has made many steps towards its integration in the world community and the co-operation with NATO. Georgia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in North Atlantic Council in 1992 and later on, the Partnership for Peace. In 1996, Georgia signed its first Individual Partnership Plan, and in 1997 ratified the Status of Forces Agreement. Georgia opened official relations with NATO in 1998 with its own diplomatic mission. Following more discussions, the first joint military exercises occurred in Poti in 2001, with more in 2002. Moreover, Georgia has actively co-operated with NATO in ISAF.

NATO's relations with Georgia were complicated during the 2008 South Ossetia War, and the intervention of Russia in the country. The Allies agreed to support Georgia, upon its request, in a number of areas. These include assessing the damage to civil infrastructure and the state of the ministry of defence and armed forces; supporting the re-establishment of the air traffic system; and advising on cyber defence issues. Russia has continually expressed its skepticism for a future acceptance of the country in the Alliance. On the other hand, nonbinding referendum in 2008 in Georgia resulted in 77% of voters supporting NATO accession.

On August 7, 2008, Georgia called for a unilateral ceasefire following days of exchanged gunfire between Georgian forces and South Ossetian separatists. Five and a half hours after Georgia's declared ceasefire, Georgia's Foreign Ministry sent troops into South Ossetia "to restore constitutional order in the entire region". The South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali became the site for a prolonged battle.

Russia responded with a larger assault that quickly moved beyond South Ossetia in Georgia and included the other breakaway region of Abkhazia. This ongoing dispute complicates NATO's relation with Russia, which has peacekeeping troops in both regions, internationally recognized as Georgian territory. The South Ossetia war further diminished the likelihood of Georgian

⁸⁹ Trenin 2002, pg. 1

⁹⁰ Trenin 2002, pg. 2

accession to NATO in the near future according to several analysts. Others however see it as a justification for Georgian membership in NATO.⁹¹

⁹¹ Ryskya Gazeta

Chapter 3

International Relations Theories

The liberal paradigm within international relations is comparatively optimistic regarding the ability of institutions to influence state behavior and foster peace.⁹² The constructivist school of thought argues that international relations scholars must take domestic cultural norms into account if they are to develop sophisticated analyses regarding contemporary and future relations among nations.⁹³

Liberalism has many veins or strands, but adherents of this paradigm share certain fundamental premises. According to liberal scholars, *“international relations are gradually being transformed such they promote greater human freedom by establishing conditions of peace, prosperity and justice. This attitude toward progress reflects a general liberal stance...”*⁹⁴ Another fundamental premise, present in all strands but predominant in neo-liberal institutionalism and republican liberalism, is that institutions can constrain state behavior and foster peace. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, Jack Snyder argued that:

*When institutions are strong there is order; the effects of anarchy are mitigated. When institutions are weak, there is disorder; politics are marked by the perverse effect of anarchy. Thus, from this perspective, the problem of creating a new European security order to supplant that of the bipolar stalemate is above all a problem of building institutions.*⁹⁵

According to liberal theorists, the democracy promotion regime, a key part of which is NATO, has been proved capable of increasing state-to-state cooperation and fostering peace through the promotion of its **democratic** values. NATO's expansion to former communist,

⁹² Keohane 1993; Snyder 1991

⁹³ Johnston 1995; Jepperson, Wendt & Katzstein 1996

⁹⁴ Zacher & Matthew 1995, pg. 109

⁹⁵ Snyder 1991, pg. 114-115

authoritarian countries is often cited as exemplifying the power of this institution to alter state behavior and make progress, in terms of increased peace and prosperity, possible.⁹⁶

NATO's work in assisting the democratic development of new member states and countries affiliated with it through the Partnership for Peace programme is significant, and should not be downplayed. Nonetheless, the information that has been presented in this thesis indicates that liberals would be negligent to ignore domestic cultural norms as discussed by constructivists. The effort here indicates that understanding a country's domestic norms, would help in understanding its level of receptiveness to new ideas and procedures.

Eastern European countries have willingly, even enthusiastically, implemented the reforms required by the Alliance in order to become member states. Conversely, Russian leaders, especially within the military, have proved extremely resistant to accepting NATO's overtures. A detailed comparative analysis is too complex and convoluted to attempt within the scope of this thesis; even so, we can deduce with relative confidence that Russian resistance to NATO's expansion and promotion of democratic norms has been due in large part to Russia's unique domestic norms and strategic culture.⁹⁷

It would be an understatement to say that the evolution and development of Russia's strategic culture has been turbulent. A nation forged in the crucible of destructive and bloody conflict is bound to have different attitudes towards war and peace than a country forged in peaceful negotiations. The Mongol invasion of the 13th century, the Napoleonic invasion of the 19th century, a revolution, two devastatingly bloody World Wars, a fifty-year-old Cold War, the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan and two horrific wars in Chechnya have, to a large degree, shaped and created Russia's identity and military doctrines. When this viewed in combination with the humiliation that Russia experienced when it lost its Great Power status no more than a decade ago, it becomes easier to understand why Soviet and immediate post-Soviet security policy was based on traditional questions of territorial protection, sovereignty and balance of power politics.⁹⁸

Since the end of the Cold War, Russia's security culture has been in flux. After centuries of fearing territorial conquest and decades of fearing an attack from the West, it is understandable that Russian military officials would be resistant to the idea that threatens their

⁹⁶ Wallander 2000, pg. 720-724

⁹⁷ Macmillian, Booth & Trood 1999, pg. 8

⁹⁸ Blank 2001, pg. 53-59

national security have undergone a fundamental change and that now the Armed Forces must adapt, restructure and reform. Only with time and effective political leadership, will Russia's strategic culture evolve to a point where it is in tune with the contemporary security environment.

For all these reasons, the Alliance has been unsuccessful in convincing Russian military that is no longer an enemy, but a potential ally. In fact, the policy of enlargement, adopted by NATO in the mid-1990's, actually perpetuated the notion that the Alliance posed a threat to Russia's national security. At least in part, because of its turbulent history, the military establishment was loath to believe that the goal of the Alliance in its eastward march was to bring peace and increased stability to Eastern Europe. This would indicate that the constructivist approach to international relations can advance our understanding of certain phenomena, such as the Russian military persistent resistance to NATO in general and its enlargement in particular.

Conclusion

At first blush, the NATO summit held in Chicago had an ambitious and exhaustive agenda, which includes everything from the effects of government financial crises on defense budgets, to lessons from the successful action in Libya. You name it - exit strategies from Afghanistan, relations with Asia in a global NATO, cyber security - and it's there. Yet one issue that is fundamental to the future of the alliance is conspicuously missing: the NATO-Russia relationship.

In late March, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen announced the cancellation of the NATO-Russia Council Summit, slated to be held in conjunction with the NATO Summit. The official statement explained that the "timing is difficult...because Russia has a very busy domestic political calendar." And just last week President Vladimir Putin canceled his trip to the G8 Summit at Camp David.

Whatever the reason, it is no secret that the relationship between Russia and NATO remains troubled. This is unfortunate. In spite of recent tensions, the historically fractured Russia-NATO relationship is the most ripe for transformation.

Since 1997, when NATO and Russia laid the foundation for future cooperation and security, the connection has been nothing but fragile. Of course, the first rupture came when NATO offered membership to Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia - all countries sharing borders with Russia - as well as the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

At a time of great vulnerability, Russia felt the affront deeply; it had peacefully backed down from the superpower struggle, only to have its erstwhile enemy incorporate former Soviet states into the US-dominated alliance. Hardliners in Russia were ready to lash out with a military response, but President Boris Yeltsin and others committed to transforming the country prevailed, instead focusing inward on domestic problems.

And the problems were many. In the 1990s, observers worried that Russia itself would be fragmented by ethnic strife and civil war. They aired concerns that the transition from a command to a market economy would leave many without employment and in dire poverty, and that the humiliation of a defeated Russia would give rise to hyper-nationalist leaders who might be even worse than communist bureaucrats. And they feared that some 40,000 nuclear weapons from poorly guarded and unsecured sites would leak out across the world.

Experts talked of four simultaneous revolutions in Russia: in the economic system; in domestic political institutions; in foreign relations, and in the psychology of the Russian people. It was anybody's guess whether a country could survive such wholesale challenges to its institutions, habits of thought, national identity, and to its social fabric.

The country's positive developments over the past 20 years are nothing short of a miracle - and they indeed offer the basis for putting Russian relations with NATO on a new footing. Due to the reasoned response of Mikhail Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and others, the cold war ended peacefully. Though still struggling to structure its economic institutions, Russia has reformed sufficiently to gain membership in the World Trade Organization and to support a rising middle class that is showing a taste for democratic action.

With the aid of the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, Russia has deactivated more than 7,500 nuclear weapons and secured some 24 nuclear weapons sites. Even more important for future collaboration, the United States and Russia have dismantled nuclear weapons side by side, in transparent operations observers could never have dreamed of, even at Reykjavik, where Ronald Reagan and Gorbachev talked of nuclear weapons abolition.

No one should overlook Russia's political corruption, its intimidation of journalists, and its belligerence toward countries on its borders. But if NATO could incorporate former enemies West Germany and Italy into the alliance after World War II, there is no reason that Russia should not join NATO now, two decades after the end of the cold war.

Two major obstacles stand in the way of Russia's full NATO membership: a lack of strategic agreement with the US on missile defense, and a failure to reconcile with former Eastern European countries that once were Soviet client states. Neither obstacle is easily overcome; the countries involved have long histories - and even longer memories. Yet there are signs that accommodation is possible.

The essential disagreement over missile defense is this: The US and NATO want to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system in Europe to destroy any potential Iranian nuclear-tipped missiles aimed at Europe or the US. Russia is concerned that the deployment of this anti-missile system in Europe is actually aimed at their nuclear arsenals, making their own defenses vulnerable, even though the US contends that this system is aimed at Iran and not Russia.

In fact, Russia is so worried about the destabilizing effects of this new system that last week the Russian General Staff chief General Nikolai Makarov remarked that Russia would

consider pre-emptively destroying the European missile defense system if it were deployed, because it would threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent.

They see the plans as threatening, even though the US approach to missile defense - placing around 500 sea- and land-based interceptors throughout Europe over the upcoming years - is still not able to distinguish nuclear warheads from decoys or other debris. According to a September 2011 Defense Science Board report, as well as a recent US National Academy report, this failure of the European system renders the US defense so deeply flawed as to be useless.

Discussions in March between the US and Russian missile defense experts focused on a more limited but possibly more effective missile defense system, the Forward Active Defense, proposed by Ted Postol, a missile expert at MIT. Whatever the outcome developing this particular system, US-Russian technical collaboration is precisely the kind of cooperation that will help overcome the missile defense obstacle to Russian-NATO integration.

On the second obstacle, Eastern European memories of Soviet domination are beginning to fade as new generations are born into a world free of the cold war. As Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and the Baltic states develop economically and become more integrated into the world economy, memories of the humiliation and hostility associated with Soviet domination have been blunted.

In addition, cooperation on energy sources, including nuclear power, is likely to grow and to produce a new sense of partnership in the region. Transforming those commercial partnerships into the kind of trust required for formal Russian NATO membership will not be easy, but the alternative is continued political tension that distracts the region from the long-term and very real problems of nuclear weapons proliferation, energy insecurity, and economic stagnation.

As NATO continues to expand its reach globally, it makes sense to invite the alliance's most prominent and able neighbor as a member. Russia possesses sophisticated military technology and already engages in military-to-military exchanges with the US. Russia also has a military-industrial infrastructure that could contribute capabilities that NATO currently lacks, and that the US has sought from its European partners for at least 20 years.

It is time to recognize how much Russia has accomplished in less than a generation, how much it could contribute to the military capacity of NATO, and how much its full cooperation could enhance global security if it were rewarded, finally, **with membership in NATO.**

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