

Russia in NATO: attesting the impossible

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Introduction

When at the outset of his presidency Vladimir Putin stated he did not exclude the possibility of Russia joining the NATO,¹ Western analysts and politicians were confounded. Madeleine Albright was quoted as saying that “he [Putin] was a ‘complicated’ man who should be judged by his deeds rather than his words.”² I believe bringing confusion in the West was the very intention of the new Russian president who never thought seriously of moving his country towards NATO membership, but who wanted to create an image of a democratic leader and win maximal possible gains. At first, the response of the West was negative: the second Chechen War in 1999 and the grave human rights abuses of local people by Russian soldiers significantly worsened the relations between Russia and the West. President George W. Bush stated,

“We cannot excuse Russian brutality. When the Russian government attacks civilians – killing women and children, leaving orphans and refugees – it can no longer expect aid from the international lending institutions. The Russian government will discover that it cannot build a stable and unified nation on the ruins of human rights.”³

However, later, namely after 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, the attitude of the West and in particular of the United States to Russia notably warmed. Shortly after the terrorist attacks in the Washington and New York, Vladimir Putin called Bush and expressed his support and sympathy to American people. This gesture was well received in Washington.⁴ Thus, it can be said that the 9/11 events marked the turning point in the US-Russian relationship and established a level of unprecedented cooperation between the two countries.

In such circumstances the issue of Russia’s possible membership of NATO became even more topical. The NATO-Russia Council established in May 2002 was seen by some as a first step to the final full incorporation of Russia in the North Atlantic Alliance. Although the war in Iraq made a considerable damage to the NATO-Russian relationship, the cooperation between the two powers did not halt like during the Yugoslav war in 1999 when Russia withdrew from the Permanent Joint Council (PJC).⁵ Still the main question is: will the cooperation of Russia with NATO evolve further leading to the full integration of the former into the Alliance or will it remain in the form of cooperation in the framework of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC)? In this paper I argue that Russia will not join NATO but instead continue to cooperate with it as an outside partner.

¹ BBC News, “Putin’s foreign policy riddle”, 28 March, 2000

² Ibid.

³ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 307

⁴ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 7

⁵ “Evolution of NATO-Russia Relations”, *Official NATO website*, <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-russia/evolution.html>

Post-Cold War relations

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union marked the start of a new era in international relations. The defeat of communism and the disappearance of the former adversary from the international arena created a certain level of uncertainty in the West's attitude to former USSR and posed a serious test for NATO. As McFaul justly notes,

"Few in the West anticipated the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even fewer correctly calculated the speed of this monumental event. And still fewer predicted the degree to which the new government leaders in now independent Russia would embrace Western economic and political institutions and aspire to replicate them on Russian soil."⁶

This was the reason why the west found it difficult to clearly define its relationship with the new Russia. This uncertainty had implications for NATO as well, because it was puzzled by the disappearance of its Cold War foe.

According to realists, the North Atlantic Alliance necessarily had to be dissolved. It was created to contain the Soviet Union and after it was gone the mission of the organization was over and it was to go as well.⁷ However, NATO not only did not fall apart, but rather started to enlarge and incorporate new members. This was a puzzle that realists and neo-realists struggled to explain. Liberal institutionalists had a better argument for the explanation of NATO's continued existence. They said that "NATO would survive because its success as an organization and because it was much more than a purely military enterprise. Indeed, it was the embodiment of a larger community of shared values and democratic norms."⁸ After all why would the West and in particular the United States want to kill "the most successful military alliance in history"?⁹

Zbigniew Brzezinski well defined the goal of the US policy towards Russia: "to encourage Russia's democratic transformation and economic recovery while avoiding the reemergence of a Eurasian empire that could obstruct the American geostrategic goal of shaping a larger Euro-Atlantic system to which Russia can then be stably and safely related."¹⁰ So, the task then for the United States was to help democratize Russia while at the same time to keep and enlarge NATO in case threat reemerged from the old foe. This would prove a difficult task, since it alienated Russians and enhanced their suspicions about the West's real intentions. As will be shown throughout the paper Russia made efforts to balance in the spirit of classical realist, balance-of-power politics.

⁶ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 59

⁷ Papacosma, Victor S., Kay, Sean and Rubin, Mark R., *NATO After Fifty Years*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 2001, p. 166

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167

⁹ Baker, James A. III, "Expanding to the East: A New NATO Alliance," *Los Angeles Times*, December 5, 1993, pt. M, p. 2

¹⁰ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997, p. 87

NATO enlargement

Russian position

Unarguably the thorniest issue in the relationship of NATO and Russia was the former's eastward enlargement. Despite the West's efforts to persuade Russians that the enlargement was not directed against them but was aimed at reuniting Europe and promoting democracy,¹¹ the policy-makers in Russia never liked the idea of NATO expansion. Russians viewed politics very much through the glasses of realism and saw NATO's approximation to Russia's borders as a threat that needed to be balanced. All the actions of Russians whether cooperation with NATO or attempts to build closer ties with other major powers (China for example) can be seen as a balancing behaviour.

There were two major arguments why Russians opposed the NATO enlargement eastwards. First was the perceived threat that this process would bring. "With the cold war over and Russia on a path of democratic and market change at home and integration with the West abroad, Russians wondered why this organization was not only still standing but growing even larger."¹² So, the only plausible explanation for Russians was that NATO was enlarging to encircle Russia and to increase its strength against the former adversary.

Another reason of Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement came from the Russian democrats. They thought that by enlarging and leaving Russia out of this process, the West was abandoning its commitment to democratize Russia. Russian reformer Anatoly Chubais complaining about the NATO enlargement in 1997 stated, "Frankly, the politicians who support this decision [to enlarge NATO] believe that Russia is a country that should be put aside, a country that should not be included in the civilized world – ever. That is a major mistake". For Chubais, who was a Western ally and a proponent of Russia's internal democratic transformation, "resistance to NATO enlargement stemmed not from his worries about a NATO attack on Russia but from the problems created by the enlargement debate for liberal reformers in Russia."¹³ This fact was also noted in the American political elite. Zbigniew Brzezinski as if responding to Chubais wrote, "many Russian democrats also feared that the expansion of NATO would mean that Russia would be left outside of Europe, ostracized politically, and considered unworthy of membership in the institutional framework of European civilization."¹⁴

So, both from the realist and idealist perspectives it can be said that there were solid grounds for the Russian elite to oppose the enlargement of NATO and to view it as a step directed against them. Even more, by enlarging NATO without Russia, the west can be accused of not caring about integrating Russia in the community of democratic states.

US position

For the United States the enlargement of NATO was critical in first and foremost as an ideational move. It was after the Cold War that the political role of the organization was emphasized. The words enshrined in the foreword of the NATO treaty suddenly acquired huge importance: "safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law."¹⁵

¹¹ Papacosma, Victor S., Kay, Sean and Rubin, Mark R., *NATO After Fifty Years*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 2001, p. xix

¹² Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 183

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 184

¹⁴ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York, 1997, p. 102

¹⁵ Foreword, *The North Atlantic Treaty*, 1949

However, NATO's eastern enlargement was not devoid of realistic considerations either. As former secretary of state Henry Kissinger complained,

"I will hold my nose and support enlargement even though the conditions may be extremely dangerous... Whoever heard of a military alliance begging with a weakened adversary? NATO should not be turned into an instrument to conciliate Russia or Russia will undermine it."¹⁶

After winning the Cold War, NATO's eastward expansion was an expression of hegemon's behaviour to dominate – "use its commanding material capability in the endless conflict over the distribution of gains."¹⁷ The key foreign policy officials responsible for enlargement, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and Assistant Secretary of State Richard C. Holbrooke, "were determined to not let concern with Russia's feelings get in the way of their effort to enlarge NATO as a means for reintegrating central Europe into the West and stabilizing the Balkans."¹⁸ From this we can see that despite all the rhetoric about reuniting Europe and promoting democracy, the realpolitik, this essential tool and idea of decision-makers, still played a role.

Russia's membership in NATO

The discussions about Russia's possible membership in NATO started quite early, even before the dissolution of USSR. As James Baker writes in his article "then President Mikhail Gorbachev raised the possibility of Soviet membership in NATO three times in 1990."¹⁹ However, he adds that at that time "the idea was clearly premature and overly ambitious."²⁰ In 1993 it was Baker who proposed "to expand the alliance eastwards and incorporate not only the Central and East European states, but Russia as well."²¹ However, this proposal met fierce opposition, which once again proved that it was too early to "think about the unthinkable."²² As opponents to this idea claimed "it [Russia] had embraced democracy and free markets only rhetorically."²³ In 1995, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, claiming that Russia had become democratic, wrote, "We do not exclude the possibility that at some point Russia itself may become a member of the alliance."²⁴ In 1997-98, discussions around the issue re-emerged mainly within academia in relation of the first round of NATO expansion.²⁵ The question of Russian membership in NATO again became topical shortly before and especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. The US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice stated after the Ljubljana summit,

"We should not rule out anything. This is a Europe that is changing dramatically. And should Russia make important, right choices about its future, about

¹⁶ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 206

¹⁷ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 13

¹⁸ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 183

¹⁹ Baker, James A. III, "Russia in NATO", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, p. 102

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103

²¹ Zvereva, Natalia, "Russia in NATO: To Be or Not To Be? Western versus Russian Perspectives", *IREs Master's Thesis*, 2004, p. 23

²² Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, title of the book

²³ Baker, James A. III, "Russia in NATO", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, p. 95

²⁴ Kozyrev, Andrei, "Partnership of Cold Peace?", *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1995, p. 12

²⁵ Zvereva, Natalia, "Russia in NATO: To Be or Not To Be? Western versus Russian Perspectives", *IREs Master's Thesis*, 2004, p. 23

democracy, free markets, about peaceful relations with its neighbours, Russia will be fully integrated into Europe."²⁶

American President George W. Bush was even more laconic, "Why not?"²⁷

In fact, Russia was not invited to join NATO, but the rapprochement of Russia and NATO in the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, marked by the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council on May 28, 2002,²⁸ can be seen as a substantial progress in the cooperation of the two sides. Since the Rome Summit, the NRC has evolved "into a productive mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, co-operation and joint action."²⁹ On the one hand it satisfies Russian desire to be treated as equal and on the other it really provides the institutional framework of cooperation between Russia and NATO.

Arguments for Russia's membership in NATO

There is a list of authors who support Russia's joining NATO. Baker, Krickus, Fadok and Straus³⁰ all argue that Russia's membership in the alliance would bring much more good for the Euro-Atlantic security than its exclusion from it and thus alienation, which may prove much more dangerous. Former secretary of state James Baker raises strong voice for Russia's inclusion in NATO. "I cannot imagine a better way to "enhance the political component" of the alliance than for NATO to consider the possibility that Russia, if and when it qualifies, be eligible for membership."³¹

David S. Fadok argues that Russia's integration into NATO would serve Euro-Atlantic security and the American interests. According to him, this would help "counter internal threats to Russian democratization, to construct an effective security architecture for post-Cold War Europe, and to address emerging challenges to Asia-Pacific security, notably, China's rise as a regional "peer competitor" and its burgeoning relationship with Russia."³² According to him, after joining the Alliance, Russia would no more view NATO enlargement as a threat (obviously because it would be part of it).³³

Kupchan argues that by incorporating Russia in NATO, the West would "get some influence over Russian behavior." He claims that Russia is already feeling very insecure and by embracing it the West would solve both its security concern and Russia's. "Sitting in Moscow, you look one direction and you see China with incredible growth rates, a huge population, an Asia-Pacific that is probably more dynamic than any other part of the world. You look on the other side and you see NATO and the European Union coming slowly towards your borders. This is not a very benign geo-political environment."³⁴

Straus stresses the problem of decision-making in NATO and the veto power. She argues that the decision-making of the Alliance needs to be reformed and Russia's integration into it might speed up this process. According to her, giving Russia a veto power "is rightly unacceptable to

²⁶ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 32

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "NATO-Russia Relations", *Official NATO Website*, <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-russia/index.html>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Zvereva, Natalia, "Russia in NATO: To Be or Not To Be? Western versus Russian Perspectives", *IREs Master's Thesis*, 2004, p. 2

³¹ Baker, James A. III, "Russia in NATO", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, p. 98

³² Fadok, David S., "Juggling the Bear: Assessing NATO enlargement in Light of Europe's Past and Asia's Future", www.usafa.af.mil/inss/OCF/ocp24.pdf, p. ix

³³ Ibid., p. x

³⁴ Kupchan, Charles, "How Enlargement Should Proceed after the First Tranche", http://www.fas.org/man/nato/ceern/gwu_c2.htm

the West”, while giving Russia a mere consultation “is rightly unacceptable to Russia.”³⁵ So, the decision-making rules should be changed to successfully incorporate Russia and to increase NATO flexibility.

Krickus summarizes the advantages of Russia’s joining the NATO as follows: 1) with Russia in NATO, Europe will enjoy the common security architecture, thus the “Russian” problem will be solved; 2) the international community can better prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Without viewing each other as a threat both Russia and the Western countries will reduce their nuclear arsenal; 3) international community can better fight with international terrorism; and 4) the democratization of Russia and former Soviet Union will be enhanced, providing conditions for stability and peaceful growth.³⁶

All these arguments are good and I would agree with the majority of them. However, how to make those things a reality, how to incorporate Russia in NATO is a different issue. I argue that it is unlikely to happen because of the four major reasons that I will analyze below.

Arguments against Russia’s joining the NATO

The issue of identity - Russia is not a democratic state

In his article Baker gives “two implicit” and “five explicit” criteria for a country to be admitted to NATO. The first is that “the candidate be a member of the Atlantic community – that is to say, the West. The second is that the candidate share important security concerns with the other members.”³⁷ The five “explicit” requirements are the following: “1) an established democracy (with individual liberty and the rule of law), 2) respect for human rights, 3) a market-based economy (with social justice and environmental responsibility), 4) armed forces under civilian control, and 5) good relations with neighbouring states (with the resolution of internal ethnic disputes).”³⁸ Baker argues that while Russia does not meet the five “explicit” criteria, it “surely qualifies” for the two “implicit” ones. Here is the critical point: while it is easy to agree that Russia and the West share security concerns - international terrorism, spread of WMD, possible threat from China, demographic, environmental and other global problems, I would disagree on the other point that Russia is a member of the West. And here we come to the first point against Russia’s joining the NATO - the issue of identity. Social constructivists would argue that Russia will only be accepted in the alliance after it changes its identity. This stems from its behaviour (both domestic and international). Despite its claims Russia is not a democratic state. The violations of human rights, suppression of free media, imperialistic policy in the near abroad, support of separatist regimes make Russia undemocratic. So, the West refuses to recognize Russia as democratic and allow it in the ‘in-group’.³⁹ This was the reason why in 1995 then Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrei Kozyrev, complained about the West’s reluctance to allow it to join the community of democratic states. “The quest for a solution, involving pan-European security interests, proceeds without the participation of several European nations, including Russia. The result is what I call an “institutional trap,” where true partnership falls hostage to the lack of joint decision-making mechanisms.”⁴⁰ Thus, until Russia changes its real identity and embraces democracy, and until the West recognizes Russia’s new identity, it will not be able to join NATO.⁴¹

³⁵ Straus, Ira, “Russia’s Role in the Fourth Generation of the Atlantic Alliance”, http://www.fas.org/man/nato/ceern/gwu_c2.htm

³⁶ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 25

³⁷ Baker, James A. III, “Russia in NATO”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2002, p. 96

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97

³⁹ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 6

⁴⁰ Kozyrev, Andrei, “Partnership of Cold Peace?”, *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1995, p. 11

⁴¹ Bugajski, Janusz “Toward an Understanding of Russia: New European Perspectives, ed., NY, Council on Foreign Relations Book, 2002, Cited from Natalia Zvereva,

The United States does not want a member of the alliance that will challenge its dominating position, using its veto power.

Today few would question the supremacy of the United States in NATO. Its economic and military might make it a key decision-maker in the organization. However, the decision-making in NATO is based on the consensus between its members.⁴² Thus, the United States would not want any challenger of its dominant position, especially a challenger such as Russia whose imperialistic and communist past does not make it a reliable partner. "Russia might not use its position to drive a wedge between the Americans or Europeans (or at least succeed in this venture), but it could further erode confidence in the organization and make manifest fissures that are presently latent."⁴³

In my opinion such attitude of the United States to Russia is well understandable. At present it is the dominating force in NATO and largely uses the Alliance for its own needs. With Russia inside the organization, the US would have to take into account Russian interests that may not always coincide with American ones. So, to this end the US just does not want any 'headache'.

Russia views itself a great power and future-to-be super power and it will not agree on its secondary status in the alliance

In her Master's thesis Zvereva⁴⁴ argues that Russia is not allowed in NATO not because of its poor democratic record and inability to satisfy membership criteria, but because it views itself as a great power and does not want to be bound by any kind of responsibilities the NATO membership entails. While I totally disagree with the first part of this hypothesis and I think that Russia is not a democratic state, a point discussed earlier, the second part of this statement offers a plausible argument. Indeed Russia is the largest country on earth in terms of territory and it is one of the richest countries in terms of its natural resources. So, it really has a huge potential. However, what is more important is how Russians themselves, and in particular how the Russian political elite views their country. The historical legacy plays a major part in forming the viewpoint of Russian political elite. Starting with Ivan the Terrible and especially with Peter the Great, the Russian empire had pursued an expansionist policies that later were continued by communists in USSR. In the 20th the Soviet Russia was arguably one of the two superpowers. Being the legal successor of the Soviet Union and the heir of the Russian empire, today's Russia claims to be a great power and a potential superpower. It refuses to accept the 'secondary status' to the United States and aspires for the treatment as an equal.

As Kay writes, "Since 1992-93, Moscow's policymakers have spent a tremendous amount of energy on having Russia treated, if not as a superpower, then at least as a great power with special status, influence, and prestige."⁴⁵ It was really hard for Russians to adapt to the new reality, which placed the economy of Russia next to the economy of the Netherlands or Sweden in size of GNP⁴⁶ and which placed them in a position of listening rather than dictating. The feeling of being humiliated followed the Russian elite all the time. It has been arguably the most sensitive issue for Russian policy makers since the end of the Cold War. That is why joining the Group of Seven as its eighth member was so important for the Russian elite. McFaul writes, that bringing Russia in the G-7 "was a real symbolic victory for the Russian president", about which Yeltsin wrote later in his memoirs.⁴⁷

⁴² "Consensus Decision-Making in NATO," *Official NATO website*, www.nato.int/issues/consensus

⁴³ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 26

⁴⁴ Zvereva, Natalia, "Russia in NATO: To Be or Not To Be? Western versus Russian Perspectives", *IREs Master's Thesis*, 2004, abstract

⁴⁵ Papacosma, Victor S., Kay, Sean and Rubin, Mark R., *NATO After Fifty Years*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 2001, p. 237

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.238

⁴⁷ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 207

It is apparent from Yeltsin's writings how much he valued being treated as an equal great power by the western leaders. It is also apparent that Russia did consider itself a great power. Krickus calls it a "Greatness syndrome" citing "Russia's culture, great size, and nuclear arsenal."⁴⁸ Thus, it is the perception of Russia of itself as a great power and its unwillingness to be bound by rules and responsibilities that would limit its freedom of action that will keep Russia out of NATO.

Both in Russia and the West there is a legacy of Cold War rivalry and despite efforts of rapprochement, the two sides view each other as potential rivals

The United States and USSR were engaged in the Cold War against each other for forty years. The struggle for supremacy in the world was characterized by arms race and fierce ideological battle. Despite the fact that the enemy was gone, at least for the United States it was so, the policies and attitude towards each other that were in place for decades was not so easy to eradicate. It was true for both sides: after losing the power and influence that Russia enjoyed during the Soviet times, it was suspicious of the West, especially as NATO kept enlarging and coming closer to its borders. For the United States, although Russia was not a Soviet Union, it potentially posed none the less threat to the American security.⁴⁹ Such sentiments have been definitely strong in the political elites of both countries. As Kay notes, "With the Soviet threat still a vivid memory, it was hard for many of NATO's planners and national leaders not to view it as still a front-line military organization committed to collective defense."⁵⁰

While on the one hand, the West tried to promote democracy in Russia, on the other hand it followed the classical traditions of Realpolitik, enlarging its collective security and balancing its rival. Such an approach of American policy-makers that basically ignored Russian interests, strengthened the perception of NATO being an enemy among Russians. Even when in 1994 Russia joined the Partnership for Peace programme – "a major programme of practical security and defence cooperation between NATO and individual Partner countries,"⁵¹ Russian observers argued that "the primary motivation for the PfP stems from the a deep-rooted anti-Russian bias, and that NATO is still geared toward 'containment'".⁵²

Thus, it can be argued that the sentiments of rivalry that shaped US-Soviet relations during the Cold War are still alive both among Russians and Americans. Despite the noticeable thaw in relationship, the two powers view each other as competitors for influence in the world and the mere fact that today Russians are weaker and Americans are stronger does not change the attitude of two actors towards each other. Therefore, it is unlikely, especially for the United States to allow Russia join the NATO because of the Cold War past.

⁴⁸ Krickus, Richard J., *Russia in NATO: Thinking about the Unthinkable*, Danish Institute of International Affairs, Copenhagen, 2002, p. 66

⁴⁹ Goldgeier, James M. and McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After The Cold War*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 2003, p. 61

⁵⁰ Papacosma, Victor S., Kay, Sean and Rubin, Mark R., *NATO After Fifty Years*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 2001, p. 79

⁵¹ NATO-Russia Relations, *NATO Official Website*, <http://www.nato.int/issues/nato-russia/index.html>

⁵² Gardner, Hall, *Dangerous Crossroads: Europe, Russia and the Future of NATO*, Praeger Publishers, 1997, p. 15

Conclusion

This paper showed the arguments for and against the Russian membership in NATO. It outlined the major problems that exist in the relationship between the two actors. Four major reasons were discussed in defense of the position that Russia cannot and will not join the North Atlantic Alliance. First and probably the most salient is the self-other division between the West and Russia, the thing that Russia is not a democratic state and because of it is not allowed in the 'in-group' of western community. Second, is the United States unwillingness to share its power with another major power such as Russia who may challenge the dominance of hegemon. Third, is the so-called "greatness syndrome" of Russia who believes it is a great power and does not want to enter into an alien alliance and follow somebody else's rules. Fourth argument is that despite the passing of years, the Cold War legacy is still very much alive in the powers perception of each other. While the sides have reached unprecedented level of cooperation, which is definitely appraisable, the balance of power politics is still dominant in the foreign policy seeing of both Russia and NATO/United States.

My point is not to say that the NATO-Russia Council is a bad creation and has no future. It is a framework of cooperation that allows sides to communicate and exchange information. The thing that Russia and United States have common threats primarily in the face of terrorism, require the sides to cooperate to achieve the maximum gains. In this respect the story is not about the zero sum game but about the positive sum game where it is better for the sides to cooperate to achieve relative gains than not cooperate and not achieve anything.

However, as concerns the full integration of Russia into the NATO, it is improbable because of the neo-realistic assumptions. In the world of anarchy where there is no central authority capable of maintaining order and justice, states have no option but to rely on themselves because no one else can be trusted. States try to maximize their power to guarantee their security and survival. This is the case of Russia and NATO, who despite efforts to establish partnership cannot entirely trust each other and thus risk their security and possibly even existence.

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