

## *Chapter 20*

# **Russia and NATO in the 1990s**

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Several clichés have become established in contemporary narratives explaining the evolution of relations between Russia and the West and particularly Russia and NATO in the 1990s.

Contemporary Russian mainstream discourse builds on the thesis that, following the end of the Cold War, it was particularly the United States that sought to extend its sphere of influence by conducting a policy of subjugation, or re-subjugation of former Communist countries, not least by integrating them into Euro-Atlantic institutions, especially NATO. In a nutshell:

Starting with the negotiations on German unification, the West systematically took advantage of Russia's weakness. The West never acted in the spirit of the Charter of Paris, in which the indivisibility of security was a key concept. The West never tried to address security with Russia, only without it, or against it. The United States instead seized the opportunity to dominate international affairs especially in Europe. [...] The 'common European home' failed because the West was unwilling to build new, open security architecture—and to fulfil its promises.<sup>1</sup>

In pursuing this policy, the West allegedly broke an earlier promise to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev not to extend the Alliance any inch eastward.<sup>2</sup>

In the West and particularly in East Central Europe, Russian reactions to NATO enlargement in the 1990s tend to be presented as a linear policy pursued by Moscow since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. After the dismantlement of the Warsaw Pact the Kremlin allegedly followed the Soviet so-called 'Falín' and/or 'Kvitsinskii doctrine'<sup>3</sup>—seeking to prevent East Central European countries from joining other military blocs (with NATO being the most prominent candidate), or from acceding to other sort of arrangements that could lead to the stationing of foreign troops and of military bases on their territory.<sup>3</sup>

The projection of this policy into the 1990s builds on an understanding (widely represented among my contemporary students) that, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the new Russia pursued the same policy and vehemently resisted NATO's enlargement.

There is a large body of evidence that seems to support this understanding. In his letter addressed to the leaders of major Western nations in September 1993, Russian President Boris Yeltsin strongly opposed NATO's eastward extension and instead offered to provide East Central European countries common security guarantees from Russia and the West. Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev admitted the sovereign right of East Central European countries to join alliances of their choice, but insisted that Russia had a sovereign right to retaliate. The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service was more specific in a public report released in November 1993, indicating that Moscow could reconsider its obligations under the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) should NATO extend eastward. Moscow also sought to persuade countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania or Slovakia, which early on appeared less determined to join the Alliance, to foster closer relations with Russia by offering them particular economic rewards.<sup>4</sup> These and many other manifestations of Moscow's anger with the emergence of NATO's debate to open its door to the East are often seen as confirming Russia's determination to resist the expansion of the political West into East Central Europe, which it, nevertheless, was unable to stop.

In this chapter I argue that none of those narratives, each implying a zero-sum game, correctly reflect policies pursued by either Russia or the West, or properly capture the highly dynamic and complex political processes that were involved with regard to managing NATO's eastward enlargement. By reconstructing the main moments highlighting the evolution of Russia–NATO relations in the 1990s, I argue that this was anything but a zero-sum exercise. On the contrary, it in fact remains a positive example of cooperative policies pursued by all parties leading to a successful joint decision-making by Russia and the West on an issue that was, admittedly, highly controversial.

This evolution should be understood against the broader background of both post-Communist Russian *Westpolitik* with the overall goal of integrating (or seeking some sort of association/affiliation)

with the “political West,” and the domestic political strife in a country where foreign policy issues played a significant role in the overall controversies. One must also take note of Moscow’s strong interest to have a seat at relevant (institutional) tables to ensure that it would have a say as an equal partner in decision-making on major international issues, particularly on those relevant for Russia’s national interests.

Policy choices made in Moscow during the 1990s changed as the European landscape continued changing. Between 1992 and 1995, Moscow pursued its ‘first choice’ of strengthening the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, contemporary OSCE) as the most inclusive, truly pan-European security organization. With the beginning of the EU/NATO enlargement debates in 1993–1994, Russia, too, adapted by seeking to institutionalize and develop mechanisms for political consultation, joint decision-making and joint action with both NATO and the EU—though, for many, this may have been only the second choice, or the ‘plan B.’ Moscow pursued this adaptation without abandoning the overall goal of seeking association with the “political West.” This led to complex arrangements during the late 1990s—ones that allowed the Kremlin and the NATO Alliance to cooperatively manage the first wave of NATO enlargement, including the one in 2004, without jeopardizing Russia–West relations.

This chapter begins by addressing general issues relevant for the Russian policy toward the West, Europe and NATO in particular, before exploring Moscow’s policy choices at different phases of the evolution of the European landscape in the 1990s. In doing so, it concentrates on Russian policy choices of the early and mid-1990s, and those made at the end of the decade as the Yeltsin government sought arrangements with NATO based on a positive-sum assumption.

## **Background**

With due regard to the highly complex and dynamic landscape of European and domestic Russian politics, four considerations appear crucial for understanding the evolution of Russian policy and choices that affected its relations with NATO all through the 1990s:

- First, the overall vector of the Russian policy toward an integration into, or association with, the “political West.”

- Second, the search for an appropriate institutionalization of Russia's relations with the West through different organizations giving Moscow a voice in joint decision-making on major international issues.
- Third, the highly dynamic and often dramatic political controversy in Russia challenging not only domestic but also major foreign policy choices made by the Russian Government.
- Fourth, the prioritization of the policy toward the post-Soviet space—the so-called “near abroad”—over many other directions of foreign policy.

*Integration into or association with the West*

The most important choice made by the Russian leadership with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union was to favor a policy of integration into or association with the “political West” on the basis of shared values and interests which was expected to be framed as some sort of a ‘strategic partnership.’<sup>5</sup> This choice anticipated a gradual formation of a wider community of democratic states, including Russia itself, that would fit into the definition of a pluralistic security community in the sense of Karl W. Deutsch and stretch from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Russian diplomat Vladimir Voronkov, being an eye witness of that period of the Russian policy, explains it simply: “Russia was not really weak; it was rather seeking—like any other state—its own place in the world. Such a search for identity took place under the influence of the dominant trend in the Euro-Atlantic zone at that time—the willingness of the majority of post-Communist nations to join NATO and the EU.”<sup>6</sup>

Despite highly controversial foreign policy debates both within the Russian government and with the political opposition, seeking a close, or even an alliance-type relationship with the West was a deliberate choice of the country's leadership, which it pursued all through the 1990s (and a few years beyond).<sup>7</sup> While anticipating the post-Cold War world to become polycentric with the increasing number of new ‘rising’ or ‘emerging’ powers seeking to assert themselves on the international stage, the first Russian foreign policy doctrine adopted in April 1993 held that “Russia should firmly embark on the course of developing relations with those countries that could help to achieve the priority tasks

of national revival, first of all with neighbors, economically strong and technologically advanced Western states and new industrial countries in various regions.” Crucially, that choice was explained by the fact that Russia and the identified group of states were committed to “shared values of the world civilization as well as shared interests as regards core issues of global developments, in particular, as far as the maintenance of international peace and security, ensuring success of Russian reforms, strengthening stability in regions going through post-totalitarian transformation.”<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, the West, including the United States and NATO, was not seen as an enemy or threat but rather as an eventual ‘strategic partner’ in assisting Russia’s own post-Communist transition toward a democracy and market economy.

It was clear from the very beginning that any proper integration with the political West would require progressive and profound convergence of Russian domestic political and economic systems with those of the West. As long as the vector of post-Communist transition in Russia would remain compatible with that of East Central European countries, the issue of a potential ‘eastward extension of the West,’ though important (not least in the context of domestic political strife), would not be central issue in Russia–West relations. That is because a transformed Russia, so it was hoped, would after all itself become part of the “political West.”

#### *Institutionalization of Russia–West relations*

While seeking to develop relations of strategic partnership with the West, Moscow’s main concern was to identify appropriate options for institutionalizing this relationship in order to ensure that Russia would have a voice in decision-making processes. Acceding to a number of “Western” organizations and institutions both global and regional (European), such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe or the G7, was from the very beginning on the agenda of Russia’s Western policy. This of course was a path on which the Soviet Union had already embarked under Gorbachev.

The Yeltsin government pointed to an important ‘institutional gap’ that divided it from the leading Western nations. While post-Soviet

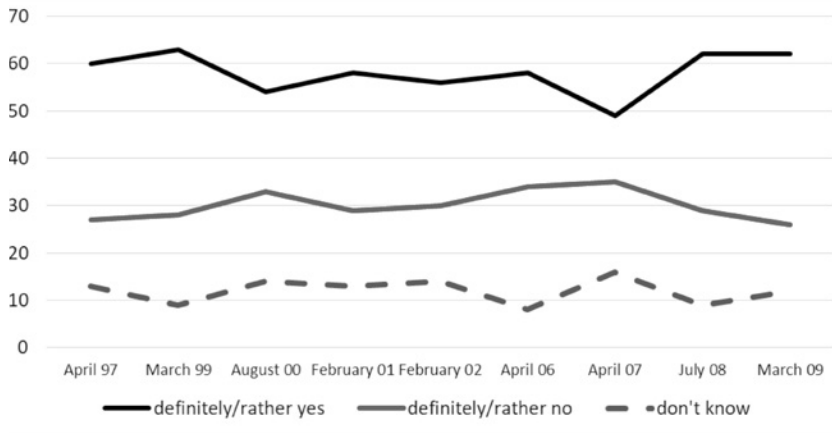
Russia as the USSR's successor state remained a permanent member on the U.N. Security Council with veto power, a participating state of the consensus-based CSCE/OSCE, and, since 1993, was a member of the Contact Group on former Yugoslavia, it was not a member of the G7, of NATO, or of the European Union.<sup>9</sup> The consequence was that Moscow was regularly confronted with a consolidated position of those groups of states after their joint decision-making process had been finalized, and was not itself part of that process. This is why Moscow sought to elaborate on inclusive institutional mechanisms that would give it a voice before final decisions would be taken in those groups.<sup>10</sup>

The objective of transforming the G7 into the G8 through the integration of Russia was formulated in the early 1990s, while the 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union provided for a mechanism for intensive political consultations and decision-making. The issue of establishing a mechanism for Russia–NATO political consultations grew in importance particularly against the background of the evolving enlargement debate.<sup>11</sup> While admitting the possibility of pursuing different options ranging from membership through different forms of association to a ‘variable geometry’ of institutional solutions,<sup>12</sup> the objective of Moscow was to form effective mechanisms for “joint decision-making by Russia and the West pertaining to the use of force, if necessary, and joint implementation of such decisions,”<sup>13</sup>

### *Domestic political controversies*

The strategic foreign policy choice seeking closer association of Russia with the West was from the very beginning part and parcel of domestic political strife. The opposition to Boris Yeltsin and his foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev rallied not only in the Parliament but reached out into various branches of the government, political and economic establishments. This included over time the growing opposition to NATO enlargement that consolidated itself as the discussions in the West matured from 1993 onward. This opposition ultimately manifested itself in the establishment in 1997 of a parliamentary ‘anti-NATO’ group that included members of different factions in both chambers of the Federal Assembly and demanded that President Yeltsin take bold steps in order to arrest any extension of the Alliance into East Central Europe. In the few months from January through April 1997,

**Figure 1. Responses to the question: “Should Russia beware of NATO member states?”**



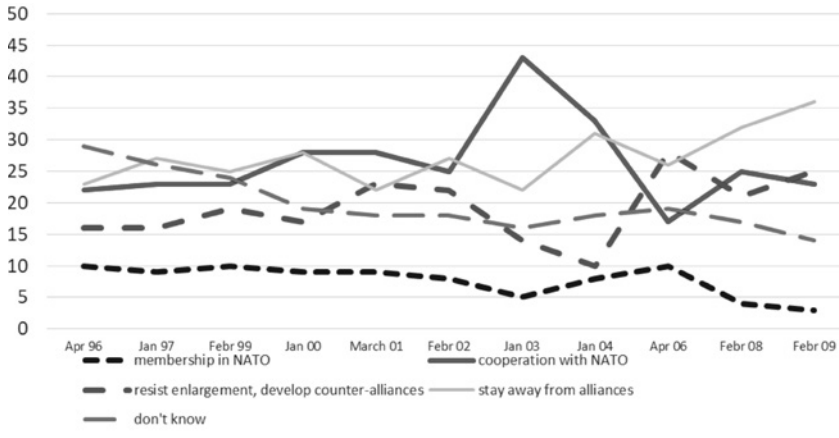
Source: Levada Center, March 31, 2009, <http://www.levada.ru/2009/03/31/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-nato/>.

this group grew from 110 to 250 members and included four of six vice-speakers of the Duma and chairpersons of 17 of 28 parliamentary committees. It was definitely much larger, vocal and visible than the small parliamentary ‘pro-NATO’ group.

Russian public opinion was also divided on NATO, although popular anti-NATO mood was not as radical as the political opposition to Yeltsin. As shown in Figure 1, around 60 percent of respondents in surveys of the Levada Center tended to see NATO as a risk, if not a threat, to Russia in 1997–1999, while the number of those who did not remained under 30 percent. Figure 2 shows that the number of respondents ready to support NATO membership for Russia never exceeded 10 percent in 1996–1999 and continued declining thereafter. However, proponents of hard resistance remained a clear minority, too. The majority of respondents favored either simply staying away from any bloc policies, or developing a cooperative relationship with NATO.

Both the domestic political strife, in which the political opposition operationalized the NATO enlargement issue against the President, and inconclusive public opinion imposed significant constraints on

**Figure 2. Responses to the question: “What policy better meets Russia’s interest?”**



Source: Levada Center, March 31, 2009, <http://www.levada.ru/2009/03/31/otnoshenie-rossiyan-k-nato/>.

Yeltsin leading up to the 1996 Presidential elections, not least considering the advance of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy’s nationalistic Liberal Democratic Party and the Communists in the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary elections. It was clear that any conciliatory policy on NATO enlargement would boost the opposition. On the other hand, the possibility of a Communist or nationalistic backlash regarding NATO enlargement served as a plausible argument for Yeltsin to delay any formal decisions on NATO until after the Russian Presidential elections.

### *Prioritization of the ‘near abroad’*

Russian policy toward the post-Soviet space was one of the most controversial themes during domestic political debates of the early 1990s. The goal of consolidating New Independent States (NIS) around Russia (or consolidating ‘Eurasia,’ to put it in the language of the contemporary debate) was advanced particularly by the opposition as an alternative preferred path to the association of Russia with the political West.



Against the background of increasing differentiation among the NIS, Russia's 1993 foreign policy doctrine became a compromise growing out of the domestic debate. It formulated the goal of maintaining and strengthening the role of Russia in the post-Soviet space, developing the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a 'viable intergovernmental framework,' and the recognition by the West of Russia's 'special role' in that geographic area. While intended to help increasing Russia's political status in the world, it was also recognized that this policy could eventually become controversial with the West.<sup>14</sup>

This recognition led to the gradual development of the Russian understanding of what a new status quo in Europe should represent, while developing Russia's relations with the West. On the one hand, it implied a limit on Moscow's policy, which sought to draw a 'red line:' the eastward extension of the 'West' (at that time primarily NATO, but the EU would not be excluded) should not continue beyond the western borders of the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, the focus on the post-Soviet space effectively implied that the East Central region that the Soviet Union had vacated at the end of the Cold war was largely considered to have abandoned the Russian orbit, no matter whether the countries of the region would accede to Euro-Atlantic institutions or not.

The crux here was the fate of the Baltic states—being left in a sort of limbo. Although they were no formal part of the CIS, they were still considered by many to be part of the former Soviet space, and their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions activated the same instincts particularly in the Russian domestic opposition as the discussion of eventual NATO membership for Ukraine in the late 1990s. Concerns raised by specific groups of the Russian establishment, and particularly by the defense community, added to the complexity of that debate.

This meant that, while not being seen as welcome, the integration of East Central countries into Western institutions would not be seen as an unsurmountable problem. The key concern related to the NIS, with the Baltic states representing a special and particularly sensitive case. The general expectation that could thus reconcile Moscow with NATO extension into the ECE region, including the second phase in 2004, was that either the Alliance would commit itself not to cross the 'red line' or, at least, that it would not cross it any time soon. As a senior

Russian diplomat put it in 2010, “NATO has already engaged all nations possible...Other states cannot expect membership or do not seek it...It means that many countries in the Euro-Atlantic in the near future, or even in the next few decades, will not be covered by the NATO and EU framework.”<sup>15</sup> This was supposed to leave Moscow more time for the consolidation of its neighborhood by pursuing integration projects within the CIS.

Still, the objective of an association with the political West was not seen as being necessarily irreconcilable with post-Soviet integration, provided that the overall vector of post-Communist transformation of Russia and its neighbors would remain compatible with that of other post-Communist nations. In that case, the CIS, like the European Union, could represent another case of regional integration without challenging the concept of a wider Euro-Atlantic community from Vancouver to Vladivostok.<sup>16</sup>

It was also important that, during the 1990s, despite beginning debate over the ‘near abroad’ doctrine, the West and the international community in general refrained from actively engaging in conflict resolution in areas of the former Soviet Union. Although, at various moments, the possibility of dispatching U.N. or OSCE peace operations was considered (in particular, in Abkhazia, Tajikistan and Karabakh), both organizations reduced themselves to sending smaller teams of monitors and did not really challenge Russian operations conducted either on the basis of ad hoc arrangements, or under CIS auspices.<sup>17</sup> The most urgent issues of Russian troop withdrawal from and integration of Russian minorities in the Baltic states were addressed in a cooperative way with the assistance of the OSCE and the United States.<sup>18</sup>

### **Before the Door Begins Opening**

In the early 1990s, when the prospect for any NATO enlargement remained still vague, the option of advancing the goal of integration with the West through further institutionalization of strengthening of pan-European institutions of the CSCE/OSCE on the basis of common values and goals enshrined in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe appeared plausible in Moscow. Russia was a full participating state of this consensus-based organization, and the CSCE did

not trigger any anti-Western instincts in the post-Soviet Russian political establishment—at least not yet. Embarking on that path, Moscow did not simply set forth the footprint of Soviet policy during the late Gorbachev era, it also seems to have overestimated its own ability to persuade the West and particularly to overcome U.S. skepticism with respect to the CSCE.

The CSCE was seen in Russia as a main framework for shaping the evolving complex European community of states and the central institution that granted Russia full involvement in European affairs. It was also considered as an *inclusive* overarching framework for the formation of the ‘Euro-Atlantic,’ and after 1991 the ‘Euro-Asian,’ communities of states. The Russian foreign policy doctrine anticipated that a CSCE-based security architecture in Europe would provide a platform for cooperation with the European Union, NATO, the Western European Union and the CIS.<sup>19</sup> Having joined together with the former Warsaw Pact countries and NIS at the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in December 1991, Moscow cautiously explored the possibility of a NATO membership.<sup>20</sup> However, before the enlargement debate began to take shape in 1993, the Alliance was really not seen as the top item on Russia’s agenda.

Moscow welcomed the 1992 Helsinki decisions which took the CSCE institutions and structures to a new level and identified it as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter. It welcomed the progressive discussions of cooperative security within the organization and of the establishment of the CSCE Forum for Security Cooperation for this purpose and the strengthening of the CSCE Conflict Prevention Center.

In 1993 and 1994, Russia submitted proposals aiming at further strengthening the CSCE.<sup>21</sup> They were followed by the introduction, in 1994, of a comprehensive “Program for Enhancing CSCE Effectiveness.”<sup>22</sup> In the Program, Moscow promoted the objective of giving the CSCE a central role in peacekeeping, strengthening of democracy and providing for security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. It anticipated to transform the CSCE into a fully-fledged, treaty-based regional organization partnering with the United Nations. The central element of the Program was the proposal to establish a CSCE ‘Executive Committee’ that would act in a similar way as the U.N. Se-

curity Council does. It would consist of no more than 10 permanent and non-permanent members and take binding decisions following the consensus rule. This vision was based on a hierarchical approach to European security architecture, implying that the CIS, NACC, the EU, the Council of Europe, NATO and the WEU should act as equal partners while the CSCE would be given an overall coordination role.

Following an earlier Russian proposal of late 1993 that suggested shifting the NACC from NATO to the umbrella of the OSCE and, for this purpose, to open its membership for neutral and non-aligned European countries,<sup>23</sup> the Russian Program proposal was met with much skepticism, for different reasons. While any sort of subordination of NATO would be unacceptable for the Alliance's members, small participating states in particular feared that the establishment of a CSCE "Security Council" would undermine the consensus rule and thus minimize their impact on decision-making. Other countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, sought to offer alternative solutions that would strengthen the role of the organization.<sup>24</sup> Russian proposals did, however, inspire a decision by the OSCE to begin a structured discussion on a Common and Comprehensive European Security Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Yet, the debate on the 'Model,'<sup>25</sup> launched in 1995, resulting in the adoption of the 1999 OSCE European Security Charter, unfolded already in a different environment—one that was already defined by the beginnings of the NATO enlargement debate, which no longer was about 'whether' but had now turned to 'when and how.'

### **Anticipating Enlargement**

It is often believed, that the Warsaw Declaration signed by Yeltsin during his visit to Poland in August 1993, in which he accepted Poland's intention to join NATO "in the long term," stating that it was "not in conflict with the interests of other states, including those of Russia,"<sup>26</sup> provided a boost to the discussion that had started months before. It served as the trigger for Moscow's mounting official rhetoric against enlargement that would follow in the fall of 1993. However, the main purpose of that rhetoric seems to have been not to begin a campaign to stop the enlargement but, rather, to buy time to sort out other important issues of Russia-NATO relations—not least which steps would be necessary for Moscow to adapt to this trend.

The most important question for Moscow was not “whether” NATO would enlarge, but “when” and “how”. The question was also whether Russia would be part of the process in some way, or would it be left out. The above-mentioned 1993 Warsaw Declaration by Presidents Yeltsin and Walesa itself put the prospect in a long-term perspective and made the membership option (for Poland) conditional on the formation of a pan-European security architecture, thus not entirely abandoning the policy of strengthening the CSCE, which Russia continued to pursue. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev emphasized at that time that the problem was not the enlargement *per se*, but a premature or hasty enlargement that would take place before other important issues had been dealt with. He did not exclude that, at some point in the future, either Russia would also join NATO, or both Russia and NATO would become part of a pan-European security system. What he explicitly ruled out was an expansion of NATO that would categorically exclude, or not involve Russia.<sup>27</sup>

Moscow had to respond to the challenge of the post-Cold War European order becoming increasingly NATO (and EU)–centric, for this would predictably lead to a progressive marginalization of the CSCE. At the same time Russia remained keen to ensure and appropriately institutionalize its own association with the “political West.” As a result, Moscow adapted to the new trend by abandoning its previous policy of concentrating on the CSCE—largely at the expense of the organization—and by seeking to institutionalize direct political consultation and joint decision-making with NATO and the European Union. Recalling this period, Andrei Kelin admits that the interest in the OSCE gradually declined both in the West and in Russia. The agenda was dominated by concentrating on different platforms for the pursuit of Russian policy objectives in cooperation with NATO and the European Union.<sup>28</sup>

It remains open whether the changes in Russia’s policy toward the ineffective CIS integration by launching, in 1995, a ‘multi-speed’ integration approach, was part of its response to the beginning NATO enlargement, or simply coincided with it. Russia’s response to NATO was formulated in the context of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) proposal advanced by the United States and NATO beginning in the fall of 1993, and particularly after the program’s launch in 1994.

In April 1994, President Yeltsin took the decision for Russia to join PfP. He did so with the support of the Ministry of Defense and the Security Council, against harsh criticism from the Russian Parliament. One month later, however, he appeared to make a U-turn, announcing during a visit to Germany that Russia would not sign the PfP Framework without a special protocol. As it turned out, his statement did not herald a reversal in Moscow's policy but, rather, a decision to institutionalize 'special' relations with the Alliance that would go beyond military-political cooperation provided for within the PfP program. Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Defense Minister Pavel Grachev clarified that Russia was prepared to sign the Framework Document together with an *additional* protocol or agreement to include detailed and reciprocal commitments of NATO and Russia in the political and military fields, and proposed to establish a mechanism for regular or ad hoc Russia–NATO consultations.<sup>29</sup>

In the event, on June 22, 1994, Kozyrev signed the PfP Framework Document on behalf of Russia. At the same time, at a press conference, a protocol on establishing a framework for enhanced political dialogue between Russia and NATO was presented.<sup>30</sup> This document anticipated an institutionalization of information exchange, political consultation, and the discussion of possibilities for cooperation in form of holding ambassadorial Russia–NATO "16+1" ad hoc meetings with the North-Atlantic Council or with the Political Committee. Following this, on July 2, 1994, Russia submitted a very ambitious program for political and military cooperation with NATO.<sup>31</sup>

In the course of the negotiations, two documents were worked out with the Alliance: a Russia—NATO individual program for cooperation within the PfP and a document on broader cooperation including holding political consultations on a wide range of international security issues. Both documents were expected to be signed on December 1, 1994. But then Kozyrev declined from endorsing them at the last moment, referring to the decision taken by North Atlantic Council to commission a study that would spell out criteria for enlargement. That was seen as a principal decision to proceed with enlargement. Even if the decision not to sign the documents was initiated by Kozyrev, his proposal must have been approved by the President, who was concerned at that time that no formal decisions concerning enlargement would be taken by NATO before the 1996 Presidential elections in Russia.

No matter whether Kozyrev was instructed not to sign or whether he himself initiated that decision, it postponed the institutionalization of cooperation between Russia and the Alliance for two and a half years.

### **Negotiating Terms of Enlargement**

As the first round of Eastern enlargement approached, Moscow considered available policy choices. Evgeniy Primakov, who in 1996 became Foreign Minister, listed them as follows:<sup>32</sup>

1. To reject NATO enlargement and exclude any relations with the Alliance. This option was considered a road to nowhere or a resumption of the Cold War.
2. Accept and not object NATO enlargement and, on this basis, seek an agreement that would govern Russia-NATO relations. This option was seen as a sort of capitulation that would not be accepted by the Russian public.
3. Without abandoning the negative appraisal of the enlargement, seek a negotiated “minimization of negative consequences,” or reduce the damage for Russia’s security and interests.

Option 3 was the favored one. It implied that (largely for tactical reasons and domestic consumption) Moscow would continue rhetoric policy opposing the enlargement but, at the same time, seek to negotiate a deal that would allow to establish ‘special relations’ with the Alliance.<sup>33</sup> Also, for tactical reasons, Moscow decided not to raise the possibility of membership for Russia during these negotiations based on the understanding that raising this question would weaken the rhetorical part of its policy and could provoke a big-bang enlargement. However, even at this time, Moscow did not yet abandon the membership option altogether.<sup>34</sup> It remained on the agenda until 2002.

This policy choice also anticipated that, prior to the enlargement, specific Russian concerns had to be addressed, particularly those raised by the defense establishment, and appropriate solutions identified and agreed upon. Like at the earlier stage, Moscow was also seeking establishing a mechanism for regular political consultations with NATO.

In particular, Moscow sought to:

- address specific military issues that served for concerns in the context of the enlargement, such as guarantees that neither nuclear weapons, nor foreign troops and respective military infrastructure would be permanently stationed on the territory of new members; agreement on the parameters for the adaptation of the CFE Treaty in order to exclude that the military power of NATO approaches Russian borders as a consequence of the enlargement;
- establish a consensus-based mechanism for consultations that would include Russia into joint decision-making on all issues that could affect its interest (effectively giving Russia a veto power on such issues);
- ensure continued transformation of NATO from being a collective defense alliance toward an organization addressing regional threats, first of all regional conflicts which were at the core of threats perceptions in the 1990s, and engaging in peace operations in cooperation with Russia;
- negotiate a legally binding document to be signed by heads of state or government.<sup>35</sup>

One of the key objectives of Moscow was to draw a ‘red line’ for NATO’s eastward extension: the Baltic states and any other post-Soviet states should remain excluded from NATO.<sup>36</sup>

At the initial stage, the discussion of those issues was supposed to resolve, in a *sequential* (rather than parallel) way, three problems: further transformation of NATO, institutionalization of cooperation between Russia and the Alliance, and enlargement.<sup>37</sup>

Intensive and complex bilateral consultations held in 1996 and 1997 at the level of heads of state or government and especially of foreign ministers, particularly with the United States, France, Germany and the UK, as well as from January 1997 with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana, resulted in the adoption of several documents and decisions. Those included, inter alia, the signing on May 27, 1997 the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, and the adaptation of the CFE treaty in 1999 that met Russian concerns. Although not included into the framework of negotiations, the transformation of the G7 into the G8 by including Russia was also facilitated by seeking a broader ar-



rangement with the West against the background of the latter's extension to the east.

Most of concerns raised by Moscow at that time were addressed and resolved in a cooperative manner. The Permanent Joint Council, established by the Founding Act, was supposed to "provide a mechanism for consultations, coordination and, to the maximum extent possible, where appropriate, for joint decisions and joint action with respect to security issues of common concern." The document identified 19 initial areas for Russia-NATO cooperation. Members of the Alliance stated that they had "no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy" and did "not foresee any future need to do so," and that they had "no intention, no plan, and no reason to establish nuclear weapon storage sites on the territory of those members, whether through the construction of new nuclear storage facilities or the adaptation of old nuclear storage facilities." They also stated that "in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. Accordingly, it will have to rely on adequate infrastructure commensurate with the above tasks."<sup>38</sup>

The arrangement reached in 1997 paved the way to a swift adaptation of the CFE treaty in order to acknowledge the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact (or of the 'eastern group', to put in in the CFE language) and to give effect to and operationalize the Alliance's pledge that its enlargement would not result in a concentration of troops or stationing of nuclear weapons at the borders of Russia. Moscow's reciprocal commitment not to permanently station additional substantial combat forces in Pskov and Kaliningrad regions was formalized in December 1999 in the context of signing the Adapted CFE Treaty in Istanbul.

Comparing this outcome with Primakov's checklist of 1996 makes clear that only two of his objectives were not obtained at the end of 1990s.

First, the language of the Founding Act was explicit that its provisions "do not provide NATO or Russia, in any way, with a right of veto over the actions of the other nor do they infringe upon or restrict

the rights of NATO or Russia to independent decision-making and action.”

Second, no explicit or tacit agreement was reached on a red line which NATO should not cross by next rounds. Since it was already clear in 1997 that this process would not be limited to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, this produced uncertainty particularly with respect to whether the Baltic states would be able to join the Alliance in the second round. However, the second round of enlargement in 2004 also did not generate a crisis in Russia–NATO relations, because both sides had a clear understanding of what they had agreed on and what they had not agreed on.

The signing of the Russia–NATO Founding Act and the establishment of the Joint Permanent Council operating at different levels and including political and military fields provided a significant boost to practical cooperation between Russia and the Alliance from 1998. Indeed, it is one of few instruments still relevant and operational which is observed by both Russia and NATO, despite the dramatically changed security environment in Europe.

## Conclusions

Neither NATO’s nor Russia’s policies in the context of the enlargement debate in the 1990s were based on a zero-sum game assumption. Although the emergence of a ‘NATO-centric’ European security architecture was far from being Moscow’s first choice, it did not adapt a policy of simply resisting enlargement. Instead, it sought to develop and institutionalize political consultations and cooperation with the Alliance, identify and raise specific security-related concerns and jointly seek for cooperative solutions. Public rhetoric accompanying this policy served the purpose of making the arrangement acceptable to the Russian public which would support developing a cooperative relationship with the Alliance.

Opening NATO doors for the enlargement in 1997/99 did not lead to a crisis in relations of the Alliance with Russia. Mechanism for cooperation established by the Founding Act began bringing fruits. The first meeting of the Joint Permanent Council was held at the ministerial level in New York on September 26, 1997, and agreed on the program

for cooperation, including main themes for political consultation and directions for practical cooperation. In October 1997, first working groups were established. In March 1998, the Russian Permanent Mission at NATO was established. Russia and NATO agreed to exchange military liaison missions and agreed on the individual partnership program for 1998 including the participation of Russia in more than 70 events in 17 areas of cooperation, including 10 joint exercises.

In 1997–1998, political dialogue and cooperation between Russia and NATO expanded significantly helping to develop an atmosphere of growing openness and confidence between various agencies involved in projects. This experience also built upon positive cooperation between Russia and NATO in Bosnia (SFOR).

Russia–NATO relations only began deteriorating in 1999, not because of enlargement but because of NATO's airstrikes against Yugoslavia between March and June 1999. The immediate reaction of Moscow was to suspend its participation in the Joint Permanent Council, the implementation of all cooperative programs with NATO and any military-to-military communication at senior level. Although Russian 'sanctions' targeting NATO at that moment did not last long, and Moscow returned to cooperation, not least within KFOR in Kosovo, this was a moment when those opposing any rapprochement between Russia and NATO, Russia and the West, indeed those who failed to influence Moscow's Western policy during the early 1990s, began increasingly to have an impact on Russia's course after 1999. The cooperative moment of the 1990s was passing, just as did Yeltsin, who passed the baton to Vladimir Putin. Times as much as leaders were changing.

## Notes

1. *Back to Diplomacy Final Report and Recommendations of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project* (Vienna: OSCE, 2015), p. 24.
2. For a recent overview of the recent historical research on the issue see, inter alia: Christian Nünlist, Juhana Aunesluoma, Benno Zogg, *The Road to the Charter of Paris: Historical Narratives and Lessons for the OSCE Today* (Vienna: OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions, 2017).
3. Marek Menkiszak, "Difficult Neighborhood: The Security Question in Polish Relations with the Soviet Union and Russia," in Roman Kuźniar, ed., *Poland's Security Policy 1989–2000* (Warsaw: Scholar Publishing House, 2001), p. 134.
4. References to this evidence are spread over several chapters in Andrei Zagorski, ed., *Russia and East Central Europe After the Cold War: A Fundamentally Transformed Relationship* (Prague: Human Rights Publishers, 2015).
5. Andrey Kozyrev, "Стратегия партнерства" ["Strategy of partnership"], in T.A. Shakleina (compiler), *Внешняя политика и безопасность современной России. 1991–2002 [Foreign policy and security of contemporary Russia. 1991–2002]*. Anthology in four volumes. Vol. I (Moscow: MGIMO et al., 2002) pp. 182–192.
6. Vladimir Voronkov, "The European Security Treaty after Corfu," in *Security Index*, 2010, No 1 (90), p. 61.
7. Igor Ivanov, "Внешняя политика России на рубеже XXI века: Проблемы формирования, эволюции и преемственности" ["Foreign Policy and Security of Contemporary Russia at the Brink of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Problems of Formulation, Evolution and continuity"], in T.A. Shakleina, ed., op. cit., pp. 207–208.
8. "Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации (1993 г.)" ["Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation, 1993"], in: T.A. Shakleina, ed., op. cit., pp. 21–23.
9. The EU was seen mainly as an economic bloc in the 1990s. The interest in developing and institutionalizing cooperation in the security field occurred in Russia with the beginning of the formation of the ESDP instruments after 2000. However, early in the 1990s Moscow was already in the process of negotiating a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU (signed in 1994) which established a flexible and intensive mechanism of regular political dialogue and joint decision-making at all levels. I elaborate later in the text.
10. Andrey Kozyrev, "Strategy of partnership," op. cit., p. 187.
11. Andrey Kozyrev, *Преображение ["The Transformation"]* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1994), p. 202.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

13. Igor Ivanov, op. cit., p. 211.
14. “Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation, 1993, op. cit., pp. 20, 23–27, 33.
15. Voronkov, op. cit., p. 61.
16. On this see Andrei Zagorski, Россия в системе европейской безопасности [*Russia in the European Security Order*] (Moscow: ИММО, 2017), p. 10.
17. V.F. Zaemskiy, ООН и миротворчество [*UN and Peacekeeping*], 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyye otnosheniya, 2012), p. 13.
18. On this see, *inter alia*, Ekaterina Furman, Nils Muižnieks, Gatis Pelnēns, “Latvia and the Russian Federation: Twenty Years of Relations”, in Andrei Zagorski, ed., *Russia and East Central Europe After the Cold War*, op. cit., pp. 231–238; Sabine Machl, “The OSCE Missions to the Baltic States,” in IFSH, ed., *The OSCE Yearbook 2002* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2003), pp. 209–218; Nils Muižnieks, *Latvian—Russian Relations: Dynamics Since Latvia’s Accession to the EU and NATO* (Riga: University of Latvia Press, 2011).
19. “Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation, 1993, op. cit., pp. 37, 38.
20. Kimberly Marten, “Reconsidering NATO expansion: a counterfactual analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s”, in: *European Journal of International Security*, Vol. 3 (June 2018), No 2. (Published online first in November 2017), p. 7, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security/article/reconsidering-nato-expansion-a-counterfactual-analysis-of-russia-and-the-west-in-the-1990s/356448EA9D5C63C53BE1EC6B33FE470A>.
21. *Diplomaticeskij Vestnik* [*The Diplomatic Herald*], 1994, No 15–16, p. 23.
22. For the text of the Program, see: *Diplomaticeskij Vestnik*, 1994, No 17–18, p. 13.
23. Andrei Zagorski, “Россия и Европа” [“Russia and Europe”], in A.Lopukhin, S. Rossi, A. Zagorski, eds., От реформы к стабилизации... Внешняя, военная и экономическая политика России (анализ и прогноз), 1993–1995 [*From Reform to Stability... Russian Foreign, Military and Economy Policy (Analysis and Forecast) 1993–1995*] (Moscow: MGIMO; Industrial Herald, 1995), p. 31.
24. For the debate of those years see, *inter alia*, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, “Strengthening the OSCE—An Indispensable Condition for a Just and Lasting Peaceful Order from Vancouver to Vladivostok,” in IFSH, ed., *The OSCE Yearbook 1995/1996* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1997), p. 53; Kurt P. Tudyka, “The Attitude of Participating States Toward the OSCE,” in *The OSCE Yearbook 1995/1996*, pp. 83–84.

25. For an overview of the discussion on the ‘Model’ see, inter alia, Heinrich Schneider, “The ‘European Security Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’—A Story without an Ending?” in IFSH, ed., *The OSCE Yearbook 1997* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998) pp. 235–255.

26. For the text of the Declaration see: *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, 1993, No 17—18, p. 16.

27. Andrei Kozyrev, “*The Transformation*,” op. cit., p.199.

28. “ОБСЕ наконец-то работает так, как должна была работать всегда” [“The OSCE Finally Operates in a Way it Was Always Supposed to”]. Interview with Andrei Kelin in PIR-Center, 2015, <http://www.pircenter.org/articles/1957-obse-nakonecto-rabotaet-tak-kak-dolzhna-byla-rabotat-vsegda>.

29. Andrei Zagorski, “Russia and Europe,” op. cit., pp. 43–44.

30. *Areas for Pursuance of a Broad, Enhanced NATO/Russia Dialogue and Cooperation*, June 22, 1994, <https://www.nato.int/DOCU/comm/49-95/c950531a.htm>.

31. For details see Andrei Zagorski, “Russia and Europe,” op. cit., pp. 44–46.

32. Evgeniy Primakov, *Встречи на перекрестках [Meetings at the Crossroads]* (Moscow: Centrpoligraph, 2015), pp. 220–221.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 222, 238.

34. Evgeniy Primakov, “Международные отношения накануне XXI века: Проблемы, перспективы” [“International Relations on the Eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Problems and Prospects”], in in: T.A. Shakleina, op. cit., ed., p 201.

35. Evgeniy Primakov, *Meetings at the Crossroads*, op. cit., pp. 225, 226, 227, 237.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

37. Primakov, “International Relations on the Eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” op. cit., pp. 201–202.

38. Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, Paris, 27 May 1997 ([https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm)).