

Chapter 21

Explaining Russia's Opposition to NATO Enlargement: Strategic Imperatives, Ideas, or Domestic Politics?

Elias Götz

This chapter examines the sources of Moscow's opposition to NATO's opening eastward. The topic is timely and important, not only because of the twentieth anniversary of the first post-Cold War round of enlargement in 1999, but also because of its prominent role in the ongoing "who lost Russia" debate among Western scholars.¹ Previous studies have documented that from 1993 onwards large parts of the Russian political elite opposed NATO's eastward expansion.² But the sources of Russia's opposition remain a matter of controversy. At risk of oversimplification, one can distinguish between three different sets of explanations in the existing literature: one group of scholars emphasizes the role of strategic imperatives and national security considerations; a second group focuses on ideational factors such as Russia's status concerns and Cold War thinking; and a third group argues that Russian domestic political factors explain Moscow's position best.

Based on the work of area specialists and newly declassified U.S. transcripts of the conversations (over the phone or face-to-face) between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, I argue that Russia's opposition to the first round of NATO enlargement was driven by the interplay of strategic imperatives and status concerns. Cold War memories and domestic political factors played only a secondary role. Of course, my findings are somewhat tentative as most internal policy documents, diplomatic cables, and records of high-level meetings—especially on the Russian side—remain inaccessible.

I begin in the first part with an account of the evolution of Russia's stance towards the planned enlargement of the Alliance in the 1990s. The core of the chapter (sections 2-4) provides an assessment of the different explanations for Moscow's resentment against NATO expansion. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of what the findings

imply for the ongoing politico-historical debate about Russia's relations with the West.

Yeltsin's Russia and the NATO Enlargement Question

In late 1991 and early 1992, Moscow made it clear that it wanted to establish closer relations with the West. President Yeltsin and other high-ranking officials even aired the idea that Russia might someday join NATO. Meanwhile, voices in Central and Eastern Europe grew louder about seeking membership in the Alliance. The Kremlin, in response, adopted an increasingly critical stance towards the ambitions of those states and NATO's activism in Central Europe more generally.

This became clear in the summer of 1993. During an official visit to Warsaw in August, Yeltsin at first stated that he was principally not opposed to Poland's membership in NATO. But, as soon as the president had uttered his words, the Russian Foreign Ministry qualified these comments, arguing that this applied only if and when NATO established a special relationship with Moscow. A few weeks later, President Yeltsin sent a letter to the governments of the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom in which he declared, "In general, we advocate that relations between our country and NATO be a few degrees warmer than those between the Alliance and Eastern Europe."³ In the letter, Yeltsin also argued that "the spirit of the treaty on the final settlement with respect to Germany (...) precludes the option of expanding the NATO zone into the East."⁴

By June 1994, Moscow decided that it would join NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The Russian leadership believed that the PfP framework was an alternative to NATO expansion—or at least a venue to exert some influence on the decision about enlargement.⁵ Soon, however, it became clear that the Alliance was seriously thinking about admitting new members from among the former Soviet satellites. In July 1994, when President Clinton addressed the Polish parliament in Warsaw, he emphasized that "no country should have the right to veto (...) any other democracy's integration into Western institutions, including those ensuring security."⁶ Clinton also reiterated the by now famous phrase that NATO enlargement was "no longer a question of whether, but *when* and *how*."⁷

Notwithstanding Western assurances that expansion would not be directed against Russia, many policymakers and military thinkers in Moscow objected vociferously. In July 1994, for instance, President Yeltsin stressed in his private conversations with Clinton, "I have to say candidly, Bill, that with respect to Poland, the position they take on this [NATO expansion] does not correspond very closely with ours."⁸ In December 1994, at a Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev unexpectedly announced that he would not sign the PfP accord out of protest against the initiation of a new NATO enlargement study.⁹ A few days later, at the OSCE meeting in Budapest, President Yeltsin doubled down and warned that "Europe (...) is in the danger of plunging into a cold peace."¹⁰

By May 1995, Russia did approve the PfP Individual Partnership Program. But it remained opposed to NATO expansion plans. One month later, in June 1995, the Russian Council on Foreign and Defense Policy issued a report, entitled "Russia and NATO," capturing Moscow's attitude towards NATO expansion, which, so the report held, might lead to the "first serious crisis in relations between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War." Furthermore, it argued that "especially in the United States, there is a desire to consolidate the geopolitical sphere achieved by 'winning' the Cold War." The report also stressed that although the "interest [of the Central and Eastern European countries] are understandable and legitimate (...) Russia does not consider [membership in the Alliance] an optimum and well-balanced response to their anxiety. If they join NATO, the security of the eastern and central European countries will be achieved at the cost of Russian security."¹¹

Russian elites clearly resented the eastward expansion of NATO and made this public. Some of the more hardline figures threatened to take all kinds of countermeasures, including the stationing of nuclear weapons in western parts of Russia and Kaliningrad, withdrawal from arms control treaties, and even military actions in Eastern Europe. In private conversations with President Clinton, Yeltsin reiterated Russia's concerns about the prospect of a widened Alliance, but he did not issue any direct threats. Given Russia's economic and military weakness, there was also little Moscow could do to prevent enlargement. So Russian negotiators tried to secure formal reinsurances that NATO would not station nuclear weapons, military infrastructure, and combat troops on

the territory of new NATO members. As Russia's new Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov declared in a 16+1 meeting with NATO in July 1996, "moving up NATO's infrastructure to our borders [is unacceptable]. On this basis, Russia is inviting NATO to conduct a dialogue, and now they have agreed to this."¹² Similarly, at the Helsinki Summit in March 1997, President Yeltsin made it clear that "[o]ur position has not changed. It remains a mistake for NATO to move eastward." But, seeing he could not stop the process anyway, he added: "I need to take steps to alleviate the negative consequences of this for Russia. I am prepared to enter into an agreement with NATO not because I want to but because it is a forced step."¹³

Seeking to allay Moscow's concerns, the Alliance proposed to set up an institutionalized form of cooperation, which was codified in the NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security. The Founding Act entailed the creation of a forum for consultation, the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), and a non-binding declaration (Article 4) that "in the *current and foreseeable security environment*, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces."¹⁴

However, even after Moscow's signing of the Founding Act in May 1997, large parts of the Russian political establishment—including President Yeltsin and many of his associates—remained worried about NATO's eastern extension. This was reflected in Russia's revised National Security Concept, which was published in December 1997. The Concept stated, "The prospect of NATO expansion to the East is unacceptable to Russia since it represents a threat to its national security." The Concept also argued that "NATO's expansion to the East and its transformation into a dominant military-political force in Europe create the threat of a new split in the continent which would be extremely dangerous given the preservation in Europe of mobile strike groupings of troops and nuclear weapons."¹⁵

In essence, despite repeated reassurances by Western governments and Clinton himself that NATO expansion was not directed against Russia, and despite intensive U.S.-Russian dialogue, many politicians and strategists in Moscow saw it otherwise, opposing the enlargement

outright. The question is, why? In what follows, I re-examine three prominent explanations in light of the evidence that has become available in recent years.

Russia's Strategic Imperatives

Some analysts have argued that Russia's opposition to the eastward extension of NATO was based on strategic imperatives and military security concerns. As Kenneth Waltz put it, "it is not so much new members that Russia fears as it is America's might moving ever closer to its borders."¹⁶ Likewise, Charles Kupchan warned already in 1994 that "enlarging the alliance would alter the balance of power on the continent and make Russia feel less secure."¹⁷ And Michael Brown cautioned, "Russian leaders will see any form of NATO expansion (...) as a change in the balance of power and an extension of Washington's and Bonn's sphere of influence."¹⁸

Indeed, as early as November 1993, Primakov, then head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), warned that NATO expansion would "bring the biggest military grouping in the world, with its colossal offensive potential, directly to the borders of Russia. If this happens, the need would arise for a fundamental reappraisal of all defense concepts on our side, a redeployment of armed forces and changes in operational plans."¹⁹ Likewise, analysts in the Russian defense ministry were concerned that "when Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join NATO, the Alliance's territory will expand eastward by 650 to 750 kilometers. As a result, the 'buffer zone' between Russia and NATO would be substantially reduced."²⁰ And Defense Minister Pavel Grachev plainly stated, "if new members are admitted into NATO, Russia will have to take additional security measures."²¹

Indeed, virtually all Russian defense planners opposed NATO's eastward movement with reference to security concerns. One might say that this is unsurprising. After all, defense planners are paid to think in terms of worst-case scenarios. What is more, by playing up the potential threat posed by NATO expansion, Russian military officials might have hoped to advance the corporate interests of the armed forces, such as higher levels of defense spending and increased influence on foreign affairs. While there may be some truth to this argument—bureaucra-

cies usually look after themselves—the significance of the Russian military's parochial agenda should not be exaggerated here, for two reasons.

First, existing research has shown that the military did not succeed in exerting significant influence on the Kremlin during the 1990s. As a RAND study concluded, "On critical resources issues such as the defense budget, pay, and military housing, the top brass has consistently been short-changed and failed to achieve its main goals."²²

Second, and more importantly, concern about the prospective eastward enlargement of NATO was shared across the political spectrum. For instance, Russian privatization mastermind Anatoly Chubais, a known pro-Westerner, stated at the 1997 World Economic Forum in Davos that with regard to NATO expansion, "for the first time in the last five years, I personally am adopting the same position as Messrs, Zhirinovskiy, and Zyuganov."²³ Similarly, the liberal opposition leader Grigory Yavlinsky declared in 1998, "Talk that this is a different NATO, a NATO that is no longer a military alliance, is ridiculous. It is like saying that the hulking thing advancing towards your garden is not a tank because it is painted pink, carries flowers, and plays cheerful music. It does not matter how you dress it up; a pink tank is still a tank."²⁴

In other words, there was broad-based opposition to NATO expansion among Russian policymakers of different stripes, even as there were frequent disputes on economic, social, and domestic political matters. This suggests that Moscow's position regarding NATO expansion was shaped by structural or situational pressures rather than by the parochial interests of particular actors or institutions.

To be clear, few policymakers in Moscow believed that NATO expansion posed an immediate threat. Only the most extreme hardliners feared that the Alliance would initiate military strikes on Russia in the near future. Nevertheless, NATO remained a politico-military bloc and thus a potential danger. As the abovementioned quotes indicate, Russian policymakers focused on capabilities rather than intentions. Intentions, after all, can be misrepresented or change over time. As President Yeltsin put it in a one-to-one meeting with Clinton in May 1995, "It's a new form of encirclement if the one surviving Cold War bloc expands right up to the borders of Russia. Many Russians have a sense of fear. What do you want to achieve with this if Russia is your partner? they ask. I ask it too: Why do you want to do this?"²⁵ Likewise,

Russian Foreign Minister Primakov noted dryly, "For any reasonable politician, plans are a variable factor but potential is a constant factor. Having a powerful military bloc being formed on our borders or near our territory irrespective of whether it poses a threat today or not, is unpleasant. It is against our interests."²⁶

Indeed, President Clinton himself reflected before the signing of the Founding Act, "they [the Russians] get our promise that we're not going to put our military stuff into their former allies who are now going to be our allies, unless we happen to wake up one morning and decide to change our mind."²⁷ Seen against this background, it is not difficult to understand why policymakers in Moscow remained concerned about the long-term strategic consequences of NATO expansion, despite repeated assurances of Western governments that the Alliance's move towards the East was not aimed at containing Russia.

Moscow's concerns were reinforced by the open-ended character of NATO enlargement. As the 1997 Madrid Declaration expressly stated (Article 8), "The considerations set forth in our 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement will continue to apply with regard to future aspirants, regardless of their geographic location. No European democratic country (...) will be excluded from consideration."²⁸

Indeed, already by the mid-1990s, Western analysts and policymakers pondered publicly about the future inclusion of other Central and Eastern European countries, including some of the post-Soviet republics (in particular the Baltic states and Ukraine). This caused a shudder to run through the spines of Russian politicians. As Vladimir Lukin, the chairman of the Duma's Foreign Relations Committee, declared, "if NATO expansion were to aim at ultimate membership for the Baltic States and Ukraine, without Russia, that would be utterly unacceptable. No Russian could possibly accept the presence of a potentially hostile NATO within striking distance of Smolensk."²⁹ Likewise, Foreign Minister Primakov warned, "Russia cannot remain indifferent to the factor of distance—the Baltic countries' proximity to our vital centers. Should NATO advance to new staging grounds, the Russian Federation's major cities would be within striking range of not only strategic missiles, but also tactical aircraft."³⁰ And Yeltsin's foreign policy aide Dmitrii Ryurikov made it clear that if NATO included any "neighboring country" Russia would "revise its position towards the Western alliance."³¹

The list of such statements could go on, but the point is clear: government officials in Moscow were deeply worried about the possibility that NATO expansion's open-ended character would lead to the admission of countries from the former Soviet area, an area that Moscow considered to be its direct sphere of influence—its real “near abroad”—for historical, cultural, economic, and geopolitical reasons. Indeed, as the declassified memcons and telcons show, President Yeltsin repeatedly raised the issue with President Clinton. For example, at the Helsinki Summit in March 1997, he emphasized that “one thing is very important: enlargement should not embrace the former Soviet republics. I cannot sign any agreement without such language. Especially Ukraine.”³² President Yeltsin also noted, “We followed closely Solana’s [the then-General Secretary of NATO] activities in Central Asia. They were not to our liking. He was pursuing an anti-Russian course.”³³ And at the end of the Helsinki Summit, President Yeltsin even proposed to Clinton, “regarding the countries of the former Soviet Union, let us have a verbal, gentlemen’s agreement — we would not write it down in the statement — that no former Soviet republics would enter NATO. This gentlemen’s agreement would not be made public.”³⁴ President Clinton rejected this politely but firmly.

Clearly then, strategic imperatives were central for Russia’s resentment to the first round of NATO expansion. The leadership in Moscow was concerned especially about the possibility that NATO military infrastructure would be moved closer to the Russian border. Equally worrisome was the uncertainty about the long-term intentions of Western governments and their response to other aspirant countries given the open-ended character of enlargement.

Ideational Factors

How then did ideational factors play into Russian behavior? Some observers highlight how Russian policymakers suffered from a Cold War hangover, meaning that Moscow focused on the United States and NATO as potential threats because of deep-seated mistrust born of the Cold War. NATO, after all, had been established as a military alliance against the Soviet Union. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that Russia, as the principal successor state to the USSR, was opposed to NATO’s eastward extension. But the problem was also generational. As

many decision makers had grown up and been trained during the East-West confrontation, vestiges of Cold War thinking were almost certainly present among parts of the Russian foreign policy establishment. As one observer put it, "present day Russian politicians and journalists are almost all themselves products of the USSR. A mistrust of Western, and especially American, motivations was inculcated in them during their childhood school days and in their early professional careers."³⁵

That said, there are also obvious difficulties with viewing Russian opposition to NATO expansion as a straightforward extension of a Cold War mentality.

First, this line of reasoning cannot explain why resentment to NATO enlargement was shared across the political spectrum. As noted, even reformers such as Chubais and Yavlinsky—certainly no Cold Warriors—opposed the Alliance's enlargement.

Second, such an explanation ignores the fact that Russia cooperated with NATO on a wide range of issues, from the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to counter-terrorism and military crisis management. Take the war in Yugoslavia. Although Moscow opposed air strikes, it supported key UN resolutions against Serbia and worked with NATO on the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.³⁶ This would have been unthinkable during the Cold War; and it shows that the Russian leadership was willing to cooperate with the Alliance.

Third, in the transcripts of the calls and personal conversations between Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton, there are no discursive structures reminiscent of Cold War thinking. To the contrary, both presidents were well aware of the shadow of the past and wanted to overcome it. And yet, Yeltsin opposed the Alliance's enlargement. Thus, while the legacy of the Cold War most likely influenced Russian perceptions of NATO, it was certainly not the sole or even primary source of Moscow's resentment to eastward expansion.

A second variant of the ideational argument stresses the role of Russian status concerns. For example, Hilary Driscoll and Neil MacFarlane have pointed out that "[NATO] enlargement runs directly counter to commonly held Russian perceptions of themselves as a great power."³⁷ Taras Kuzio has similarly concluded that Russian resentment to NATO expansion can be attributed to "questions of coming to terms

with loss of empire and Great Power status.”³⁸ And Peter Shearman has argued that “[t]he majority of Russians, the elite and the wider population, has been consistently opposed to NATO expanding closer to Russia’s borders, not out of any sense of direct military threat, but due to psychological factors linked to questions of prestige and identity.”³⁹

The leadership in Moscow, no doubt, was status-sensitive. This was visible in President Yeltsin’s efforts to make Russia a member of the G7 group of advanced industrialized states. Likewise, Yeltsin often referred to status concerns when debating NATO expansion (and international affairs more generally) with President Clinton. Yeltsin complained, for instance, that “Russia is not consulted on some issues but Russia is a great power.”⁴⁰ He also demanded “to get a clear understanding of your [Clinton’s] idea of NATO expansion because now I see nothing but humiliation for Russia if you proceed.”⁴¹ Moreover, he stressed that “Russia is a great power to be reckoned with and that no problem can be addressed without Russia.”⁴² In particular, President Yeltsin was concerned that the post-Soviet Russian rump state would be relegated to a second-ranked power on the European periphery without a say in the formation of the continent’s new post-Cold War order.

What is more, several scholars have argued that the Russian elite’s conception of great-power status is bound up with a sense of entitlement to a regional sphere of influence along its periphery.⁴³ This helps to explain why Russian policymakers responded so strongly to NATO expansion’s open-ended character and the possibility that former Soviet republics would join the Alliance in the future.

To acknowledge all this, though, is not to say that Russia’s resentment to NATO expansion can be solely explained by reference to status concerns. As described above, there were also strategic imperatives at play. Indeed, in situations when strategic imperatives conflicted with status concerns, the former trumped the latter. For example, Russia was initially hesitant to become a member of the PfP program, for several reasons. One was that the program treated Russia on par with other post-communist countries and did not provide Moscow with a special role. This challenged Russia’s view of itself as a great power. But, once Moscow came to regard PfP as a venue to influence and possibly hold up the process of NATO expansion (mistakenly, as it later turned out), status concerns were set aside and it decided to join the program.⁴⁴ In

other words, status concerns are best understood not as the root cause of Moscow's opposition, but rather as a reinforcing factor that amplified Russia's strategically induced resentment to NATO's eastward expansion.

Domestic Politics

According to some scholars, domestic political developments in Russia were the key driver for Moscow's opposition to the planned enlargement of NATO. For example, Allen Lynch has argued that "the communist-nationalist political opposition to Yeltsin's government at home quickly realized that the prospect of NATO's extension eastward could be exploited so as to undermine the government's nationalist credentials. In response, Yeltsin just as rapidly moved to close the rhetorical gap with the communists, so that there is no longer a serious difference between government and opposition on the issue."⁴⁵ In this view, President Yeltsin started to oppose NATO enlargement—not because of strategic imperatives and status concerns—but because the issue served to placate communist-nationalist forces at home who challenged his presidency. This was especially important after the December 1993 parliamentary elections, in which Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's right-wing party garnered 23 percent of the votes, not least due to his appeal among military servicemen.⁴⁶ Yeltsin therefore decided to adopt a more assertive stance towards the West in general and NATO in particular to boost his nationalist credentials.

While intuitively appealing, this explanation is problematic for several reasons.

First, there is a timing problem. As indicated above, members of the Yeltsin government began to oppose NATO enlargement by mid-1993, that is, prior to the strong showing of Zhirinovskiy's party in December. Logically, therefore, the latter cannot have caused the former. Of course, Yeltsin had been under pressure from communist reactionaries and hardline nationalists since fall 1992. Thus, one might argue that he indeed had good reasons to placate nationalist voters in the run-up to the elections by adopting a tougher stance on NATO. If so, the gambit failed as right-wingers won almost a quarter of the votes.

Second, the underlying logic of the argument is built on shaky empirical ground. As public opinion research from the time shows, the majority of Russian citizens were not particularly interested in international affairs. Instead, they were preoccupied with plunging living standards, rising crime, and increased social insecurity. Accordingly, ordinary Russians were largely apathetic on the issue of NATO enlargement.⁴⁷ Seen against this background, it is not at all clear why the Yeltsin government would have wanted to adopt a tougher stance towards the West for electoral purposes.

Third, and related, although there existed nationalist forces in Russia that stridently opposed NATO expansion, the domestic politics argument overlooks that there also existed a powerful counter-lobby. Commercial and financial elites promoted close cooperation with the West. As James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul have demonstrated, “oil companies, mineral exporters, and bankers (...) emerged as the main societal forces pushing for greater Western integration [in the 1990s].”⁴⁸ This begs the question: why would the Yeltsin administration want to placate nationalists while incensing the equally (if not more) powerful pro-Western lobby? The logic of domestic politics provides no obvious answer to this question.

Fourth, the memoranda of conversation between Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton do not support the thesis that domestic political calculations were the primary driver behind Moscow’s opposition to NATO expansion. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, as the saying goes. Still, one would expect that President Yeltsin had disclosed a domestic political rationale for opposing NATO expansion in private talks with Clinton, especially since the two had a close personal relationship. Indeed, Yeltsin’s political survival and Russian elections figured prominently in their talks. But, apart from one passing comment, President Yeltsin did not link NATO expansion to his re-election campaign or domestic politics more generally.⁴⁹ This is surprising. Overall, then, while the domestic politics argument cannot be fully discarded, the available evidence casts considerable doubt on it.

Concluding Observations and Implications

The interplay of strategic imperatives and status concerns goes a long way to explain Moscow's resentment to the Alliance's eastward expansion. By contrast, there is limited evidence that domestic political calculations were the principal cause for Moscow's opposition. More specifically, my argument is that uncertainty about NATO's long-term intentions and the possibility that former Soviet countries might join the Alliance in the not-too-distant future were the central drivers behind Russia's negative view on enlargement. These strategic imperatives were reinforced by a latent fear that NATO expansion would demote Russia to a second-ranked power on the European periphery.

This conclusion implies that Russia would have objected to the eastward expansion of NATO no matter how the West would have packaged or presented it. The ambition of Central and Eastern European countries to join the Western Alliance was seen in Moscow both as a challenge to Russia's strategic interests and as a humiliation of its great-power status.

Some observers have argued that the West should have made a serious effort to integrate Russia into NATO during the early 1990s. Leaving aside the organizational and political challenges involved in embracing Russia as a full member, this would effectively have transformed the character of NATO. NATO would have become a collective security organization—that is, a UN-style body on the regional level—rather than a collective defense alliance. Given the well-known problems of collective security organizations and the different outlooks of the United States and Russia, it is doubtful that this would have contributed to establish a more stable and lasting security architecture in Europe.

Another option was to keep NATO in place but without expanding its membership. This, in Moscow's eyes, would have been a desirable outcome as Yeltsin kept telling Clinton, but it would have occurred at the expense, and over the heads, of the Central and Eastern European countries who were eager to join the Alliance. Moreover, large parts of the political establishments in the United States and Germany wanted to enlarge NATO towards the East, for a variety of economic, strate-

gic, and ideological reasons. Why, one is left wondering, should these countries—and not Russia—set aside their interests?

Some observers have criticized that the West took advantage of Russia's weakness in the 1990s. That is correct, but misses the point. After all, the interests of states sometimes coincide and sometimes clash with each other; and in such situations the more powerful actor usually gets its way. This is a normal feature of international politics. It is likely, for example, that the Soviet Union would have acted in a similar way and extended the Warsaw Pact had it prevailed in the Cold War.

Instead, I would argue that lack of power political considerations—not their application—is one of the root causes of today's crisis. During the 1990s, Western governments grew accustomed to take a weaker Russia for granted. Policymakers in Washington, Brussels, and elsewhere forgot—so it seems—that the first round of NATO enlargement (as well as the second round) had been enabled by a highly asymmetric distribution of power. This changed, to some extent, as the increase in world energy prices and internal reforms under the Putin government led to the resurrection of Russian power in the mid-2000s. Accordingly, Russia adopted a more assertive stance and pushed back against Western advances into the post-Soviet space. In my view, therefore, only an approach that takes into account the configuration of interests *and* power will lead to a more stable European security order and a less adversarial relationship with Russia.

Notes

1. See, for example, Peter Conradi, *Who Lost Russia? How the World Entered a New Cold War* (London: Oneworld, 2017); William Hill, *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO expansion: a counterfactual analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 2 (2017), pp. 135-161; Richard Sakwa, *Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

2. See, for example, J. L. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Roland Dannreuther, "Escaping the Enlargement Trap in NATO-Russian Relations," *Survival* 41, no. 4 (1999), pp. 145-164; Anatol Lieven, "Russian Opposition to NATO Expansion," *The World Today* 51, no. 10 (1995), pp. 196-199.

3. *Retranslation of Yeltsin Letter on NATO Expansion*, National Security Archive, George Washington University, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=4390818-Document-04-Retranslation-of-Yeltsin-letter-on>.

4. *Ibid.* There is a longstanding debate among scholars as to whether a no-NATO expansion pledge was ever given to Russia. See, for example, Mark Kramer, "The myth of a no-NATO-enlargement pledge to Russia," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009), pp. 39-61; Mary Elise Sarotte, "Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990," *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010), pp. 119-140; Joshua R. Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the US Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016), pp. 7-44; Kristina Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting: The 'NATO Enlargement Question' in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990-1991," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012), pp. 4-54.

5. Hilary D. Driscoll and S. Neil MacFarlane, "Russia and NATO after the Cold War," in *Almost NATO: Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security*, ed. Charles Krupnick (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 240-241.

6. Cited in Adrian Bridge, "Clinton pleases Poles with cash and NATO carrot," *Independent*, July 8, 1994.

7. *Ibid.* President Clinton had publicly uttered the phrase for the first time during his January 1994 trip to Prague. James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), p. 57.

8. Telcon, 5 July 1994, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

9. Martin Smith, "A Bumpy Road to an Unknown Destination? NATO-Russia Relations, 1991-2002," *European Security* 11, no. 4 (2002), p. 63.

10. Cited in Andrew Marshall, "Russia warns NATO of a 'Cold Peace,'" *Independent*, December 6, 1994.

11. Cited in Roland Dannreuther, *Russian Perceptions of the Atlantic Alliance* (Final Report for NATO Fellowship, Edinburgh University, 1997), p. 18. The full text of the report is reproduced in Transition Online, *NATO Expansion: No Role for Russia*, December 15, 1995, <http://www.tol.org/client/article/1708-nato-expansion-no-role-for-russia.html>.

12. Cited in Dannreuther, *Russian Perceptions*, op. cit., p. 22.

13. Memcon, March 21, 1997, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

14. *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm (emphasis added).

15. *Russian National Security Blueprint*, December 1997, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html>.

16. Kenneth N. Waltz, "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2 (2000), p. 31.

17. Charles A. Kupchan, "Expand NATO—and Split Europe," *New York Times*, November 27, 1994.

18. Michael E. Brown, "The Flawed Logic of NATO Expansion," *Survival* 37, no. 1 (1995), p. 43.

19. Cited in Mike Bowker, "Russian Policy toward Central and Eastern Europe," in *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, Peter Shearman, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 82.

20. Victor Israelyan, "Russia at the Crossroads: Don't Tease A Wounded Bear," *Washington Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1998), p. 53.

21. Cited in Mark Kramer, "NATO, Russia, and East European Security," in *Russia: A Return to Imperialism?*, Uri Ra'anana and Kate Martin, eds. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 126.

22. F. Stephen Larrabee and Theodore W. Karasik, *Foreign and Security Policy Decisionmaking Under Yeltsin* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), p. 15.

23. Cited in Michael C. Williams and Iver B. Neumann, "From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia, and the Power of Identity," *Millennium* 29, no. 2 (2000), p. 360.

24. Cited in Rick Fawn, "Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy: An Introduction," *European Security* 11, no. 4 (2002), p. 3.

25. Summary report on one-to-one meeting between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, The Kremlin, May 10, 1995, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

26. Cited in Peter Shearman, "NATO Expansion and the Russian Question," in Robert G. Patman, ed., *Security in a Post-Cold War World*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 168.

27. Cited in James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), pp. 204-205.

28. *Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation*, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25460.htm?mode=pressrelease.

29. Cited in Anatol Lieven, "A New Iron Curtain," *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1996), p. 22.

30. Cited in Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), p. 216.

31. Cited in J. L. Black, "Russia and NATO expansion eastward," *International Journal* 54, no. 2 (1999), p. 252.

32. Memcon, March 21, 1997, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57569>.

33. *Ibid.* Solana had toured the South Caucasus and parts of Central Asia in the spring of 1997, promoting closer ties between NATO and the countries in these regions.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion*, op. cit., p. 240. See also Driscoll and MacFarlane, "Russia and NATO," p. 235.

36. Bowker, "Russian Policy," pp. 87-88.

37. Driscoll and MacFarlane, "Russia and NATO," p. 253.

38. Taras Kuzio, "NATO Enlargement: The View from the East," *European Security* 6, no. 1 (1997), p. 52.

39. Peter Shearman, "The sources of Russian conduct: understanding Russian foreign policy," *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001), p. 261.

40. Memcon, September 27, 1994, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

41. Summary report on one-to-one meeting between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, The Kremlin, May 10, 1995, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

42. Telcon, January 26, 1996, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.

43. Anne L. Clunan, "Historical aspirations and the domestic politics of Russia's pursuit of international status," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3-4 (2014), p. 284; Driscoll and MacFarlane, "Russia and NATO," p. 253.

44. On the international and domestic drivers of Russia's decision to join the PfP program, see Sten Rynning, "A Balancing Act: Russia and the Partnership for Peace," *Conflict and Cooperation* 31, no. 2 (1996), pp. 211-234.

45. Allen C. Lynch, "Russia and NATO: Expansion and Coexistence?" *The International Spectator* 32, no. 1 (1997), p. 85.

46. Jacob W. Kipp, "The Zhirinovsky Threat," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 3 (1994), pp. 84-85.

47. William Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian Elite and Mass Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 187-215.

48. James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, "The Liberal Core and the Realist Periphery in Europe," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 2, no. 1 (2001), p. 18.

49. Summary report on one-to-one meeting between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, The Kremlin, May 10, 1995, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/57568>.