

## **Power Failure: NATO, Russia and the Double Enlargement**

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## Power Failure: NATO, Russia and the Double Enlargement

It is often assumed in the media as well as in the specialized literature that the fast-increasing assertiveness of Russia's foreign policy with regards to "the West" is a recent phenomenon that owes much to the rise of Putin's team of *siloviki* at the Kremlin. According to that storyline, it is the current president's autocratic tendencies that best explain Moscow's mounting resistance to Western policy in Europe and the rest of the world, from Kosovo to Ukraine through Iran. While there certainly has been a crackdown on Russia's fragile democracy in recent years, this paper seeks to debunk the myth that it is at the root of contemporary Russian-Atlantic disputes. This view, I contend, is a convenient way for NATO—the institutional flagship of "the West"—to overlook its own responsibilities in the current stalemate. In this paper, I show that the contemporary spiral toward renewed confrontation has an earlier origin: the double enlargement policy launched by NATO in 1994, which set Russian-Atlantic security relations on the uneasy tracks that they still ride to this day. Put differently, many of today's problems are the logical extension of Brussels' practices starting in the mid-1990s and to this day.

From the Western point of view, NATO's "double enlargement" (functional and geographical) is the natural widening of a democratic zone of peace and of its security responsibilities abroad. *Enlargement* means the extension of a benign community of liberal values to whoever embraces them. The outlook from Moscow is starkly different. From the outset, even liberal elites and experts portrayed NATO's *expansion* as a wilfully aggressive policy whereby "the West" arrogates new territories and duties to the exclusion of others. In this narrative struggle, Brussels clearly had the upper hand: not only has the double enlargement policy been implemented, the Alliance has also successfully naturalized enlargement as the normal adaptation of the democratic West to the new security environment. But this political victory has not gone without costs, at least as far as Russia is concerned. Over the last twelve months especially, everything has taken place as if Russia had left the Western orbit for good. After years of veering, in 2007 Moscow took a number of initiatives that decidedly set it on a different ellipsis than the Alliance's: it has staunchly opposed ballistic shield plans in Eastern Europe; it has suspended its obligations under the CFE treaty; it has vigorously fought any Western rapprochement with Ukraine, Georgia, and other color-revolution countries; and it has actively contested the Alliance's self-arrogated, global security mandate. The possibility of a return to confrontation and active nuclear deterrence with the Russian bear clearly is one of the worst possible scenarios for "the West" in the post-Cold War era.

The paper makes the case for a shift in NATO's policy toward Russia. Under current circumstances, as the double enlargement policy keeps aggravating the stigmas that it left over the last ten years, Russian-Atlantic relations will likely continue to deteriorate if left to themselves. The paper contains three sections. First, I demonstrate that the launch of the double enlargement policy in late 1994 considerably helped revive dispositions of "Great Power-ness" in Moscow. Second, I argue that today's Russian-Atlantic disputes—the American BMD project, the CFE treaty, the globalization of NATO and a looming third wave of enlargement—stem somewhat directly from the critical juncture of 1994. Third, I conclude that today the Alliance should declare its readiness to consider Russian membership. Although the policy carries evident risks for the "transatlantic consensus," they are well worth taking in view of the alternatives.

### 1. The Origins of Russia-NATO Disputes

The end of the Cold War constituted a watershed in the history of the field of international security. After decades of bipolar confrontation, the whole structure of political interaction underwent radical changes prompted in large part by the demise of the USSR. At the intersubjective level, the rules of the game of international security underwent significant changes. As Gheciu insightfully argues, the

principle of sovereignty, which forms the normative basis of the contemporary international society, enables two distinct modes of pursuing security: an inside mode and an outside mode.<sup>1</sup> The *outside* mode, which was prevalent during the Cold War (and forms the traditional focus of security studies), is based on geostrategic arrangements such as alliance-making and power-balancing. In this scheme, the military instrument is the main tool to enhance security. Throughout the Cold War, NATO's doctrine relied for the most part on this approach, emphasizing conventional and nuclear deterrence of the Soviet threat. By contrast, the *inside* mode of pursuing security proposes that stability in world politics relies on states' domestic institutions and order. In the Kantian tradition, for instance, democratic regimes are valued as efficient means to achieve international security. To be sure, given its liberal origins NATO has always espoused this view in its discourse. However, in the post-Cold War world, security-from-the-inside-out gained an "unprecedented importance" in the field of international security.<sup>2</sup> Traditional realpolitik became second to democratic peace as a means to achieving security.<sup>3</sup>

*a. The Branching Tree of History—before and after 1994.* NATO was particularly instrumental in effecting this intersubjective transformation toward security-from-the-inside-out. In fact, not only was the shift promoted by the Alliance, it also contributed a lot to consolidate NATO's new dominance in the field. For one thing, the demise of communism (not only in the USSR but also on the world scale) directly benefited NATO by opening a window of opportunity to change the rules of the game toward the internal mode of pursuing security. In contrast to free-falling post-Soviet countries, the Alliance stood as an island of stability in amidst the structural shifts of the end of the Cold War. Given its successful history, NATO imposed itself as a "locus of accumulated [capital]": "The alliance provided a uniquely powerful venue in which the new situation could be defined, policies pronounced, forces mobilized."<sup>4</sup> First, despite important military cuts at the end of the Cold War, NATO benefited from a growing military superiority while retaining a unique institutional strength as a tightly-knit alliance that had triumphed, in Western eyes, over a decades-long rivalry. Second, the Alliance boasted a new civilizational identity as the spearhead of democracy and human rights on the international stage. As Williams explains, "the West appropriated the claim to represent democratic values, and asserted its own inherent peacefulness. In short, the idea of the democratic peace allowed the military conflict of the Cold War to be transformed into a cultural struggle, thus contributing to the exercise of specific strategic and forms of cultural power."<sup>5</sup> Third and relatedly, in reifying democracy and human rights as natural and universal, the Alliance concealed its own domination as a disinterested advocate of universal values.<sup>6</sup> As a result, in the new internal mode of pursuing security, NATO enjoyed a strong position of preeminence. This position allowed the Alliance to couch the rationale for its functional and geographical enlargements in terms of the internal mode of pursuing security. As Gheciu notes, "at the end of the Cold War, the international promotion of Western-based liberal democratic norms in

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<sup>1</sup> Gheciu 2005, 4-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>3</sup> This intersubjective shift became evident in the early 1990s when the principles that had given birth to the CSCE in the mid-1970s were consolidated and extended. The CSCE process enshrined several of the basic ideas that still underpin the security-from-the-inside-out paradigm, for example a comprehensive approach to security, conceived as indivisible, mutual, and to be pursued by cooperative means. The means of cooperative security, including mutual transparency, accountability and confidence-building, have to do not only with foreign policy but also, and in fact primarily, with domestic politics. The Paris Charter, signed in 1990, proclaimed that democracy had become the only legitimate form of government in Europe and promulgated the protection of human rights as the only way to organize the relationship between member states and their citizens. The internal mode of pursuing security also informs the agenda of "human security" promoted by some UN agencies, as well as the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, which puts democracy and human rights front and centre of its external relations.

<sup>4</sup> Williams 2007, 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Central/Eastern Europe was regarded within NATO as both an important recipe for enhancing Euro-Atlantic security and as a viable project.<sup>7</sup> NATO's double enlargement was—and still is—designed as part and parcel of the new rules of the game in the post-Cold War international security field.

In the new rules of the international security game, promoted in large part by NATO itself, talk about power balancing was replaced with the promotion of democracy and human rights as the best means of ensuring security. With the USSR still alive, NATO's SG Manfred Wörner promoted “a more diffuse concept of security in which economic integration and assistance and the internal democratization of states become as important as traditional military defence in maintaining security.”<sup>8</sup> The first push toward transforming NATO came at the London summit (1990), where Allies explicitly embraced the idea of indivisible security by recognizing that “in the new Europe, the security of every state is inseparably linked to the security of its neighbours.”<sup>9</sup> The Alliance also enunciated for the first time what would become one of its fundamental tasks in the post-Cold War era—partnership: “The Atlantic Community must reach out to the countries of the East which were our adversaries in the Cold War, and extend to them the hand of friendship.”<sup>10</sup> Several mechanisms, including the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP), were created in the early 1990s to that effect.

In its first years as an independent country, Russia enthusiastically embraced the internal mode of pursuing security, even to the point of supporting NATO's transformation in that direction. When the Alliance proposed to establish military contacts with former Warsaw Pact countries, in 1992, reactions in Moscow were generally positive.<sup>11</sup> In a similar way, at first the Russians were quite supportive of NATO's functional transformation toward peacekeeping. For instance, the Charter of Russian-American Partnership and Friendship, signed in October 1992, asserted that Russia and the United States support “[t]he creation of a rather strong Euro-Atlantic peacekeeping potential, based on the CSCE's political authority, that would allow for use of the possibilities of the [NACC].”<sup>12</sup> It is true that a few Russian officials expressed concern that the Oslo summit “could mean that one day NATO soldiers might turn up somewhere in Nagorno-Karabakh or the Dnestr region.”<sup>13</sup> But these fears concerned NATO *per se*, not the internal mode of pursuing security that the organization had come to profess. Clearly, the new Russian elites who came to power in 1992 arrived at the Kremlin with strong dispositions to support the new rules of the international security game.<sup>14</sup>

For instance, it is striking that Russia's sanguine attitude toward NATO's functional transformation did not darken when it became obvious that by taking up new functions of partnership and peacekeeping, the Alliance was giving itself a new lease on life. Of course, most Russian specialists and politicians had first expected NATO to disband just like the Warsaw Pact had and be replaced with the OSCE as a pan-European security institution. The Alliance dissipated all doubts,

<sup>7</sup> Gheciu 2005, 5; interview with Anthony Lake, Washington, October 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Woerner 1991, 8.

<sup>9</sup> NATO (1990), “Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council,” London, 6 July., par. 4 ([www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b900706a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b900706a.htm), accessed 6 November 2004).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 4 and 8.

<sup>11</sup> Aleksandr Syhov (1992), “NATO and Warsaw Pact Set Course for Closer Ties,” *Izvestia*, 2 April, translated in *CDPSP* 44(13); Yury Kovalenko (1992), “NATO and Former Warsaw Pact Countries under Blue Flag,” *Izvestia*, 21 December, translated in *CDPSP* 44(51).

<sup>12</sup> “Charter of Russian-American Partnership and Friendship,” reprinted in *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, 19 June, translated in *CDPSP* 44(24); cf. Maksim Yusin (1992), “Yeltsin and Bush Propose the Creation of International Armed Forces with Contingents from Russia and the U.S.,” *Izvestia*, 19 June, translated in *CDPSP* 44(24).

<sup>13</sup> Andrei Ostalsky (1992), “NATO Prepares to Impose Peace by Force,” *Izvestia*, 5 June, translated in *CDPSP* 44(23).

<sup>14</sup> These liberal dispositions were largely inherited from Gorbachev's “New Thinking,” which was heavily inspired by the CSCE process and cooperative security ideas. After the implosion of the USSR, in December 1991, the new ruling elites in Moscow essentially followed the precepts of New Thinking and the internal mode of pursuing security.

however, when in 1991 it stated its objective to remain “the essential forum for consultation among the Allies.”<sup>15</sup> While this should have logically tempered Moscow’s enthusiasm, for a time the enlargement of NATO’s functions to peacekeeping and partnership was still considered by the new Russian elite as fitting the security-from-the-inside-out approach. For instance, the inclusive and cooperative spirit of the NACC was in line with the CSCE’s cooperative security approach and seemed to suit Russian interests quite well. Still in October 1993, when the Americans first floated the idea of the PfP with the Russians, the initial reaction was quite favourable. Yeltsin was reported to approve the outreach initiative toward the post-communist world insofar as it included Russia too.<sup>16</sup> It seemed as though the Russian apprentice would nod in response to whatever the Atlantic master said.

Similarly, looking at NATO-Russia dealings over involving the Alliance in the Bosnian civil war, the most striking aspect is the explicit support the Russian government offered in the beginnings.<sup>17</sup> Until February 1994, Russia shared “the predominant Western interpretation of events in Bosnia: that Serb expansionism and aggressive ethnic nationalism was directed against the legitimate government of a sovereign and independent state.”<sup>18</sup> Significantly, this supportive approach was translated into deeds, as demonstrated by Russia’s alignment with the Western members of the UNSC. In May 1992, Kozyrev supported resolution 757, which imposed sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). It is noteworthy that Russia voted in favour while China and Zimbabwe both abstained. The most significant gesture demonstrating Moscow’s support for the Atlantic approach came in early June, when Russia agreed to UNSC resolution 836, authorizing the deployment of peacekeepers to protect Bosnian safe areas and threatening Serbia with “tougher measures, none of which is prejudged or excluded from consideration.”<sup>19</sup> This crucial vote implicitly supported NATO’s repeated threats to strike if violations continued. In total, throughout 1992 and 1993, more than fifty resolutions on Yugoslavia were jointly adopted by Russia and the NATO countries at the UNSC. To be sure, Russia’s support was not unequivocal and some differences remained: for instance, Moscow systematically opposed the use of force and was critical, at times, of what it perceived as the West’s anti-Serb bias. But overall, in practice the alignment remains striking.

Russia’s accommodative foreign policy started to change in 1994, as the Alliance became militarily involved in Bosnia and talk of geographical expansion began. In late 1993 and early 1994, NATO’s stance with respect to enlargement was left ambiguous. When enlargement was officially put off the agenda in favour of the PfP, in December 1993, Kozyrev and his team celebrated the launch of this vast program of partnership and cooperation.<sup>20</sup> During the Brussels summit of January 1994, where heads of state and government agreed “to reaffirm that the Alliance remains open to the membership of other European countries,” the emphasis was put on the PfP, “a major initiative” enticing partners to “work *alongside* the Alliance.”<sup>21</sup> For the Russians, expansion and the PfP were irreconcilable initiatives because one was exclusive and the other, inclusive. NATO could take one or the other direction, but not both at a time. In a press conference with Clinton, Yeltsin made this interpretation obvious (reports Talbott):

<sup>15</sup> NATO (1991), “NATO’s Core Security Function in the New Europe,” North Atlantic Council meeting in Ministerial Session, Copenhagen, 6-7 June, par. 7 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c910607b.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c910607b.htm), accessed 5 September 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Pavel Erlikh (1993), “Eastern Europe Moves Toward Cooperation with NATO,” *Sevodnya*, 26 October, translated in *CDPSP* 45(43).

<sup>17</sup> Tsygankov 2006, 71.

<sup>18</sup> Headley 2003, 211.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Security Council (1993), “Resolution 836,” S/RES/836(1993), 4 June, par. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Dmitry Gornostayev (1993), “NACC Does What CSCE Couldn’t,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 4 December, translated in *CDPSP* 45(49).

<sup>21</sup> NATO (1994), “Declaration of the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (‘The Brussels Summit Declaration’),” Brussels, 11 January, par. 1 (emphasis added) ([www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b940111a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b940111a.htm), accessed 6 November 2004).

The integration of former communist countries into the structures of the West was a fine objective, he said, and Russia looked forward to being part of that process. But all those countries must be integrated together, in just one package. This will make everyone more secure. If, however, you try to dismember us, accepting us and admitting us one by one—that will be no good. I'm against that; I'm absolutely opposed to it. That's why I support the president's initiative for Partnership for Peace.<sup>22</sup>

In this spirit, Kozyrev signed the PfP framework document in June 1994 and agreed with NATO member states to engage in reflection on a special partnership with Russia “corresponding to its size, importance, capabilities and willingness to contribute to the pursuit of shared objectives.”<sup>23</sup> When the U.S. and Russian armies held their first ever joint peacekeeping exercises on Russian soil, in September, it really looked as though a Russian-Atlantic *modus vivendi* were taking shape.

And yet, a series of events in December 1994 showed this to be a cruel illusion. On the first day of that month, the NAC issued a communiqué initiating “a process of examination inside the Alliance to determine how NATO will enlarge, the principles to guide this process and the implications of membership.”<sup>24</sup> This decision, which took by surprise many senior officials including the American Secretary of Defence,<sup>25</sup> came as a huge blow to the Russians. For one thing, Clinton had promised Yeltsin that U.S. policy with respect to enlargement would be guided by three no's: no surprises, no rush, and no exclusion.<sup>26</sup> For another, the internal deliberations and tergiversations inside the Alliance had led most observers to conclude that enlargement was still off the agenda: the “Russians had good reasons to be confused about America's real intentions,” conclude Goldgeier and McFaul.<sup>27</sup> Coincidentally or not, on the day of NATO's announcement, Kozyrev was in Brussels to sign an Individual Partnership Program (as part of the PfP) as well as a document fostering Russia-NATO dialogue. Claiming that no one in Brussels had forewarned Moscow of this upcoming decision, he finally declined to sign any document and, under Yeltsin's direct instructions, froze all further progress in institutionalizing cooperation with the Alliance.<sup>28</sup> For the Russians, the unilateral decision to expand

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<sup>22</sup> Talbott 2002, 115.

<sup>23</sup> NATO (1994), “Final Communiqué,” press communiqué M-NAC-1(94)46, Istanbul, 9 June, par. 9 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940609b.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940609b.htm), accessed 12 October 2007).

<sup>24</sup> NATO (1994), “Final Communiqué,” Communiqué NATO M-NAC-2(94)116, Brussels, 1 December, par. 6 ([www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c941201a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c941201a.htm), accessed 11 October 2007).

<sup>25</sup> As James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul reveal, “the U.S. secretary of defense did not even believe that NATO enlargement was administration policy until after a meeting with President Clinton and other top officials in late December 1994, that is, after the announcement of the NATO study”; Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 184.

<sup>26</sup> Talbott 2002, 136.

<sup>27</sup> Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 195.

<sup>28</sup> Leonid Velekhov (1994), “Russia-NATO Betrothal Didn't Happen,” *Sevodnya*, 3 December, translated in *CDPSP* 46(48). In a late December letter to Clinton, Yeltsin explained the Russian reaction: “I proceeded from the assumption that we had agreed in Washington [in September 1994] not to act hastily, but rather to achieve, in the first place, agreement between us on Russia's full-scale partnership with NATO, and only after that to start tackling the issues of enlargement”; quoted in Talbott 2002, 444 fn. 11. On Kozyrev's about-face, he later explained that “[p]rior to the meeting, as a result of arduous and protracted negotiations, representatives of the 16 NATO member-states worked out a compromise communiqué. The Russian delegation had the text of the paper only a few hours before the official inauguration of the cooperation program between Russia and NATO. We did not even have time to translate the document into Russian, much less to analyze it in order to report to the president of Russia. However, the communiqué recorded positions on issues of direct concern to Russia. It described the future evolution of the alliance, including its eventual expansion eastward, with the emphasis on the expansion rather than on partnership with Russia. This created a new situation for Russia, which we needed at least to examine. Thus it was decided to postpone signing the partnership instrument”; Kozyrev 1995, 11.

reflected a NATO pattern “to offer Russia a *fait accompli*, a final position of the ‘take it or leave it’ type.”<sup>29</sup>

Within a few days, this about-face led to one of the most emblematic moments of the post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic relations: the Budapest C/OSCE summit. The Russians had hoped that this summit would consecrate an inclusive European security architecture based on a strong pan-European institution—the strengthened OSCE. Their hopes had just been shattered by NATO’s December 1<sup>st</sup> communiqué. The new security order premised on the Alliance’s functional and geographical enlargement relegated Russia to the margins of Europe. Despite all the NATO talk of cooperative security and partnership, Atlantic practices in late 1994 plainly seemed to Moscow against the professed cooperative security order of the post-Cold War era. Lamenting the rise of a “cold peace,” in Budapest Yeltsin denounced the exclusionary consequences of the Alliance’s double enlargement:

Europe, even before it has managed to shrug off the legacy of the Cold War, is risking encumbering itself with a cold peace. ... NATO was created in Cold War times. Today, it is trying to find its place in Europe, not without difficulty. It is important that this search not create new divisions, but promote European unity. We believe that the plans of expanding NATO are contrary to this logic. Why sow the seeds of distrust? After all, we are no longer adversaries, we are partners. Some explanations that we hear imply that this is “expansion of stability,” just in case developments in Russia go the undesirable way. If this is the reason why some want to move the NATO area of responsibility closer to the Russian borders, let me say this: it is too early to give up on democracy in Russia!<sup>30</sup>

For the first time, the Russian frustration with the Alliance’s activities was bluntly aired at the highest level. Everything took place as if something fundamental in Russian-Atlantic relations broke for good in December 1994. On the plane to Washington from Budapest, the Clinton team tried “to figure out if [Yeltsin’s speech] was a long-term change or a brief interruption in what had been a very close and friendly relations between Washington and Moscow.”<sup>31</sup> My contention, with the benefit of hindsight, is that December 1994 constitutes the crucial turning point from which Russian-Atlantic relations became increasingly difficult. Recall that only days after the OSCE summit, Russian troops began invading Chechnya...

*b. The Revival of Russian Dispositions of Great Power-ness.* The year of 1994 was a critical juncture in post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic security relations: from thereon, they embarked on the uneasy path that continues to this day. The window of opportunity opened by NATO’s unprecedented domination and Russia’s acquiescence, between 1992 and 1994, was quickly shut when the Alliance launched its geographical enlargement and implemented its new collective security functions in Bosnia. Starting in the mid-1990s, Russian elites stopped being well-disposed toward the NATO-professed order of international security things.

In using the language of “critical juncture,”<sup>32</sup> I want to emphasize the path-dependent nature of social and political relations, whose future depends on their past because history unfolds like a branching tree. The theoretical argument according to which early steps in a socio-political relationship are crucial applies unequivocally to the Russian-Atlantic case. As Pierson explains:

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 191.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with R. Nicholas Burns quoted in *ibid.*, 192.

<sup>32</sup> Collier and Collier 1991.



the key mechanism at work in these path-dependent sequences is some form of self-reinforcement or positive feedback loop. Initial steps in a particular direction may encourage further movement along the same path. Over time, “roads not chosen” may become increasingly distant, increasingly unreachable alternatives. Relatively modest perturbations at early stages may have a large influence on these processes. In many cases, the significance of early events or processes in the sequence may be amplified, while that of later events or processes is dampened.<sup>33</sup>

Arguably, the end of the Cold War was one of those rare historical instances in which the world found itself at an intersection from which several directions were available. As Kissinger writes: “When an international order first comes into being, many choices may be open to it. But each choice constricts the universe of remaining options. Because complexity inhibits flexibility, early choices are especially crucial.”<sup>34</sup> For a short time span, between 1992 and 1994, everything took place as if Russia were to integrate into the new NATO world order. At that point, “[t]he ideas of Russian messianism and the pursuit of an independent role in line with its Great Power heritage were either understated or even denied.”<sup>35</sup> Things abruptly changed in 1994 when NATO took two initiatives that set its relations with Russia on the bumpy track that continues to this day. For the Russians, the double enlargement amounted to NATO renegeing, in practice, on its own discourse of inclusive, mutual, and cooperative security. Because the move was reminiscent of *realpolitik* more than of the professed internal mode of pursuing security, Russian dispositions of Great Power-ness gradually resurfaced.

Using a Bourdieu-inspired theoretical framework has an important edge in matters of critical junctures because it supplies an agent-level mechanism for path dependence. As a historical distillate of embodied dispositions, *habitus* explains self-reinforcing practices.<sup>36</sup> The historical constitution of *habitus*, in effect, is characterized by a “relative irreversibility”: “all the external stimuli and conditioning experiences are, at every moment, perceived through categories already constructed by prior experiences. From that follows an inevitable priority of originary experiences and consequently a *relative* closure of the system of dispositions that constitute *habitus*.”<sup>37</sup> The practical sense, as a result, builds on past experiences to feel what is to be done. The dispositions comprised in the *habitus*, constituted by past experiences, subjective and intersubjective, in part constitute future practices. As a result, the path taken at certain historical junctures may preclude others in the future. Such has been the case in post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic relations: partly because of the resiliency of Russia’s Great Power *habitus*, which was reactivated by NATO’s double enlargement, today’s tough politics are nothing but the fallout from the critical juncture of the mid-1990s.

But for NATO’s double enlargement, would Russia’s accommodative stance have continued? Asking counterfactual questions is always a bit tricky because social life is non-linear, path dependent, and multiply realizable. A macro-pattern such as the nature of Russia-NATO relations may be caused, alternatively, by several different factors and through various processes, always with the same effect. Similarly, a slight and apparently unrelated change in early conditions—for instance, higher oil prices in the early 1990s—might have changed the whole story of post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic relations. In this context I adopt a dual counterfactual strategy. On the one hand, I concede that the historical roots of Great Power dispositions in Moscow as well as the upheaval of Russian transition, both of

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<sup>33</sup> Pierson 2004, 64.

<sup>34</sup> Kissinger 1994, 26-27.

<sup>35</sup> Ponsard 2007, 62.

<sup>36</sup> *Habitus* is a “system of durable, transposable dispositions, which integrates past experiences and functions at every moment as a matrix of perception, appreciation and action, making possible the accomplishment of infinitely differentiated tasks”; Bourdieu 2001, 261. I discuss the notion at more length, as well as its application in IR, in Pouliot 2008; and Mérand and Pouliot 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 133.



which have nothing to do with the double enlargement, constituted particularly fertile soil for Russian elites to lapse into quixotic practices with NATO. Even without the double enlargement, chances are that many of the current Bush administration's policies would have been just as badly received in Russia. To be sure, the Russian habitus of Great Power was never too far from the surface even during the 1992-1994 honeymoon. For more than forty years, Moscow was the centre of a huge empire and entertained a privileged dialogue with its superpower counterpart in Washington. Such an enduring position of strength in the international security field left deeply ingrained dispositions among Russian policymakers. And yet, for a little less than a decade, Great Power dispositions were remarkably tamed inside the Kremlin, to the benefit of what could be dubbed a cooperative security habitus, from Gorbachev to Kozyrev. The crucial question thus becomes, what explains that in the mid-1990s, the dispositional balance in Moscow was tipped in favour of the Great Power habitus? In this section I argue that NATO's self-defeating practices with regards to the double enlargement have played an important role in this change.

On the other hand, in my counterfactual strategy I assert that Russia's change away from its accommodative foreign policy would surely not have occurred *as early and to the same extent* had NATO not decided to enlarge in the mid-1990s. The best way to ascertain this claim is to look at the precise sequence of events. First, in the preceding section, I showed that the Alliance took its crucial decisions *before* Moscow reverted to a more difficult foreign policy. For example, the Russian invasion of Chechnya—the first genuinely praetorian practice enacted by the post-communist Kremlin—was decided *after* NATO had announced its study on enlargement. In addition, late 1994 coincided with a new and unprecedented consensus among Russian security elites, away from integration into the West. From then on, the Russian elite struck a position that repudiated much of the New Thinking of the early 1990s to instead integrate several items from the age-old Russian disposition of Great Power-ness. An insider to these debates, Trenin confirms that “the turning point came in 1994 with the decision in principle by NATO to admit new members. Most groups within the Russian elite, otherwise deeply divided on the issues of policy, were suddenly united in portraying this decision as essentially anti-Russian.”<sup>38</sup> In a detailed study of elite and mass opinions about foreign policy, Zimmerman similarly observes that “Russia's orientation to the world had changed considerably in the two years between 1993 and 1995. The era dominated by those sometimes termed the Atlanticists in Russian foreign policy had passed.”<sup>39</sup> Further, the author makes a link between this finding and NATO's enlargement, arguing that “NATO expansion both in numbers and in role has very likely deterred those Russian elites who from a Western perspective warranted being deterred *and* has disabused Russian elites who would have been likely to respond favorably to policies designed to reassure.”<sup>40</sup>

Interestingly, evidence that NATO's double enlargement seriously contributed to reviving Great Power dispositions in Russia can also be found on the Atlantic side in some officials' recollection of events. For instance, one insider to the Clinton White House believes that the policy has been “the real culprit” in the deterioration of Russian-Atlantic relations.<sup>41</sup> Building on dozens of interviews with American diplomats and politicians, Goldgeier and McFaul similarly conclude that although “it is hard to measure the negative impact of NATO enlargement for U.S.-Russian relations on other security concerns ... it is true that the cooperative pattern of problem solving on issues like Baltic troop withdrawal and the India rocket deal established in 1993-94 were not repeated after the NATO enlargement process began to move forward for subjects like Iran or START [Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty] on which the United States needed Russian cooperation.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Trenin 2000, 13-14.

<sup>39</sup> Zimmerman 2002, 93.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>41</sup> Blacker 1998, 179.

<sup>42</sup> Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 356.

In addition, the double enlargement was quickly followed with the disempowerment of Westernizing elites *à la* Kozyrev. Critics may counter that the brunt of the change was of domestic origins—especially the consecutive victories of nationalistic forces at the 1993 and 1995 Duma elections. But a closer look at timing and the precise sequence of events in the mid-1990s suggests that much of Russian domestic change followed (instead of preceded) the foreign policy shift. For example, Moscow did not become more assertive immediately after the 1993 elections and the arrival en force of nationalistic deputies at the Duma. During the first half of 1994, Russian officials were still taking a conciliatory tone toward NATO, supporting much of its diplomacy in the Balkans as well as its partnership initiatives. The real change in Russian foreign policy came only after December 1994, once NATO had announced its enlargement and as it prepared for its large-scale military intervention in Bosnia. Nothing better illustrates the revival of Russia’s age-old disposition of Great Power-ness than the nomination, in January 1996, of Primakov as Foreign minister in replacement of Kozyrev.

At his very first press conference in his new capacity, Primakov summarized the disposition quite clearly: “Despite the current difficulties, Russia has been and remains a Great Power, and its policy toward the outside world should correspond to that status.” He also insisted on the need for equitable partnership with the West and reasserted that there was no victor of the Cold War because overcoming it had been a joint victory.<sup>43</sup> Starting with Primakov, Russian foreign policymakers appealed to the historical notion of “*derzhava*,” which Tsygankov translates as “the holder of international equilibrium of power.”<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, the main constitutive elements of the Russian narrative of Great Power-ness are calls for equality, multipolarity, spheres of interest, and balance of power.<sup>45</sup> As such, the Russian Great Power habitus is attuned to the external mode of pursuing security—that is, the traditional rules of the game in the field of international security centred on power-balancing and alliance-making. These dispositions were carved in Russian bodies during the Cold War and well before that after the consolidation of the Moscovite empire and its arrival on the European scene. The reemergence of the Great Power habitus led more and more Russian officials to contest the order to international security things imposed by NATO in the early 1990s.

How can we explain that Russian dispositions of Great Power-ness were revived by NATO’s double enlargement? Despite all the Alliance talk to the contrary, the December 1994 decision to enlarge seemed to Moscow to breach the three basic CSCE principles that had been so fundamental after the end of the Cold War—that security is indivisible, mutual, and cooperative. It looked as though the NATO-professed rules of the post-Cold War international security game were scorned by the Alliance itself, whose actions, as Moscow understood them, smacked more of *realpolitik* than cooperative security. First, from a Russian perspective expanding NATO created new dividing lines in the European security system. NATO’s claim that “an enlarged NATO will not lead to new dividing lines in Europe”<sup>46</sup> made very little sense for Moscow: one is either inside the tent, or outside. So long as Russia remained on the margins of a tightly-knit alliance that arrogated to itself the central role in European security, it could but lead to its exclusion. The Russians felt they were unfairly excluded from a place they thought they belonged to:

The new Russia, which parted decisively from the USSR’s domestic and foreign policy heritage, strongly believes that it has every right to comprehensive inclusion in modern Europe—economically, politically, and with regard to its security dimensions as well. What Russia seeks is

<sup>43</sup> No author (1996), “Primakov Starts with the CIS,” *Moskovskiye Novosti*, 14 January, translated in *CDPSP* 48(2).

<sup>44</sup> Tsygankov 2004, 93.

<sup>45</sup> Lo 2002, 98 ff.

<sup>46</sup> Javier Solana (1998), “Do We Need New Allies? Yes, to Enhance Everyone’s Security,” *Wall Street Journal*, 12 March (reprinted on [www.nato.int/docu/articles/1998/a980312a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/articles/1998/a980312a.htm), accessed 15 January 2005).

an arrangement that would assure its full participation in European affairs, rather than its isolation from, or marginalization in, Europe. This is the crux of the matter.<sup>47</sup>

Seen from Moscow, the geographical enlargement of the Alliance necessarily led to “the creation of a buffer zone in reverse, a means to isolate the new Russia from continental Europe.”<sup>48</sup> As their country was relegated to the sidelines, the NATO discourse of inclusiveness sounded increasingly hollow to Russian ears.

In addition, expansion seriously undermined the chances of developing a pan-European security institution with teeth in which Russia could exert influence. To counter this view, many Atlantic officials insisted that the door would always remain open for Russia to eventually join NATO. Most remarkably, Clinton made sure that Yeltsin understood that enlargement could, in theory, also embrace Russia.<sup>49</sup> And yet, there are grounds to doubt that such a policy could have been implemented, if only because all of Moscow’s declarations of interest—in 1992, in 1996, in 2002—were quietly but firmly turned down by Brussels. A more accurate expression of the dominant view in the Atlantic world was offered by the German Defence minister in September 1994: “Russia cannot be integrated, neither into the European Union nor in NATO ... if Russia were to become a member of NATO it would blow NATO apart ... It would be like the United Nations of Europe—it wouldn’t work.”<sup>50</sup> Inside the Alliance, most member states feared that involving Russia could only mean the end of the transatlantic consensus. In any event, Russian officials concluded that their country was excluded from NATO’s geographical enlargement in contravention of the oft-cited indivisibility of security.

In a similar logic, for the Russians NATO’s February 1994 ultimatum to Bosnian Serbs contradicted the very essence of the new rules of the international security game premised on inclusiveness and mutuality. For instance, one official from the Ministry of Defence wrote in *Kraznaya Zvezda*: “Russia has a right to ask why it was included in the [NACC] and why it should approve the [PfP] initiative if, when an ultimatum was prepared—in a matter that affects it directly—Moscow was ignored.”<sup>51</sup> From the Russian point of view, in so doing the Alliance contradicted in deeds the new order premised on cooperative security that it had been preaching in words. Gorbachev, certainly no hawk, expressed a similar complaint: “Russia was confronted with a fait accompli. It was treated as a junior partner that is expected only to nod its head and support the choice made by others, contenting itself with a pat on the shoulder.”<sup>52</sup> In late August 1995, when NATO’s *Operation Deliberate Force* began, Yeltsin went further, denouncing the Alliance for breaking with the cooperative security discourse it was simultaneously preaching: “In proclaiming its ‘peacekeeping mission,’ the North Atlantic alliance has essentially taken upon itself the role of both judge and jury.”<sup>53</sup> For the Russians, NATO was guilty of duplicity: while claiming to include Russia in diplomatic talks through the Contact Group, it was simultaneously making unilateral decisions to use force without Russia’s participation. As a result, many in Moscow came to construe NATO’s functional enlargement not in terms of the internal mode of pursuing security, but as a very cold-blooded strategy intended to strengthen the Alliance’s profile in the post-Cold War era.

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<sup>47</sup> Pushkov 1997, 2 (html version).

<sup>48</sup> Black 2000, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Talbot 2002, 136.

<sup>50</sup> Rühle quoted in Yost 1998, 139.

<sup>51</sup> Sergei Sidorov (1994), “Russia’s Position Is Clear: No NATO Air Strikes against the Bosnian Serbs,” *Kraznaya Zvezda*, 19 February, translated in *CDPSP* 46(7).

<sup>52</sup> Mikhail Gorbachev (1994), “The NATO Ultimatum Was the Worst Possible Way of Handling the Bosnian Crisis,” *Nezamisimaya Gazeta*, 22 February, translated in *CDPSP* 46(7).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in No author (1995), “Abandon Reflexive Resort to Force in Favor of Considered Approach,” *Rossiskiy Vesti*, 8 September, translated in *CDPSP* 47(36).

Space constraints preclude me from pursuing this interpretive analysis of NATO-Russia dealings beyond the mid-1990s. Suffice it to say that the deteriorating trends I just described accentuated in the wake of the Alliance's intervention in Kosovo, of its new security concept adopted in 1999, and of its post-9/11 decision to enlarge again, including to the Baltic states. As a result, the Russian habitus of Great Power seriously consolidated and became so widespread that very few elites in Moscow would question it today.<sup>54</sup> In the next section, I demonstrate how current Russian-Atlantic disputes are the consequences of the critical juncture of the mid-1990s.

## 2. Current Disputes between Russia and NATO

In what ways are today's security disputes linked to NATO's double enlargement launched in 1994? It is particularly enlightening to recall some of the key Russian demands during the tense negotiations that led to the Founding Act in 1997 (intended to compensate Moscow for enlargement). Under Primakov's leadership, the Russians asked for (1) a limit on NATO's geographical expansion, especially with regards to former Soviet states; (2) the clear delimitation of the Alliance's mandate and functions and its subordination to the UNSC; and (3) the non-deployment of conventional and nuclear forces on the territory of new NATO members on a permanent basis. NATO officials wholly rejected the first two demands and offered half-hearted gestures on the latter. At the outset of a 16+1 Defence Ministers meeting in December 1996, US Secretary of Defence Warren Christopher declared that "in today's Europe, NATO has no intention, no plan, and no need to station nuclear weapons on the territory of any new members, and we are affirming that no NATO nuclear forces are presently on alert."<sup>55</sup> This political commitment had obviously no legal force. In addition to its non-binding character, the Alliance's declaration was seriously restricted by the contextual clause "in today's Europe." A similarly contrived pledge was taken in early 1997, when the Alliance declared that "[i]n 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."<sup>56</sup> Note that just like the promise made to Gorbachev in 1990 not to expand NATO east of Germany, both of these pledges have been broken by the Alliance, which stationed a few fighters in the Baltic countries<sup>57</sup> (not to speak of the American deployments in Bulgaria and Romania) and projects BMD elements in Poland and the Czech Republic (more on this below).

In this section, I take up in turn four of today's key security disputes between Russia and NATO: the CFE treaty, the American BMD project in Central Europe, a looming third wave of enlargement and the globalization of NATO. This list is obviously not exhaustive, as it leaves out Kosovo, Iran, Iraq, etc. But it supplies a good *tour d'horizon* of the contemporary Russian-Atlantic relationship.

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Neumann 2005.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Goldgeier and McFaul 2003, 203. The defence minister communiqué read like this: "Enlarging the Alliance will not require a change in NATO's current nuclear posture and therefore, NATO countries have 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 unclear posture or nuclear policy—and we do not foresee any future need to do so"; NATO (1996), "Final Communiqué," press communiqué M-NAC-2 (96)165, Brussels, 10 December ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-165e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-165e.htm), retrieved 26 September 2007).

<sup>56</sup> NATO (1997) "Statement by the North Atlantic Council," press release 97(27), Brussels, 14 March ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-027e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1997/p97-027e.htm), retrieved 1 November 2007).

<sup>57</sup> In early 2004, the NATO Allied Command Europe began patrolling the Baltic states' airspace and policing their border with Russia. This zealous and somewhat provocative operation profoundly irritated Moscow, who responded in kind by sending airplanes do similar reconnaissance missions on the border with the Baltic states.; cf. Gennady Nechayev (2004), "Spies Fly to Russia's Borders," *Noviye Izvestia*, 26 February, translated in *CDPSP* 56(8); Ivan Safronov (2004), "Russia Answers NATO With a 'Flight of the Bumblebee,'" *Kommersant*, 28 February, translated in *CDPSP* 56(8).

a. *The Moratorium on the CFE Treaty.* I begin with the latest Russian-Atlantic row, which illustrates with clarity how much NATO's double enlargement has contributed to jeopardize even the strongest *acquis* of the end of the Cold War. The CFE treaty was signed in late 1990 by the NATO and Warsaw pact countries, and it basically set limits on conventional forces and equipment on the European continent, with solid verification and information exchange mechanisms. Under Russia's request, an adapted version was agreed upon in 1999 in order to allow more flexibility in Moscow's troops movements in the Caucasus, notably. In the 1999 Istanbul Final Act, Russia also agreed to withdraw its military from bases in Georgia and Moldova. In the ensuing weeks, NATO countries conditioned the ratification of the Adapted CFE treaty on Moscow's fulfilment of what has come to be known as the "Istanbul commitments."<sup>58</sup> On its part, the Russian Duma ratified the treaty in June 2004 while urging those new NATO member states not covered by the original CFE to sign the treaty. In April 2004, at their very first NRC meeting, Slovenia and the Baltic states stated their intention to join the arms control regime.<sup>59</sup> That was never done, however, and Moscow did not fully withdraw its forces from Georgia and Moldova either. In his presidential address in April 2007, president Putin proposed to suspend Russia's commitments under CFE, a decision that came into effect in December that year.<sup>60</sup> In late 2007, the most far-reaching symbol of the end of the Cold War seemed doomed to oblivion.

The CFE stalemate has two main origins. One is Russia's failure to fulfill the Istanbul commitments. One must remember the context in which the Adapted CFE deal was signed: on the verge of leaving office, president Yeltsin had to work hard to obtain NATO's favours after the Kosovo crisis and a second invasion of Chechnya earlier in 1999. Under the Putin administration, however, Russia reneged on its signature and contested NATO's conditioning of CFE ratification to the 1999 pledge as an "artificial linkage."<sup>61</sup> As Lavrov put it in 2004: "There is no legal connection between these issues [of CFE ratification and Istanbul commitments.] From a legal standpoint, these demands are improper, since the agreements on resolving the situation with respect to the bases in Georgia and withdrawing military equipment from the Dnestr region were political, rather than legal, in nature; they are being fulfilled and are not bound by any strict deadlines."<sup>62</sup> In effect, Moscow and Tbilisi signed several agreements since 2000 and the latest one, concluded in March 2006, sets the deadline for complete Russian withdrawal at the end of 2008. The situation in Moldova is more difficult as Moscow considers its troops stationed there as "peacekeepers" who defend ethnic Russians. Whatever reasons Russian officials may give for their failure to withdraw on time, however, it is essential to put this policy in perspective of NATO's double enlargement. Georgia has become the main focus of NATO's political seduction over the last few years and its possible membership is a source of deep concern and irritation in Moscow (cf. below). So long as secessionist tensions remain high (fuelled in part by Russian troops in Abkhazia), Tbilisi's prospects of entering the Alliance remain limited. A similar trade-off is also happening in Chisinau, although at this point it is mostly the EU that has courted the country.

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<sup>58</sup> NATO (1999), Final Communiqué, press release M(NAC) (99)166, Brussels, 15 December (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-166e.htm>, retrieved 14 December 2007).

<sup>59</sup> NATO (2004), "Chairman's Statement, Informal Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers," Brussels, 2 April (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p040402-nrc-e.htm>, retrieved 14 December 2007).

<sup>60</sup> Alexander Osipovich (2007), "President Pulls Out of a Key Treaty," *Moscow Times*, 16 July; Associated Press (2007), "Putin Signs CFE Moratorium Drawing U.S., OSCE Protests," *Moscow Times*, 3 December.

<sup>61</sup> Yury Baluyevsky quoted in *Izvestia* (2004), "Yury Baluyevsky, First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff: 'NATO Expansion Will Strike a Fatal Blow to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,'" *Izvestia*, 3 March, translated in *CDPSP* 56(9).

<sup>62</sup> Gennady Sysoyev (2004), "Minister Gets Job Done at Highest Level," *Kommersant*, 30 June, translated in *CDPSP* 56(26).



NATO's double enlargement is also related to the second source of the Russian-Atlantic stalemate over the CFE treaty. Among the ten new Allies, six were part of the Warsaw Pact in 1990 (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia). The remaining four (the three Baltic states and Slovenia) were not independent states in 1990 and are thus not covered by the CFE arms limitations. General Baluyevsky expressed Moscow's exasperation quite clearly: "the expansion of NATO, the changed military and political status of six CFE signatory countries and the resulting changes in the structure and composition of the groupings—all these things supposedly have nothing to do with the CFE Treaty, while Russia's bilateral relations with Moldova and Georgia have a direct bearing on the treaty and are preventing its ratification!"<sup>63</sup> To be sure, the planned American deployments in Romania and Bulgaria would cause NATO to surpass its flank limits. In addition, armies stationed in the Baltic countries are not covered so long as these countries do not sign the treaty. For these reasons, Russia sees no interest in maintaining the CFE regime. The links between the moratorium and NATO's double enlargement was explicitly made by Putin in early 2007:

But what is happening at the same time [that we wait for Moscow to fulfil the Istanbul commitments]? Simultaneously the so-called flexible frontline American bases with up to five thousand men in each. It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders, and we continue to strictly fulfil the [CFE] treaty obligations and do not react to these actions at all. I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: "the fact the we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee." Where are these guarantees? [...] And now they are trying to impose new dividing lines and walls on us—these walls may be virtual but they are nevertheless dividing, ones that cut through our continent.<sup>64</sup>

Russia's suspension of its CFE commitments seemed to take NATO by surprise, although the idea had been floated many times since 2004. Even after Putin's speech, NATO countries refused to compromise during an extraordinary conference in Vienna.<sup>65</sup> The Alliance's calls for more talks, after Putin had signed a decree suspending the country's CFE commitment, did not succeed to budge the Russians this time.<sup>66</sup> In an unprecedented show of impotence, NATO announced its decision "not to respond in kind at this stage to the Russian Federation's political decision to 'suspend' its legal obligations [while] NATO Allies will continue to meet theirs, without prejudice to any future action they might take."<sup>67</sup> In the meantime, it is now Moscow that conditions implementation of the CFE treaty on its ratification by all NATO members.

<sup>63</sup> Izvestia (2004), "Yury Baluyevsky, First Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff: 'NATO Expansion Will Strike a Fatal Blow to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,'" *Izvestia*, 3 March, translated in *CDPSP* 56(9).

<sup>64</sup> President of Russia (2007), "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," Munich, 10 February ([www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/02/10/0138](http://www.president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/02/10/0138), retrieved 4 April 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Associated Press (2007), "Arms Pact Talks End in Deadlock in Vienna," *Moscow Times*, 18 June.

<sup>66</sup> *Moscow Times* (2007), "NATO Calls for Talks on CFE Treaty," *Moscow Times*, 17 July.

<sup>67</sup> NATO (2007), "Alliance's Statement on the Russian Federation's 'Suspension' of Its CFE Obligations," press release (2007) 139, 12 December ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/2007/p07-139e.html](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2007/p07-139e.html), retrieved 14 December 2007).

b. *The American BMD Project in Central Europe.* In May 2006, the Bush administration announced its plans to install a limited set of missile interceptors as well as a radar station on the territory of Poland and of the Czech Republic by 2011.<sup>68</sup> The declared rationale for this Central European location was to intercept eventual Iranian missiles on their way to the US and Europe. The new interceptors would add to those already built at Fort Greely (Alaska) and the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, while the proposed radar station would complement the modernized facilities in Fylingdales (UK) and the American Thule Air Base in Greenland. Would the negotiations with Warsaw and Prague succeed, the BMD project would give way to the first permanent American deployment on Polish and Czech soil. The Russian reaction was as harsh as immediate. Yury Baluyevsky, the chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, declared that “plans to make Eastern Europe a forward region in the US missile defense system are intended to neutralize Russia’s strategic potential.”<sup>69</sup> Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov similarly claimed that “the choice of location for the deployment of those systems is dubious, to put it mildly.”<sup>70</sup> From the outset, the Russians rejected the American plan as designed against their nuclear deterrent, as if the Cold War had never ended: how can we make sense of this seemingly abrupt return to deterrence logics?

There are four reasons why the Russians are so troubled by the American BMD project. First, Russia’s harsh reaction follows the American unilateral withdrawal from the ABM treaty in December 2001. Although Moscow did not make a diplomatic fuss at the time, Putin made it clear that he considered Washington’s decision a serious mistake.<sup>71</sup> The Russians had come to consider the Treaty as the cornerstone of nuclear and strategic stability in the post-Cold War world. Moscow is all the more bothered that in early 2002, the Pentagon’s *Nuclear Posture Review* was leaked in the American media, counting Russia as part of seven states on which nuclear weapons could/should be targeted.<sup>72</sup> Second, the BMD breaks the political pledge taken by NATO and Washington in 1996 not to station nuclear forces on the territory of new members. For Moscow, this is just one more broken promise in a long series that started in 1990 when Gorbachev was told by several Western politicians that the Alliance would never move eastward. Third, Russia is particularly sensitive to any infringement on its nuclear deterrent because of its startling weakness on the conventional level.<sup>73</sup> After more than fifteen years of decay, the Russian army has become the shadow of its former self and must rely more than ever on nuclear forces for territorial defense. Fourth and finally, as will become clear below, since the Kosovo intervention Moscow is particularly wary of NATO’s interventionist tendencies in the various conflicts of our time. Nuclear forces are one of the few dimensions of Great Power-ness that still promise Russia some semblance of influence over Brussels and Washington.

Throughout the 1990s, everything took place as if nuclear deterrence was disappearing from the political discursive background of Russian-Atlantic relations.<sup>74</sup> For several years, the only nuclear talk one could hear or read about was related to disarmament (START I, START II and SORT, for instance<sup>75</sup>) or to the cooperative management of old stockpiles (e.g., CTR, CIS denuclearization). In 1994, in a symbolic gesture Clinton and Yeltsin pledged to re-target all their nuclear forces away from

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<sup>68</sup> Michael R. Gordon (2006), “U.S. Is Proposing European Shield for Iran Missiles,” *New York Times*, 22 May.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Dmitri Litovkin (2006), “Intercept at Any Costs,” *Izvestia*, 30 May, translated in *CDPSP* 58(22).

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Michael R. Gordon (2006), “U.S. Is Proposing European Shield for Iran Missiles,” *New York Times*, 22 May.

<sup>71</sup> Black 2004, 131.

<sup>72</sup> Michael R. Gordon (2002), “U.S. Nuclear Plan Sees New Targets and New Weapons,” *New York Times*, 10 March.

<sup>73</sup> Gottemoeller 2006.

<sup>74</sup> As two Russian experts write: “Since the end of the Cold War, nuclear deterrence between Russia and the United States had been receding into the background in terms of day-to-day foreign policy and official public relations.” Arbatov and Dvorkin 2006, 3.

<sup>75</sup> According to experts’ calculations, the total reductions in American and Russian nuclear arsenals will amount to at least 80 percent over the twenty years following the end of the Cold War. Cf. Arbatov and Dvorkin 2006, 3.



their mutual territories.<sup>76</sup> Even after 9/11, the major financial commitment of the 2002 Global Partnership (USD 20 billions over 10 years) to help Russia manage its nuclear arsenal partook in this generally cooperative climate in which nuclear deterrence did not seem the primary preoccupation on neither side. This may well have been an illusion, however. In fact, in both American and Russian defense strategy, nuclear deterrence has always remained a central component after the end of the Cold War. Russia's first defence doctrine, adopted in November 1993, emphasized deterrence as the core component of the country's security.<sup>77</sup> Given the rapid degradation of its conventional armed forces, this was justified as the least expensive policy to ensure an efficient defence of the Russian territory.<sup>78</sup> The 2000 version of the doctrine confirmed the central importance of nuclear weapons and added specific references to Atlantic aggressive policies.<sup>79</sup> On the American side, the Nuclear Posture Review published in 1994 similarly considered strategic nuclear forces as a "hedge" against the "uncertainty" of the epoch.<sup>80</sup> It is true that none of these documents specifically mentioned the Russo-American axis of deterrence at the time. In the 2002 Review, however, Russia was specifically named as part of seven states on which nuclear weapons could/should be targeted.<sup>81</sup> In view of those contradictory policies—dargeting and disarmament on the one hand and confirmation of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence on the other—one cannot but have a certain feeling of dissociation.

And yet, such is the way contemporary Russian-Atlantic relations have evolved to this day: institutionalized diplomacy coexists with talk of nuclear deterrence. For instance, it is striking that Moscow and the Alliance have decided to conduct their talks on nuclear deterrence at the NRC. Since April 2007, different levels of officials have been regularly meeting in order to find a diplomatic solution to the dispute.<sup>82</sup> Talks have been held in Moscow, Washington, and several concrete proposals have been discussed at the highest levels.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, both the US and Russia are testing new models of missiles and bombs in a mounting atmosphere of "arms race."<sup>84</sup> In a typical performance of Russia-NATO relations, during the spring of 2007, General Baryulevsky aired a list of complaints on the matter at the NRC but concluded his speech by saying: "We need to talk."<sup>85</sup> In a similar way, Foreign Minister Lavrov enticed European capitals to cooperate on developing a joint defense missile on the same day that president Putin threatened to re-point Russian nuclear bombs at EU countries.<sup>86</sup> After expressing his anger to the NRC in a 10-minute-long monologue, in April 2007, Foreign Minister Ivanov declared: "Naturally, we reaffirmed our readiness to continue discussion [about the shield], both

<sup>76</sup> Talbott 2002, 451 fn. 22. This pledge was reconfirmed by Yeltsin on the signing day of the Founding Act in 1997; Dmitry Gornostayev (1997), "Boris Yeltsin Announces that Warheads Will Be Removed from Missiles Targeted at NATO Countries," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 28 May, translated in *CDPSP* 49(21).

<sup>77</sup> Pavel Geligengauer (1993), "Russia Shifts to Doctrine of Nuclear Deterrence," *Sevodnya*, 4 November, translated in *CDPSP* 45(44); Serge Schemann (1993), "Russia Drops Pledge of No First Use of Atom Arms," *New York Times*, 4 November.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Gottemoeller 2006.

<sup>79</sup> Ponsard 2007, 104-106; Gottemoeller 2006, 186-187.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. [www.fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/dod/95\\_npr.htm](http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/usa/doctrine/dod/95_npr.htm), retrieved 4 December 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Michael R. Gordon (2002), "U.S. Nuclear Plan Sees New Targets and New Weapons," *New York Times*, 10 March. Cf. Arbatov and Dvorkin 2006, 63 ff.

<sup>82</sup> Mark John (2007), "NATO to Press Lavrov on U.S. Missile Shield," *Moscow Times*, 26 April; Lada Yevgrashina (2007), "U.S. Military Mum after Radar Visit," *Moscow Times*, 19 September.

<sup>83</sup> Putin proposed Bush to share a Russian radar station in Azerbaijan during the G8 summit in Heiligendamm and later during a bilateral summit in early July 2007: Sheryl Gay Stolbert (2007), "Putin Surprises Bush with Plan on Missile Shield," *New York Times*, 8 June; Jim Rutenberg (2007), "Putin Expands on His Missile Defense Plan," *New York Times*, 3 July. Within ten days, however, NATO had decided to move forward with the original plan: NATO (2007), "NATO Agrees on Missile Defence Way Forward," Brussels, 14 June ([www.nato.int/docu/update/2007/06-june-e0614a.html](http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2007/06-june-e0614a.html), retrieved 18 June 2007); and Thom Shanker (2007), "U.S. to Keep Europe as Site for Missile Defense," *New York Times*, 15 June.

<sup>84</sup> Anna Smolchenko (2007), "Putin Defends Tests as Response in 'Arms Race,'" *Moscow Times* 1 June.

<sup>85</sup> Author's interview with Senior Officer, German Defence Ministry, Berlin, 15.05.07.

<sup>86</sup> Nikolaus von Twickel (2007), "Putin Warns of Missiles Pointed at EU," *Moscow Times*, 4 June.

with the US and in the NRC framework.”<sup>87</sup> That the NRC dialogue would be “natural” while talk of nuclear deterrence is mounting is just the latest demonstration that fifteen years after the end of the Cold War, there is nothing straightforward in Russian-Atlantic security relations.

*c. A Looming Third Wave of Geographical Enlargement.* A third contemporary Russian-Atlantic dispute that flows directly from the double enlargement policy kick-started in 1994 regards the looming new wave of geographical enlargement, including to countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. The Alliance publicly declared its “open-door policy”<sup>88</sup>: “In 2009 I would like to see more countries in NATO,” said Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer. “I would like to see a NATO of 26 plus. I would like to see Serbia firmly on the road to NATO and I would like to see us coming closer to honouring the ambitions of Ukraine and Georgia.”<sup>89</sup> NATO’s double enlargement practices, which have significantly contributed to the re-emergence, sustenance and consolidation of Great Power dispositions in Moscow, have not changed whatsoever since 1994. Since the color revolutions in Tbilisi and Kyiv in November 2003 and 2004, the NATO bureaucracy has taken several steps to actively court Ukraine and Georgia despite Russia’s strong reservations. As for the former, the Alliance offered an Intensified Dialogue process in April 2005 in order to prepare the country for eventual membership. When Kyiv held joint exercises with the Alliance in June 2006, however, major popular demonstrations took place for seven days in the Crimea seaport of Feodosia.<sup>90</sup> As a result, Prime Minister Yanukovich told NATO in September 2006 that membership would be put on hold in Ukraine.<sup>91</sup> At the time of writing the Ukrainian membership remained a hotly debated topic inside the Alliance,<sup>92</sup> but a decision could be made at the April 2008 Bucharest summit. On the Russian side, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov had already warned that there would be “an inevitable impact one way or another on our relations, particularly on cooperation in the military-industrial sector and some other spheres” if and when Ukraine joins NATO.<sup>93</sup> Given the very close historical and cultural ties with Ukrainians, this issue is probably the toughest that ever sprung between Russia and the Alliance since the end of the Cold War.

Russia’s opposition is also intense with respect to Georgia, as the very dramatic crisis of September 2006 recalled. US president Bush has long declared his intention to invite Tbilisi inside the Alliance: “I’m a believer in the expansion of NATO. I think it’s in the world’s interest. Georgia has got work to do, but we’ll do all we can to make it easier for it to become a member of NATO.”<sup>94</sup> Given the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, however, the situation remains extremely tense. As with Ukraine, there is no consensus inside NATO about admitting Georgia. Nonetheless, the Alliance offered an Intensified Dialogue on Georgia’s membership aspirations in September 2006—that is, only

<sup>87</sup> NATO-Russia Council (2007), “Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov Following Ministerial Meeting of Russia-NATO Council,” Oslo, 26 April ([www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/en/statements26apr07\\_3.shtml](http://www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/en/statements26apr07_3.shtml), retrieved 19 November 2007). On the very same day, Putin announced a moratorium on the CFE treaty.

<sup>88</sup> That expression was used in NATO’s Istanbul communiqué: NATO (2004), “Istanbul Summit Communiqué,” Press release 2004(096), 28 June, par. 25 ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm), retrieved 4 July 2005).

<sup>89</sup> NATO (2007), “Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, at the Munich Conference of Security Policy,” Munich, 9 February ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/2007/s070209d.html](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2007/s070209d.html), retrieved 14 February 2007).

<sup>90</sup> Svetlana Stepanenko (2006), “Crimea Doesn’t Want to Join NATO,” *Vremya Novostei*, 5 June, translated in *CDPSP* 58(23).

<sup>91</sup> Constant Brand (2006), “Ukraine Puts NATO Plans on Hold,” *Moscow Times*, 15 September.

<sup>92</sup> As confirmed by many interviewees in Brussels, who put forward divergent positions on the matter. At the Riga summit, in November 2006, president Bush made it clear that the US is the staunchest supporter of enlargement: *Moscow Times* (2006), “Bush Backs Georgia and Ukraine in NATO,” *Moscow Times*, 29 November.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Associated Press (2006), “Ivanov Warns Ukraine Joining NATO Comes with Big Price,” *Moscow Times*, 8 December.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Yury Simonyan (2006), “US Promises to Smooth Tbilisi’s Path to NATO,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 7 July, translated in *CDPSP* 58(27).

days before Tbilisi expelled several Russian officials on spying accusations. The diplomatic row that ensued between the two countries was unprecedented and gave birth to hostile reactions on both sides.<sup>95</sup> For Russia's Foreign Minister, Georgia's "provocation" was the direct consequence of NATO's expression of interest in its candidacy: "The latest escapade involving the seizure of our officers occurred immediately after NATO's decision to adopt a plan for intensified cooperation with Georgia and after the visit that Mikhail Nikolayevich paid to the US. [...] Here's how it all unfolded in chronological order: the trip to Washington, the NATO decision, the taking of hostages."<sup>96</sup> As NATO's open-door policy reaches the post-Soviet space up to its very borders, Moscow is growing increasingly nervous and rigid in its opposition. In 2007, Foreign Minister Lavrov publicly compared NATO's limitless expansion to Cold War containment.<sup>97</sup>

*d. The Globalization of NATO.* The Russians are no more heartened by the Alliance's apparently limitless expansion at the functional level—the fourth dispute in line with the 1994 critical juncture. Recall that in 1999 at the Washington summit, NATO had adopted a new Concept providing for out-of-area missions. That trend deepened in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks. At the Prague summit in 2002, NATO created the Response Force, a body of approximately 20,000 troops to be available on short notice for deployment around the world and across the full spectrum of military operations.<sup>98</sup> By October 2006, the Force was operational with 25,000 troops ready for operations of up to thirty days anywhere on the planet (more if re-supplied). As far as functional expansion is concerned, however, the real headway took place at the Istanbul summit in June of 2004. There, the Alliance unambiguously affirmed that "[w]e are determined to address effectively the threats our territory, forces and populations face from *wherever they may come*."<sup>99</sup> For the first time, NATO was explicitly granting itself the right and even the duty to intervene anywhere on the global scale. It is also in Istanbul that the Alliance took the decision to expand its ISAF mission to the whole of Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup>

In this context, a new narrative emerged among Atlantic officials and experts to the effect that NATO is now "going global," as Daalder and Goldgeier put it.<sup>101</sup> Since the turn of the millennium, the Alliance has lent logistical support to the African Union's mission in Darfur; assisted tsunami relief efforts in Indonesia; ferried supplies to victims of hurricane Katrina in the US; as well as airlifted food after a massive earthquake in Kashmir. For experts like Daalder and Goldgeier, the next logical step would be to enlarge membership to any democratic state in the world. Though this conclusion remains far from consensual, since the November 2006 Riga summit, the new name of the game for the Alliance is *functional* security—meaning that geography is no more a constraint on its action.<sup>102</sup> In the wake of the Kosovo precedent, Russian officials fear that in becoming a global policeman, NATO could eventually mingle in conflicts that are of direct concern for (and in close vicinity of) their country. Foreign Minister Lavrov put that feeling clearly:

<sup>95</sup> Arkady Dubnov and Sergei Novikov (2006), "Diplomatic War," *Vremya Novostei*, 29 September, translated in *CDPSP* 58(39).

<sup>96</sup> Vladimir Solovyov and Dmitry Sidorov (2006), "Sanction Master," *Kommersant*, 4 October, translated in *CDPSP* 58(40).

<sup>97</sup> Sergey Lavrov (2007), "Beyond the Cold War: 'Containing Russia: Back to the Future?'" *Global Research*, 20 July ([www.globalresearch.ca/printarticle.php?articleid=6373](http://www.globalresearch.ca/printarticle.php?articleid=6373), retrieved 20 July 2007).

<sup>98</sup> NATO (2002), "Prague Summit Declaration," Press Release (2002)127, 21 November ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm), retrieved 24 January 2005), par. 4a.

<sup>99</sup> NATO (2004), "The Istanbul Declaration: Our Security in a New Era," Press release 2004(097), 28 June ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-097e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-097e.htm), retrieved 24 January 2005), emphasis added.

<sup>100</sup> NATO (2004), "Istanbul Summit Communiqué," press release (2004)096, 28 June ([www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm), 5 July 2004). In addition to Afghanistan, the Alliance also launched a training mission in Iraq as well as a Greater Middle East initiative.

<sup>101</sup> Daalder and Goldgeier 2006.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. NATO (2006), "Comprehensive Political Guidance Endorsed by NATO Heads of State and Government," Riga, 29 November ([www.nato.int/docu/basic/b061129e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/b061129e.htm), retrieved 5 December 2007).

The parameters of our interaction largely depend on how the alliance's transformation will proceed. There are a number of aspects in this regard that evoke our concern. For example, it was agreed at the NATO Riga Summit in what cases military force could be used. The number of such hypothetical scenarios is increasing. But there is no clarity as to how this is going to correlate with the rules of international law, in particular, whether NATO will ask for permission from the United Nations, as it should be done under the Charter of the Organization. We cannot, of course, watch impartially the military structure of the alliance moving ever closer to our borders. It is worrying that since 1999 nothing has been done to advance arms control and military restraint. These tasks have a fundamental significance for our relations with the alliance.<sup>103</sup>

In addition, during spring 2002 the American administration announced that the Transcaucasus and Central Asia had become areas of interest for the Alliance, while showing little inclination to remove its newly acquired bases in the Stans. Starting in early 2003, persistent rumours that the Pentagon was working on plans to deploy US forces in Bulgaria and Romania—in contravention to NATO's 1997 unilateral pledges—further alarmed the Russians.<sup>104</sup> The US has also started to deploy a significant force in Azerbaijan.<sup>105</sup> For the Russians, these deployments were further proofs of NATO's aggressive attitude. As the Great Power habitus further consolidates, Moscow decreasingly accepts the Alliance's self-attributed agenda on the global scale. For the Russians, a global NATO that intervenes anywhere in the world constitutes a very unwelcome development and a serious infringement on their capacity to influence the international order.

### 3. Conclusion: *Shto Delat'?*

The story that I told in this paper is the story of a missed opportunity. With the implosion of the USSR, in the early 1990s, many new paths opened for Moscow and its former Atlantic enemy in building peace in and through practice. In 1992-1993, everything was taking place as if a new security community was in the making. All the precipitating conditions had obtained<sup>106</sup> and NATO could wield the power and organization to make diplomacy the self-evident practice of Russian-Atlantic relations. That window of opportunity abruptly shut in 1994, when the Alliance decided to geographically enlarge and implement its functional expansion in Bosnia. Since then, the exclusionary consequences of the double enlargement for Moscow have led to re-emergence of realpolitik dispositions among Russian officials. This Great Power habitus later consolidated over the Kosovo crisis, the globalization of NATO and a second wave of enlargement. Today, as the CFE controversy, the BMD row and the persisting disputes over the double enlargement demonstrate, the Russian-Atlantic relationship has embarked upon a path of mild rivalry which, as non-violent as it may remain, appears conducive to compounding security dilemmas. All in all, the promises of the end of the Cold War not only failed to materialize—a decade and a half later they also seem to have withered away.

The key policy lesson to be drawn should be clear: in hindsight, the policy of NATO's double enlargement was self-defeating as far as pacification with Russia was concerned. Of course, keeping

<sup>103</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2007), "Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov Following Ministerial Meeting of Russia-NATO Council," Oslo, 26 April ([www.in.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/a0e7d8a140e816c](http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/a0e7d8a140e816c), retrieved 3 June 2007).

<sup>104</sup> Dmitry Litovkin (2003), "America to Set Up Military Bases on Russia's Borders," *Izvestia*, 1 March, translated in *CDPSP* 55(9).

<sup>105</sup> Aleksei Dmitriyev (2004), "American Forces Expected in Baku," *Noviye Izvestia*, 16 March, translated in *CDPSP* 56(11).

<sup>106</sup> Pouliot 2007a.

alive the “most successful military alliance in history” or “welcoming back to the European family” countries that had been brutally occupied for decades cannot be said to be wrong in intent. Alliance officials cannot either be completely blamed for being prudent with their former enemies in Moscow. My criticism of the double enlargement policy rests not with its intent but with its effects, which were definitely not properly assessed with regards to Russia. As much as expansion made sense from the NATO point of view, it made no sense to Moscow: exclusionary and delusionary, the policy corresponded to the realpolitik game of the Cold War far more than to the new rules of security-from-the-inside-out simultaneously professed by the Alliance. Problematically, Atlantic officials failed to understand how the double enlargement would spark exclusion feelings in Russia and rehabilitate Great Power dispositions among Moscow officials. The seeds of today’s aggravating problems were planted back in 1994.

My point is *not* that NATO officials were wrong throughout and that the Russians have been the poor victims of the bad guys in Brussels. For all their mistakes, Atlantic decision-makers did try to reach out to Russia, most visibly by granting it a voice through the PJC and later the NRC. A lot of time and money was spent on establishing ties with the Russians and several practitioners I met seemed genuinely committed to the task. Quite often, their Russian counterparts proved to be extremely difficult partners. In addition, shadowy power struggles at the Kremlin and forceful interventions in the near abroad have understandably bumped off NATO’s enthusiasm for the new Russia. At the end of the day, the real culprit of the missed opportunity of Russian-Atlantic pacification after the end of the Cold War is not individual but relational. Elsewhere, I captured the problem in practical terms with the notion that there are two masters but no apprentice at the NRC table.<sup>107</sup> Given the structure of the international security field (positions and doxa), NATO officials consistently behave as if all their policies were right and did not require compromise; which has led Russia to reject and openly contest the post-Cold War international security order. Russia and NATO just don’t cast each other in the roles they actually play together. In the contemporary relationship, it seems like everybody is trying to punch above their weight—which obviously makes for difficult and tense diplomacy.

In this context, letting the situation go on would be a costly non-decision. As I showed in this paper, there are many political processes at work right now that point toward further degradation of the relationship. First, the Russian habitus of Great Power and Atlantic dispositions of universality are too ingrained to possibly change overnight. As a result, the fierce (and inconclusive) symbolic struggles over the rules of the game and the role that each player should play will continue. Second, with the ongoing globalization of NATO and a looming third wave of enlargement (possibly to Georgia and Ukraine), there are no reasons why Russia’s staunch opposition to the Alliance should soften. Third, mistrust today is more intense and reciprocal than it has ever been since the end of the Cold War: there is a consensus in Moscow that NATO consistently overlooks (and in fact infringes on) Russia’s interests, while the TSC has grown more and more dubious about the possibility of democracy to its east (not to speak of the new members’ contagious mistrust of anything Russian). Fourth, since the United States announced its plans for a BMD system in Central Europe, nuclear deterrence is suddenly back in the game as a defining axis of the Russian-Atlantic relationship.

In this context, the eternal Russian question resounds: *shto delat’*—what is to be done? Reflecting on the matter is all the more urgent that the year of 2008 may well turn out to be a window of opportunity in NATO-Russia relations. In effect, two new presidents will come to power in Moscow and Washington over the coming months. Though not a structural change, the election of new executive teams in the two most important capitals carries the potential of giving a new life to Russian-Atlantic pacification processes. It cannot alter deep trends on its own—for instance, the extent of Great Power dispositions in Moscow—but it certainly can infuse renewed political will to effect certain

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<sup>107</sup> Pouliot 2007b.



changes on both sides. My policy orientation is that NATO should state openly and unambiguously that it is ready to examine Russia's candidacy for membership. This is not to say that the country is ready—far from that: for anything to happen, the Russian democracy will first need to consolidate far more than at present. Great Power dispositions will also have to be toned down in Moscow (while the Alliance needs to simultaneously kick its teaching habit). The rule of law, the freedom of media, executive transparency and accountability, to name but a few, are fundamental requirements that are not satisfied in Russia at the time of writing. But since letting the situation deteriorate on its own is not an option anymore, a strong signal on NATO's part that it is ready to take concrete steps toward including Russia appears the most appropriate policy. While membership would probably not happen for at least a decade, possibly two, the deeper institutional ties that would develop in the meantime, including joint decision-making and common defence initiatives, would considerably reinforce the diplomatic process at the NRC and elsewhere and perhaps tip the balance away from nuclear deterrence. In addition, offering to open talks on eventual membership would be an unprecedented gesture of goodwill, inclusion, and consideration on NATO's part, which would seriously help dampen symbolic power struggles and rein in Great Power dispositions in Moscow. A clear *finalité* combined with an operational roadmap is something that has been direly lacking in post-Cold War Russian-Atlantic relations.

The main trade-off of opening the Alliance's door to Moscow's membership is the potential weakening of the "transatlantic consensus." No doubt the integration of Russia into NATO structures would provoke headaches and make diplomatic give-and-take among allies much harder (at least for a time). The Russians are tough negotiators who have yet to embody the allied sense of one's place. Chances are that an Alliance comprising Russia could turn out to be ineffectual because of the difficulty to reach consensual decisions and take joint action. This danger cannot and should not be minimized. But the risk is well worth taking in the currently deteriorating situation and with a political window of opportunity opening in 2008. In effect, preserving the "transatlantic consensus" at all costs would be profoundly misguided. After the end of the Cold War, NATO kept Russia at arm's length precisely for that reason and we now know the results: leaving Russia on the margins of Alliance diplomacy turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. At the end of the day, the "transatlantic consensus" is useless, and in fact harmful, if it leads the Alliance to exclude certain states outright and precludes it from meaningfully engaging with its former enemies. Especially in the wake of the Iraqi crisis, it is worth taking the risk of weakening the "consensus" in order to avoid NATO and Russia retargeting thousands of nuclear missiles at one another. This, it would seem, is the worst possible scenario for the TSC: lapsing into yet another deadly confrontation with the Russian bear.

The risk is all the more worthy of taking that NATO has historically been a coalition of former enemies. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Italy joined with France, the UK, the United States and others in common defence. The same happened to the Federal Republic of Germany a few years later. The Alliance also admitted Greece and Turkey, who would probably entertain an active military rivalry but for NATO. Beyond its operational effectiveness and its resilient solidarity, therefore, NATO has also proven very successful in dampening conflicts among its members. A few decades ago, diplomacy was far from self-evident inside the Alliance, even among its core founders such as France, the UK and the United States, who had a troubled history of mutual relations until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The strength of NATO solidarity, premised on a strong pattern of social order in which each ally strongly feels its sense of one's place, have rendered the Alliance an exceptionally effective vehicle for the self-evidently non-violent settlement of mutual disputes. Few people would have predicted this success fifty years ago and it took a lot of political will and perceptiveness to embark on so difficult a path. Yet no one today would deny that it was well worth it and that overall it worked out very well. It is time for NATO countries to pluck up the courage to sacrifice certitudes in order to decidedly turn the page on Russian-Atlantic rivalry.

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