

Public opinion trends with regard to NATO in post-Soviet countries during the 90's

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Project is aimed to study the public opinion changes in the post-Soviet countries towards NATO after the cold war. During the cold war Soviet propaganda was trying to establish NATO's as "enemy icon's" image. After the fall of the Berlin wall introduction of a new strategic concept of the Alliance and creation of NACC were first remarkable steps towards changing the image of NATO. Other major events affecting public opinion were the launch of PfP, NATO Enlargement, and NATO's engagement in peace operations (IFOR, SFOR, and KFOR). One of the most controversial points in regard of public support was NATO at Kosovo crisis. There were considerable differences in the opinions in various regions. This crisis proved once more that old stereotypes still could influence public opinion, especially in countries where governments hold negative position towards the Alliance and consider it as an adversary.

The differences in public opinion were quite substantial in various regions of the former Soviet countries. In this regard it should be underlined that the aspirations and strategic goals of the countries were the main factors that shaped the public opinion toward NATO. Since early 90's Baltic countries have chosen the way to the full integration into the Alliance and hence have directed their internal and foreign policies to this objective. In contrast, NATO was considered as an adversary by the official Russia and Byelorussia. In this regard, trends in the South Caucasus were quite controversial. Azerbaijan and Georgia officially stated their intention to cooperate closely with the Alliance. At the same time Armenian official position was rather cautious. Therefore government official position was remarkably influencing on public opinion and debate.

Following report is not pretending to be comprehensive, but just describes some public opinion trends regarding NATO in the selected post soviet countries during the 1990s and is based on public opinion surveys conducted by different institutions.

Russia

Local Media and official propaganda have played leading role in formation of public opinion regarding NATO. There was no large diversity of opinion concerning NATO at the Russian media, especially in television and radio. Taking into consideration that Television and Radio stations with broad coverage mostly have been owned by the State or financial groups rather closely tied with the official Moscow, covered NATO Policy, its activities and cooperation rigorously following the line of official Kremlin view. News reports usually presented general and mostly quite short information on ongoing NATO events related with transformation of the Alliance and deepening its cooperation with the Central and Eastern European countries without apparently expressed estimations and analysis. In exceptional cases there were few general comments, judgments, points of views and sometimes, political statements with regard of NATO activities articulated by representatives of the official structures responsible for the Foreign, Security and Defense policy of the Russia and/or by representatives of ultra nationalistic political parties of legislative brunch of power of Russia. Mostly in all cases these explanations, interpretations and statements consisted of strong criticism of NATO enlargement and the efficiency and necessity of NATO-led peace operations in the Balkans. In almost all cases related to the operations in the Balkans television news reportages were prejudicially presenting NATO-led peacekeeping troops acting against Serbs and the Slavs in general in favor of Albanians, Bosnians or Croats. At the same time the Russian peacekeepers were described as main protectors of the Slavic population in the areas of their deployment. The general line of the news reportages and comments was the attempt to perceive NATO as an instrument of the US policy in Europe.

News and analytical articles describing NATO in light colors were very rare guests on the pages of the Russian newspapers and magazines, while those in dark colors strengthening negative attitudes toward the Alliance, appear with a greater frequency. Interviews with NATO and western leaders and well-known politicians as well as top officials of countries oriented to the close cooperation with NATO (like Georgia, Latvia) composed the bulk of publications included in the first category. Those interviewed highly evaluated the role of NATO in the new security architecture of Europe and efficiency of its peacekeeping missions. The emphasis was made also on the idea that the NATO enlargement is managed in a way that does not threaten Russian interests but is focused on shaping a more benign strategic environment in Europe.

Consequently, such informational policy had an appropriate result on public opinion. According to CNN, in April 1999, after NATO strikes on Yugoslavia, nearly two-thirds of all Russians were saying that their country has reason to fear a NATO attack. The poll, conducted by the Russian Center for Public Opinion, found that 63 percent of Russian citizens believe NATO could be a threat. Russian television news stations showed the same pictures of NATO strikes against Yugoslavia that has been shown by other TV stations around the globe. But the two largest government controlled television channels in Russia gave the story in a different way. Russian news reports blamed NATO air strikes causing for the flow of hundred of thousands of refugees from Kosovo to the neighboring countries. Nothing was said about real actions of Serb Armed Forces and paramilitary and on campaign of "ethnic cleansing." – real reason of humanitarian catastrophe. Old soviet propaganda machinery was employed to highlight ongoing events in Yugoslav republic and therefore to justify position of the government in this regard. It has affected public opinion appropriately.

As a result BBC reported in spring 1999 that survey taken by the "Public Opinion" Foundation of 1,500 people during the first week of the campaign found that:

- 92% opposed the bombing and only two percent supported it.

- The lowest level of opposition to NATO came from young people [88%] and the highest [96%] from amongst those who aged 50 or more and remembered how NATO was Russia's enemy during the Cold War.
- The highest level of support for NATO -- though still tiny at five percent of those questioned -- was in Russia's two capital cities, Moscow and St Petersburg.

Another survey of the same size by the same foundation taken two weeks later asked Russians what actions they would like to see their country take and found them reluctant to support any military involvement.

- The most popular tactic, supported by almost half the respondents [47%], was the use of diplomatic pressure on NATO to make it stop the bombing.
- Forty percent of people wanted to send humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia.
- Only a sixth of those questioned were in favor of sending military advisers to assist the Serbs.

The idea of sending volunteers to fight in Yugoslavia turned out to be the most unpopular measure: over half those questioned [54 percent] were strongly against it.

It should be noted that the attitude favorable to NATO was revealed also in a small number of articles of Russian authors. In these articles authors tried to stress on the necessity of normalization of Russia's relations with NATO and on enlarging of cooperation between Russian and the EU and NATO. Some of them were looking ahead as far as to Russia's membership in the Alliance or participation in the meetings of NATO political bodies in the future.

One of the main information policy tendencies of the negative attitude toward the Atlantic Alliance was so called anti-Americanism. As it has been mentioned above there were continuous attempts to identify NATO as an instrument of the USA policy in Europe. Several articles published in the Russian magazines and newspapers touched such issues as the transatlantic tensions due to different interests and views on whether

Europeans could resolve every problem of European security without the American assistance. The intention of US to withdraw from 1972 ABM treaty also was followed by some anti-American articles and comments in Russian mass-media. However, the overwhelming majority of materials on the related issue was devoted to the two themes: (1) NATO in the Balkans, and (2) NATO enlargement eastward and NATO's influence in the CIS countries. Publications about the situation in the Balkans after the 1999 NATO war against Yugoslavia and the intervention in the province of Kosovo composed the major parts of this set (about 80 percent of the total number). In *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* like in other Russian printed editions the 1999 NATO action against Yugoslavia was condemned as unjustified aggression, and the aggravation of the internal situation in Macedonia has been considered as a direct and sad consequence of NATO's narrow-minded policy.

Since the early 90's NATO enlargement toward the East, PfP program, deepening of cooperation between NATO and Central and Eastern European Countries became most popular subjects for the debate in the Russian mass media. Russian political and military elite was linking NATO enlargement with the American national interests and considered this process as a firm prove of losing Russia's influence. Logic and mode of reasoning of these elite has not been changed since the Cold War. Still thinking in dimensions of Block systems and putting equality mark between patriotic and imperialistic thinking, this elite considers NATO enlargement as a threat to the Russian National interests. Arguments like "through NATO the US wants to maintain American military presence in Europe and simultaneously to counter any expansion of Russian role on the continent" have been on place. In some speculations even the development of the idea of great conspiracy against Russia can be observed. According to the opinion widely spread among the Russian elite, the aim of the PfP program is to enlist newly independent post-Soviet countries in a "strategic partnership" with NATO premised on the erroneous belief that the main threat to their independence comes from Moscow and that the military cooperation with the US and NATO should provide the principal mean for containing this threat.

The NATO's decision to expand eastward has promoted sustained criticism from Moscow, particularly from the security analysts who have tried to deliver it as threatening from political and strategic points of view. Therefore the Russian press doubts that the enlargement contributes to maintaining the European security and stability in the Balkans, the Baltic Sea area, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Opinion surveys revealed that during the second half of the past decade the fantastic idea of Russia joining NATO has a rather small number of supporters – approximately one fifth-one fourth of the populace. Here are the figures: in December 1996, the beginning of the second term of office for Yeltsin, the share of the adherents to his idea amounted to 22 percent of respondents. By February 1997, this proportion practically was not changed and reached 19 per cent.

Russians considered the war in the Balkans very seriously as the dangerous regional conflict. The overwhelming majority (92 per cent) of Russians strongly opposed NATO's actions against Yugoslavia. According to the data of the polls carried out by the Public Opinion Foundation, in the spring of 1997, during NATO actions against Yugoslavia 70 per cent of respondents considered NATO action as a threat to Russia, while only 9 per cent agreed that Russia should intervene in the conflict using military force.

Although the majority of Russians did not consider the war against Yugoslavia as a real military threat, the public concern about NATO expansion grew steadily from year to year. Initially debates on this issue did not worry the Russian public very much. The ordinary people hardly ever commented on the matter, as they were more concerned with far more pragmatic problems. In the first half of the 1990s, due to a deep economic crisis flaming in Russia, the most of plain Russians were preoccupied with the basic question of how to survive in the new capitalist environment. It was the period of the sharp political confrontation between Boris Yeltsin and his opponents, and domestic political battles attracted much more attention of the public than NATO's policy. In December 1995, only every hundredth respondents (0.7 per cent) expressed concern over the NATO enlargement.

In the second half of the 1990s, the media coverage of NATO policy became more intensive. The impact of media resulted in a growth of public interest to the problem of NATO-Russia relations. In December 1996, to the question “What policy should Russia pursue with regard to NATO?” 31 per cent of respondents replied: “Russia should obstruct NATO enlargement” and only 2 per cent expressed the opposite view. 10 per cent believed: “Russia should agree to NATO enlargement in exchange for a good treaty on cooperation with NATO countries”. In February 1997 half of respondents (51 per cent) articulated their concern against NATO’s expansion plan, while for a third (34 per cent) it caused no worry.

In May 1997 the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed. But the same month Russian President Boris Yeltsin said that NATO enlargement was the cause of the biggest dispute with the US since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Since then, Russian officials have continued to criticize the plan of NATO expansion, but their objections were not accepted. Moreover, on March 1999, the Alliance had admitted three new members: Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

In a survey conducted by the All-Russia Center for Public Opinion Research (VtsIOM) in December 1995, only 0.7 per cent of respondents expressed concern over NATO enlargement. Russians are far more worried about the fate of the Russian Diaspora abroad (10 per cent), the profligate trade in natural resources (14 per cent), restoring superpower status to their country (61 per cent) and regaining national dignity (77 per cent).

According to a joint survey of foreign policy specialists conducted by VtsIOM and the Moscow branch of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the first half of 1996, 9 per cent of the respondents were in favor of Russia joining NATO, 10 per cent believed that NATO enlargement would not harm Russia's security interests, 30 per cent felt that it ran counter to Russian interests and 2 per cent said that NATO enlargement would help to strengthen Russia's security.

In December 1996 the Russian Public Opinion Foundation conducted a nationwide poll in 56 communities in 29 regions, territories and republics, covering all economic and geographic zones of Russia. The respondents were asked the question, "What policy should Russia pursue with regard to NATO?" The answers were as follows:

1. Russia should obstruct NATO enlargement: 31 per cent.
2. Russia should itself become a member of NATO: 22 per cent.
3. Russia should agree to NATO enlargement in exchange for a good treaty on cooperation with the NATO countries: 10 per cent.
4. Russia should not obstruct NATO enlargement: 2 per cent.
5. Don't know: 35 per cent.

In general it appeared that the ongoing debate in Moscow on NATO expansion and question of decreasing political influence of Kremlin was not a subject of primary concern for the Russian provinces. The regional leaders were not on the position to make comprehensive comments on this issue, as they were more concerned with resolving more concrete and actual problems related with the transfers from the federal budget in order to cover wages to their electorates as well as with the improvement economical and trade relations with foreign companies. However, single cases of a strong anti-NATO statements made by charismatic provincial leaders were appearing time by time. Mostly politicians making these statements were on their career way from local leadership to federal one.

In general, results of public opinion surveys conducted during this period in Russia on the issue of NATO enlargement were quite contradictory and proved that there was no national consensus on the issue. Controversy in Official Kremlin statements that people of Russia feel strongly against NATO eastward expansion and real public opinion is well demonstrated in public opinion survey in Russia on Lithuania's membership in NATO and in analysis of the survey by Director of the center L.A. Kazakova.

Survey was conducted on March 3-6, 1997, in Russia the framework of the series of the research study "The enlargement of NATO to the East" planned by the Center of International Sociological Investigations.

The following are the answers to the questions:

Question 1:

Do you think Lithuanian membership in NATO is Lithuania's internal affair?

Response:

1. Yes - 70.4 %
2. No - 24.8%
3. Uncertain 4.8%

Question 2:

Do you think Lithuania's membership in NATO will increase its security and defense potential?

Response:

1. Yes, I do - 44%
2. No, I do not - 25%
3. Uncertain- 31%

Question 3:

Is Lithuania in the sphere of interests of vital importance to Russia?

Response:

1. Yes - 52 %
2. No - 32%

3. Uncertain - 16%

Question 4:

Under what conditions do you consider possible Lithuanian membership in NATO?

Response:

1. Under the condition not to launch nuclear weapon and transportation means on the Lithuanian territory - 54%
2. Under the condition that Lithuania does not allow the third countries make attacks through its territory - 31%
3. Under the condition that Lithuania and Russia sign Treaty on non-aggression - 10%.
4. Uncertain - 5%

Question 5:

What consequences can Lithuania have as a member of NATO?

Response:

1. Increase of military expenses - 33%
2. Increase of taxes in Lithuania - 25%
3. Worsening of relations with Russia - 22%
4. Uncertain - 20%

Question 6:

Do you think that Lithuania, like Sweden, should stay neutral and keep away from joining any blocks to preserve its independence?

Response:

1. Yes - 70 %

2. No - 5%

3. Uncertain - 25%

Question 7:

What do you think about the idea of some politologists to use Lithuania as 'a buffer zone' between the West and the East as an alternative to membership in NATO?

Response:

1. It is a good idea - 2%

2. It is a bad idea - 59%

3. Uncertain 39%

Question 8:

Do you consider it necessary that the question of Lithuania's entering into NATO should be submitted for consideration at the Security Council at the UN?

Response:

1. Yes 21 %

2. No 69 %

3. Uncertain 10 %

Question 9:

Do you think that the Lithuania's membership in NATO should be considered simultaneously with the membership of Poland's in NATO?

Response:

1. Yes, simultaneously 35 %

2. No, separately 43 %

3. Uncertain 22 %

Question 10:

Do you think that the Lithuania's membership in NATO is to be also raised at the national referendum in Lithuania itself?

Response:

1. Yes 49 %

2. No 20 %

3. Uncertain 31 %

Results of the opinion poll conducted in Russia on the problem of NATO enlargement to the East and new members' entry were unexpected. It appeared that despite of the well-known official propaganda Russian society had different from officially announced opinion on these issues.

The majority of Russians (70%) suppose that Lithuania should stay neutral and refuse participation in any blocks in order to preserve its independence, but nevertheless, most Russians thought that the question of Lithuania's entry into NATO is the internal affair of Lithuania.

Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament Vitautas Landsbergis during his visit to US in March, 1999 said in the interview to Radio Liberty that he does not believe that Russia will be a major obstacle to Lithuania's joining the Western alliance. Citing public opinion polls in that country which show that more than 70 percent all Russians agree that "Lithuania's security decisions are only the business of Lithuania", he called on Russia's political elite to "abandon their old thinking" and "become real partners with their small neighbors rather than treating them as satellites."

However of more than half questioned (52 %), considered that Lithuania is in the sphere of vital interests of Russia. Therefore they considered that possible membership of Lithuania in NATO (in the second round of enlargement) has to be followed by guarantees on fulfillment of certain conditions in the opinion of Russians. 1. The first

condition is that nuclear weapons and transportation means are not launched (54 %). 2. Under the condition that Lithuania will not render its territory for attack from the third country (31 %). 3. Under the condition that Lithuanian - Russian Treaty on non-aggression will be signed (10 %).

Nevertheless, the Russian nation regarded Lithuania as a friendly neighbor, irrespective of whether Lithuania enters NATO or not.

Most importantly, according to the results of the opinion poll, majority of Russians considered that any state has right to make decisions on its own way of development.

In the analysis of the survey Dr. L.A. Kazakova, Director of the Center of International Sociological Investigations concludes: "The time of the dictatorship of the "great empire" Russia has gone forever and all the problems have to be solved in the spirit of mutual understanding. The people of Russia have grasped that already, while the old "party nomenclature" represented by the current executive power of Russia have not.

The Russians today see new priorities in the development of Russian-Lithuanian relations (ref. to the opinion poll on the new directions of interrelations between Lithuania and Russia), which is dictated by the time, and the new economic situation of the two countries.

The Lithuanian membership in NATO has no influence to a separate individual neither in Lithuania, nor in Russia. This should be taken into consideration while making vitally important decisions."

Some contradictions even in the position of official Moscow can be observed on the issue of NATO expansion. As Prof. Rukavishnikov in its presentation on ATA General Assembly stated in 2000: "the Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, assures us that he personally is not afraid of NATO enlargement, but that the Russian people will not accept it; Ivan Rybkin, the Secretary of the Security Council, proposed some months ago that Russia become a member of NATO; Foreign Minister Yevgeni Primakov says that Russia is and will remain against NATO enlargement, but that pragmatism dictates the

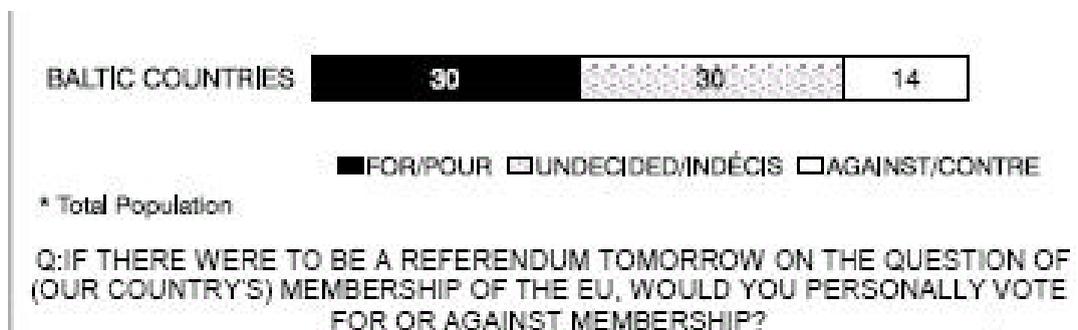
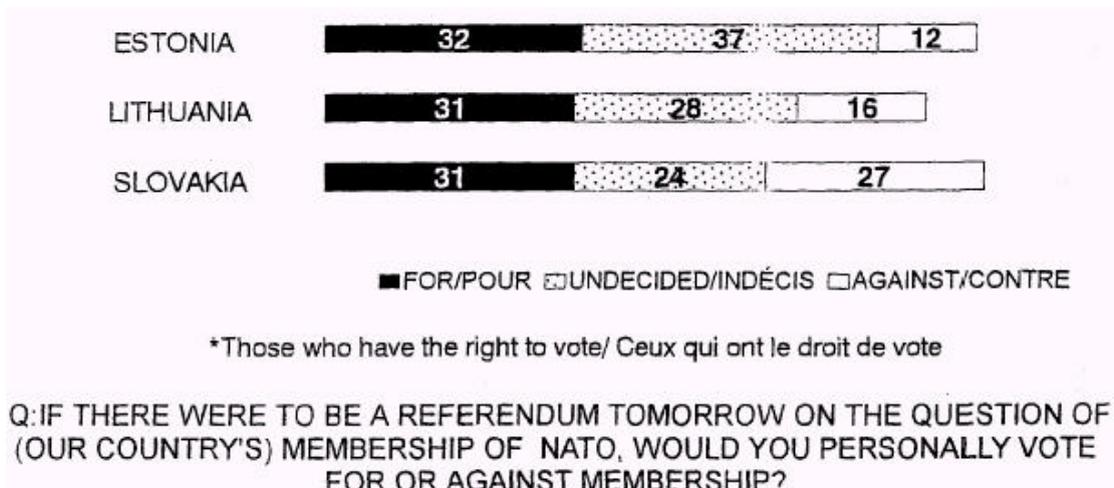
necessity of negotiations. This lack of coordination spills periodically onto the pages of the Moscow newspapers.”

Baltic Countries

Information strategy with regard of NATO, its transformation, policy, activities and enlargement in all Baltic countries was consequent and aimed on well understanding for the population of states' integration policy. It should be mentioned that from the very early 90's idea of full integration of Baltic countries to the European and Euro-Atlantic Institutions enjoyed wide public support. The consequential policy of the government in this direction and well-developed free media institutions made grow of this support stable.

Seriousness of approach of the Governments of Baltic States to the issue of public opinion regarding the integration to NATO, was clearly demonstrated by the statement of the President of Latvia. Guntis Ulmanis, President of Latvia, in its address -- Europe And NATO, broadcasted by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty on 11 May 1999 said, “I would like to once again stress that for Latvia the accession is mainly dependent upon public sentiment. The technical problems are a question of some minutes or, at least, some hours. But public opinion and public support, not only in the Baltic states but also in the world, is a crucial issue.”

In 1997 Central and Eastern Eurobarometer conducted public opinion survey in Baltic Countries asking question: If there were to be a referendum on the question of your country's membership in NATO, how would you personally vote? (CEEB 8 - ZA3068 (November 1997) www.gesis.org.)



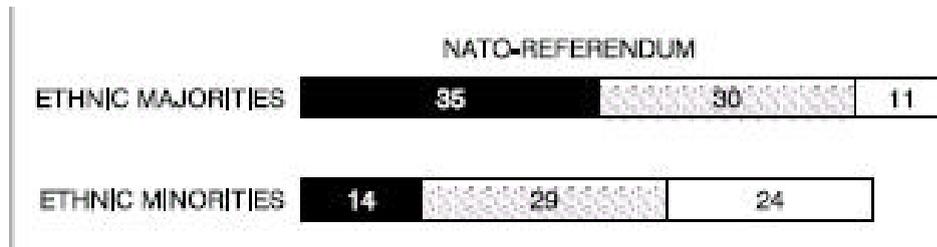
Approximately one third of the population in all Baltic Countries voted in favor of countries' joining North Atlantic Alliance, while slightly less than 1/3 of them were found undecided. Only 14% voted against NATO Membership.

According to this survey the intention to vote in favor increased notably since previous years especially in Estonia (35% pro, +6). At the same time Estonia was the country with the highest percentage of undecided persons (37%).

As it has been concluded by GESIS ethnicity was influencing voting intentions regarding the NATO-membership in those members of the ethnic minorities (mainly Russians) who showed a negative attitude on this issue.

In accordance with the GESIS, in the case of NATO membership, ethnicity did play an important role in the Baltics. Looking at the resident population (and not only at eligible voters) 35% of the ethnic majorities declare a voting intention for joining NATO, while

only 14% of the ethnic minorities did so. Correspondingly, only 11% of the ethnic majority announces a no-vote but 24% of the minority did.



George Cunningham, Central and Eastern Eurobarometer Project Director, in its article -- EU and NATO enlargement: How public opinion is shaping up in some candidate countries published in NATO Review May/June 1997, wrote: "It should be noted that the results in Estonia and Latvia exclude sizeable segments of populations that do not have citizenship and the right to vote. If all residents were included, then the results for those in favor of NATO membership would drop from 32 per cent to 26 per cent in Estonia and from 31 per cent to 27 per cent in Latvia. Minorities in those two countries are only in favor of NATO membership by 8 per cent (versus 30 per cent "against") and 13 per cent (versus 26 per cent "against") with absolute majorities in both cases in fact undecided or saying they "don't know". Among citizens, intentions to vote for NATO membership have also declined over the past year - by 10 points in Lithuania and 15 points in Estonia."

As it comes to the main reasons for voting in favor of country's Membership in NATO, according to the GESIS – Eurobarometer survey they are as following:

1. NATO will guarantee security and stability in the region;
2. Security from Russia;
3. NATO will control and reform the army and the military industry. (in Lithuania this was most important argument -- 35% outnumbering all other arguments in this country.)

4. NATO's contribution to general progress and cooperation (not only in the military field);
5. NATO membership would make country a part of Europe.

Reasons to vote against the NATO membership (small percentage) were quite disperse:

1. Wish for neutrality;
2. General pacifism;
3. Financial obligations caused by NATO membership.

In March, 1998 public opinion survey on security issues was conducted in the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia by NATO Office of Information and Press, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania and "Baltic Surveys"/GALLUP

This survey was carried out of behalf of NATO Office of Information and Press and The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

In three countries, the survey was co-ordinated by Lithuanian-British public opinion and market research company BALTIC SURVEYS Ltd., member of the Gallup International and Gallup Worldwide.

The methodology employed in this study allowed collecting the national representative data of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian permanent residents, aged 15-74. Interviews were done face-to-face at the respondents homes.

Main findings of the public opinion survey are as following:

Membership in NATO

Attitudes towards NATO membership. Of all three Baltic countries, Lithuanian population was mostly supportive for the country's efforts to join NATO: 55% of Lithuanian population, 47% of Latvian population and 54% of Estonian population fully approved or somewhat approve these efforts. Accordingly, in Lithuania 26% of population did not approve such efforts, while in Latvia there was 32% and Estonia – 31% of opponents to such efforts. Almost one out of six Lithuanian residents, one out of

five Latvian residents and one out of seven Estonian residents had no opinion on this matter.

Costs of the membership. In all three countries, the view that the NATO membership is too expensive was supported by more residents than the opposite view. In Lithuania 42%, in Latvia 44% and in Estonia 42% of residents thought that the NATO membership is too expensive. However, in Lithuania and in Estonia one out of three (accordingly 30% and 32%) and one out of five (23%) Latvian residents thought that the membership is most effective way to ensure security. One should keep in mind, that 34% of Latvian, 28% of Lithuanian and 27% of Estonian residents could not answer this question.

The best means to guarantee country's security and stability. Residents of three Baltic countries were asked, which way, in their opinion, guarantees their country's security and stability the best..

In Lithuania, prevailing opinion was that the NATO membership is the best way (26%). The next options are NATO and EU membership together (23%) or neutrality (23%). Only 3% of Lithuanian population believed that EU membership without NATO membership could guarantee security and stability for Lithuania.

In Latvia, the larger group of population believed that the neutrality best guarantees Latvian security and stability (29%). The second option – NATO and EU membership together (26%) while NATO membership is the third option (15%). 10% of Latvian population believed that EU membership alone could guarantee stability and security for Latvia.

In Estonia, NATO and EU membership together was considered to be the best guarantee (30%), followed by neutrality (29%). NATO membership was chosen by 16% of Estonian residents. 9% of Estonian residents believed that EU membership alone could guarantee security and stability for their country.

Visegrad countries' membership in NATO. Of all three Baltic countries, Lithuanian residents were best aware that according to the NATO expansion plan, in summer of 1997, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary were invited to join NATO.

Among **Lithuanian** public, 58% have heard about this event, 29% - have not.

In Latvia, 53% have heard this and 38% - have not.

In Estonia the level of awareness about this invitation is the lowest – 49% of Estonian residents have heard about this invitation and 42% - have not.

Being best informed about this decision, **Lithuanian** residents were also most in favor for it. In Lithuania, 53% of the residents were in favor of this decision and 8% express unfavorable view.

In Latvia, only 37% were of favorable opinion about this decision and 11% - were opposing it, while 50% of Latvian residents did not have opinion on this matter.

In Estonia, 41% were in favor and 13% - were not, with 46% of Estonian residents not having any opinion on this decision.

1.5. Reasons for not inviting Baltic countries to join NATO. The perception of the reasons for not inviting Baltic countries to join NATO at the first wave of expansion differs in three Baltic states. Lithuanian people more often think that Russian influence and NATO members unwillingness to accept new members was the main reason, than Latvians and Estonians. In Latvia and Estonia the view that none of the Baltic countries is ready for NATO membership was expressed more often.

Evaluation of the Government efforts to prepare for the NATO membership.

Of three Baltic countries, Estonian residents were of the highest opinion about their Government's efforts to join NATO: 44% of **Estonian** population thought that their Government was preparing for the NATO membership active enough while 23% thought that these efforts were not active enough and 4% thought that in reality the Government was not preparing at all. 30% of Estonian population had no opinion on this issue.

Lithuanian population also evaluated the Government's efforts in a positive way: 36% of Lithuanian residents thought that the Government was active enough, 30% thought it was not. Only 2% of Lithuanian residents thought that Government was doing nothing. 32% of Lithuanian residents could not answer this question.

Latvian residents were of a negative opinion about their Government's efforts: while 24% of Latvian residents considered the Government being active enough, as many as 32% thought that the Government was not active enough and 5% thought that Latvian Government was doing nothing in this direction. In Latvia there was the largest number of people who had no opinion on this issue – 39%.

Priorities in a preparation to join NATO. Residents of the Baltic countries were asked to rate the priorities of the things to be done while preparing to join NATO.

Lithuanians stressed first of all protection of borders and international image of the country. The second group of the means to be undertaken – strengthening Lithuania's army in accordance with the NATO standards.

For **Latvian** population the border issues were the first priority, followed by the country's image. Improvement of the army's professional level and ethnic issues were important but they came as the second stage of actions.

Estonians first of all stressed the unsolved border issues. The second group of necessary actions was improvement of the professional standards of the army.

Estimation of the NATO membership impact on various spheres. Residents of the Baltic states were asked, whether in their opinion the membership in NATO would have positive or negative influence on various spheres.

In all three countries, majority of the population thought that the country's security and country's army will benefit when the Baltic countries join NATO. **In Lithuania**, more than half of population also expected the improvement in country's attractiveness for foreign investors and possibilities to receive financial assistance.

In Estonia, residents believed that the membership would help Estonia's government to attract more confidence. This was not the opinion of Lithuanian and Latvian residents – they did not think that the membership might have strong influence on this matter.

In all three countries, not much influence from the membership was expected on social welfare. However, all three countries thought that the membership in NATO would harm

the relations with Russia. Lithuanian and Latvian residents also believed that the membership could have negative impact on relations with Belarus, while Estonia has less relations with this country now, therefore did not expect much changes.

Of all three countries, Lithuanians were most optimistic about the overall positive influence of NATO membership on the country, while Latvians were most skeptical.

Referendum on NATO. If the national referendum on NATO membership is held at the moment, Lithuanians would be most supportive for the country joining the alliance.

51% of **Lithuanian** residents would vote for, 25% - against and 24% did not make their decision yet. **In Estonia**, 43% would vote for while 32% would vote against and 25% do not know. **Latvia** has the lowest number of the supporters for the country's membership in alliance: 37% would vote for, 29% - against, while 34% of Latvian population has not decided yet.

Why people are in favor or against their country's membership in NATO ?

The main arguments of supporters for **Lithuanian** membership were related to the security of the country and confidence in NATO as the organization. The main arguments of the opponents were related to the opinion that Lithuania was not ready yet, the costs and believe in neutrality.

The main arguments of supporters for **Latvian** membership were related to the security of the country and standard of living improvement. The main arguments of the opponents were related to the opinion that the membership would have negative influence on standard of living, that Latvia was not ready yet and problems in the relations with Russia and Belarus.

The main arguments of supporters for **Estonian** membership were related to the security of the country and development of armed forces. The main arguments of the opponents were related to the opinion that Estonia is not ready yet and that Estonia should stay neutral.

Confidence In International Institutions

Estonian inhabitants were better informed about various international institutions and organizations than Latvian and Lithuanian inhabitants: in Estonia the larger share of the respondents could express their opinion about these organizations and institutions.

Lithuanian inhabitants were most confident with NATO (53%), UNO (49%) and EU (48%). Almost every second Lithuanian inhabitants had much or somewhat confidence in these international organizations. Lithuanian inhabitants trusted least CIS - 47% had little confidence in it.

Latvian inhabitants mostly trusted UNO - 66% of them had much or somewhat confidence in this organization. 44% of Latvian inhabitants trusted EU and NATO. Latvian inhabitants had least confidence in CIS - 47% of them had not much confidence in CIS or not confidence at all.

Estonian inhabitants most trusted UNO - 73% of Estonian inhabitants had much or somewhat confidence in this organization. 61% of Estonian inhabitants had much or somewhat confidence in NATO.

Awareness and evaluation of US and Baltic Countries' Charter. The majority of residents of Baltic States have heard about this Charter - 65% of Lithuanian inhabitants, 69% of Latvian inhabitants and 61% of Estonian inhabitants said that they have heard about US and Baltic States' Charter.

61% of **Lithuanian** inhabitants and 55% of **Estonian** inhabitants had very or somewhat favorable opinion about US and Baltic Countries' Charter. Among **Latvian** inhabitants 48% had very or somewhat favorable opinion about US and Baltic Countries' Charter and 45% had no opinion about it. No opinion about this charter was expressed by 36% of Lithuanian inhabitants and 36% of Estonian inhabitants.

The majority of Baltic countries' inhabitants thought that US and Baltic Countries' Charter would help Baltic countries to join NATO sooner. It was said by 54% of residents of Estonia, 49% of residents of Lithuania and 37% of residents of Latvia. In Latvia as much as 44% of residents had no opinion on this issue. 35% of Estonian population and 40% of Lithuanian population had no opinion on this question.

International Peacekeeping Missions And Programs

Participation in the international missions. Residents of three Baltic countries were asked to express their opinion about the participation of the soldiers of their country in joint peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. **Estonian** and **Lithuanian** populations more often approved this participation (50% in Estonia and 49% in Lithuania) while in **Latvia** the opinions split: 37% of Latvian population approved this participation and 39% disapproved.

The attitude towards the participation in “Partnership for Peace” program.

In Estonia, 69% of the residents approved this participation, 14% disapproved and 18% had no opinion. **In Lithuania**, 62% approved, 12% disapproved participation in this program and 26% had no opinion. **In Latvia**, 54% of population approved the participation in this program, 16% disapproved this participation and 28% had no opinion.

Attitude towards joint defense projects in the Baltic countries. Residents of the Baltic countries were asked, whether they think that the establishment of such joined military forces as peacekeeping unit “Baltbat”, joint navy squadron “Baltron” and Baltic air surveillance network “Baltnet” would help to join NATO sooner.

68% of Estonian residents, 56% of Lithuanian residents and 49% of Latvian residents thought that the establishment of those forces would help Baltic countries to join NATO sooner. 11% of Estonian, 12% of Lithuanian and 16% of Latvian residents did not believe in this. 21% of Estonian, 32% of Lithuanian and 34% of Latvian residents had no opinion in this regard.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Most often mentioned in **Lithuania** *main source of information about NATO*:

- Lithuania’s TV stations (54%);
- Lithuania’s newspapers (38%);

- Lithuania's radio stations (17.8%);
- Lithuania's Government official information (5%).

Most often mentioned in **Latvia** *main source of information about NATO*:

- Latvia's TV stations (55%);
- Latvia's newspapers (33%);
- Russia's TV stations (19%);
- Latvia's radio stations (16%);
- Russia's radio stations (5%);
- Russia's newspapers (4%).

Most often mentioned in Estonia *main source of information about NATO*:

- Estonia's newspapers (32%);
- Estonia's TV stations (27%);
- Estonia's radio stations (14%);
- Russia's TV stations (7%);
- Estonia's Government official information (6%).

Respondents were asked which issues they would like to learn more about. Main topics which inhabitants of all three countries were most interested in are following:

- Cost of country joining NATO;
- Advantages of country joining NATO;
- Responsibilities country will have to accept joining NATO;
- How NATO guarantees security of its members.

These four issues were mentioned most often in all three countries.

People who were going to vote for their country's membership in NATO were more interested to know about all issues mentioned than people who were going to vote against or people who did not decide yet how to vote if referendum of their county joining NATO would be held.

NATO operation in Yugoslavia in 1999 had full support in Baltic countries. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Latvia Valdis Birkavs, speaking on EU enlargement in Bonn on 26 March 1999, noted that he believed that 'the effects of NATO actions will be far-reaching and positive for the Baltic States'. Therefore, remarkable trends in public opinion of Baltic states had not been observed.

General informational strategy that was consequential was based on the principle that Baltic Countries sharing the democratic values and principles were moving toward the full integration to the Euro-Atlantic collective defense structures. That has also provided public support for the process of reforms in the countries.

After the joining of MAP public support of integration policy has been significantly raised. The Ministry of Defense of Estonia regularly conducted public opinion surveys. In this regard its interesting the summary report on public opinion monitoring study that was conducted in 2000 and was focused on tracking public opinion trends on the three main issues:

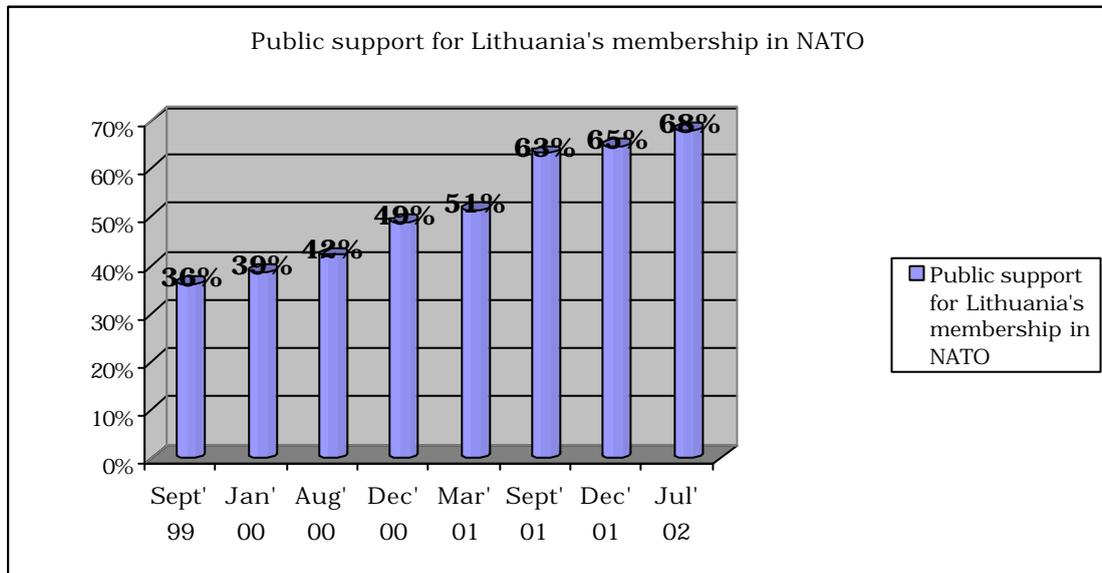
- opinion on NATO accession;
- opinion on defending the Estonian state and on willingness to participate in state defense;
- opinion on increasing defense spending.

The polls indicated that the support of Estonia's population to joining NATO has throughout the year 2000 been stable (45-49 percent), while a quarter of the population was not able to express its position in this matter. Among ethnic Estonians the support

rate was 54-57 percent, but among younger people the support was higher than the average both among Estonians and non-Estonians. The awareness of the process of joining NATO has generally improved. The majority of those responding support an increase in the spending on the Estonian defense capability or preserving the present level, while 16% consider a decrease necessary.

The will to defend the country is continuously high among Estonia's inhabitants. 56-60 percent has considered armed resistance necessary also in case the final solution remains unclear. 53-60 percent of those responding are willing to participate personally in defense activities.

Tendency of rising support to the NATO Integration was observed in Lithuania as well, where public support on this issue always was highest among Baltic States. Following chart is based on the public opinion surveys published by the Lithuanian Ministry of Defense.



Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan

While talking about the Caucasus region it should be mentioned that term Central Asia and Caucasus frequently used during the last years in the context of Euro-Atlantic policy and NATO activities in these regions seems is not always correct. In most cases participation of states in mentioned activities and initiatives are determined by country's Security and Foreign policy. Term Central Asia and Caucasus includes states with quite different aspirations and priorities toward the Euro-Atlantic Alliance: some of them officially declared its willingness to join alliance, while others limit its strategy in this regard only with cooperation. Therefore use of the term "Central Asia and Caucasus" in political dictionary, especially to introduce political initiatives or to plan activities may not be acceptable. Public opinion survey conducted by Georgian Opinion Research Business International (GORBI) in 1999 covering Armenia and Georgia can be vivid example of the diversity in public opinion in two neighboring Caucasian states.

Pro-Western disposition has always been prevalent in Georgia both on the level of political elites and wide public. As it was often mentioned Georgian society shared democratic values and associated itself with the western community. Attitude toward the NATO was positive and quite stable throughout 1990s. War in Abkhazia and following political events, like joining the CIS under the pressure, in early 1990s has not affected this attitude. At the same time coverage of NATO events, comprehensive analysis of the policy of Alliance quite rarely appeared in the Georgian Media during the mentioned period of time.

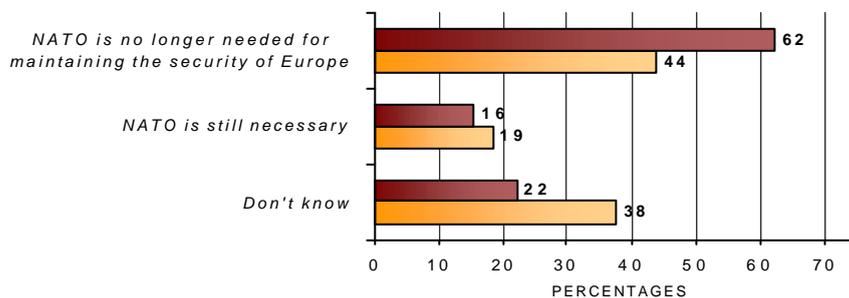
After middle 1990s transformation of the Alliance, deepening cooperation in the framework of PfP, transfer of 'gravity center' of the Alliance Eastwards attracted more attention of the Georgian media and academicians. Coverage of NATO policy and activities by the media became more precise and informative.

In 1999 Georgian Opinion Research Business International (GORBI), which is the leading company working in the field of public opinion and market research in the Caucasus region, including Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, carried out public opinion polls aimed on study of attitude of population towards NATO in Georgia and Armenia.

Main Findings

The first question concerned the attitudes of the citizens of two countries (Georgia and Armenia) toward the necessity of NATO's presence in order to maintain peace and security in Europe. With almost equally low responses, the option "NATO is still necessary" was chosen by less than one fifth of the respondents with 16% and 19% in Georgia and Armenia, respectively. However, attitudes toward NATO in subsequent questions were rather positive. One possible explanation that remains unexplored is the perception that the residents of these countries feel that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, there exists little threat to European security. The percentage of respondents feeling that "NATO is no longer needed for maintaining the security of Europe" was rather high in Georgia with 62% versus 44% of respondents answering thusly in Armenia.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING VIEWS IS CLOSER TO YOUR OWN?

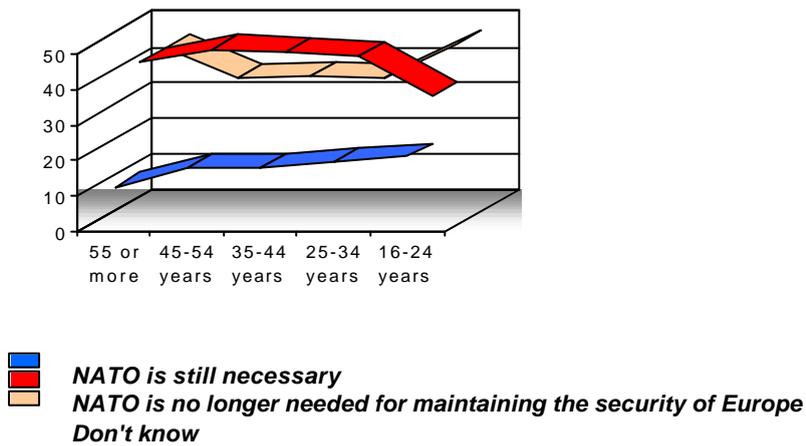


- GEORGIA

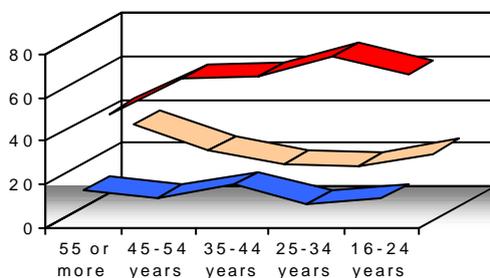
- ARMENIA

As for distribution of these questions by age, the younger the respondents in Armenia, the more frequently they answered “NATO is still necessary” (with 21% of respondents aged 16-24 answering thusly and only 12% of those aged 55 or more doing so). Rather high in Armenia were the responses of those not being able to provide an answer to the question (38%). For Georgia, for the option "NATO is no longer needed for maintaining the security of Europe" the lowest rate went to representatives of the “oldest” age group, and highest – to “younger” respondents, namely 16-24 y. and 25-36 y (64% and 73% correspondingly).

ARMENIA

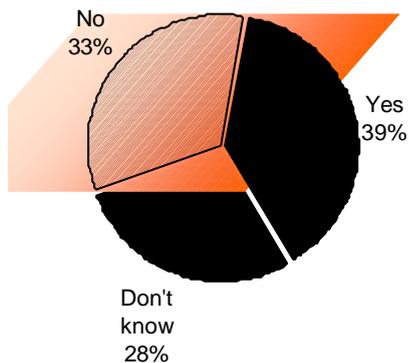


GEORGIA

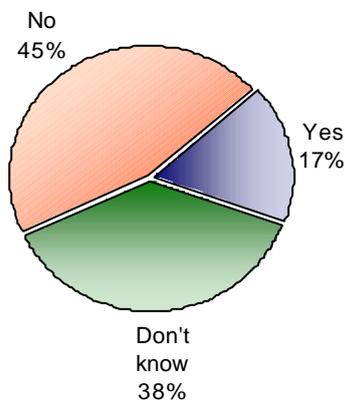


One question of the survey concerned the respondents toward the military involvement of NATO to resolve the situation in Kosovo. The findings differ quite significantly for the responses to this question between the two countries. About two-fifths (39%) of the respondents in Georgia supported the military involvement of NATO in the Balkans versus less than one-fifth of the sample (17%) for Armenia. Conversely, 33% of the Georgian respondents felt that NATO should not have become involved militarily to resolve the conflict in Kosovo and 45% of respondents answered thusly in Armenia. In sum, the number of Georgian supporters for operation in Kosovo was more than that of opponents to the action while the reverse opinion prevails in Armenia.

Do You Believe That NATO Should Or Should Not Have Become Involved Militarily To Resolve The Situation In Kosovo? (Answers in Georgia)

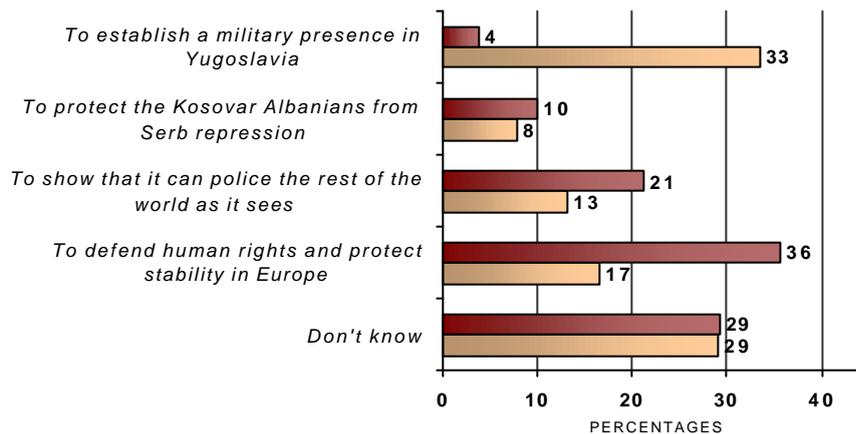


Do You Believe That NATO Should Or Should Not Have Become Involved Militarily To Resolve The Situation In Kosovo? (Answers in Armenia)



A subsequent question concerned perceptions of NATO’s reasoning for becoming involved militarily in Kosovo and here the results are equally skewed. In Armenia, the reason registering the highest response rate (33%) was “To establish military presence in Yugoslavia”. The corresponding rate for this response in Georgia was 4%. In Georgia, more than one third (36%) of the respondents believed that NATO got involved in the conflict in Balkans primarily to defend human rights and protect stability in Europe while the percentage of Armenian respondents offering this as the main reason was two times less (17%).

Which One Of The Reasons Of Nato Becoming Involved Militarily In Kosovo Do You Agree With Most ?

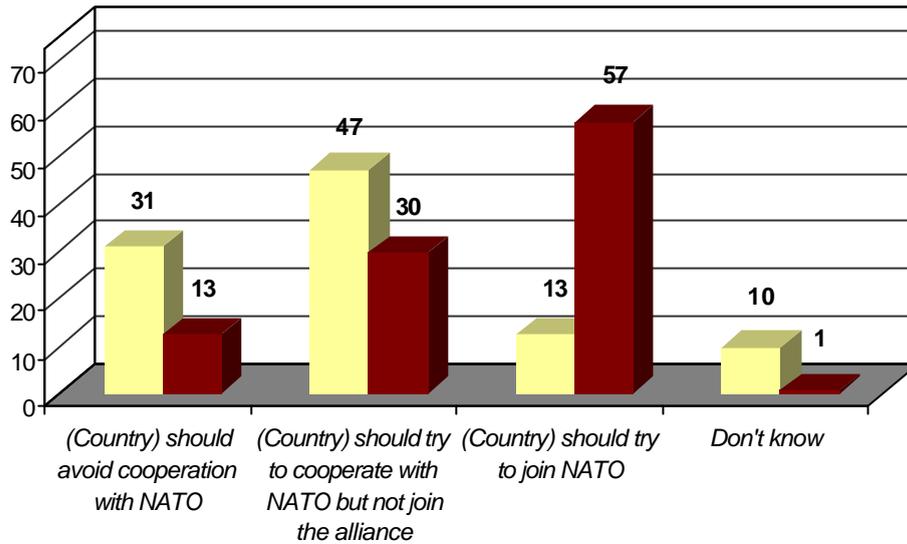


- Georgia
- Armenia

The final survey item concerned respondents’ perceptions of future relations between NATO and their country. Respondents were offered three options about these possible relations and asked to select one. The highest number of responses in Armenia (47%) answered that “Armenia should try to cooperate with NATO but not join the alliance”. the corresponding percentage for Georgian respondents selecting this option was 30%. The response registering the highest percentage in Georgia was that “Georgia should try to join NATO” with 57% (the corresponding rate in Armenia was 13%). There was also a

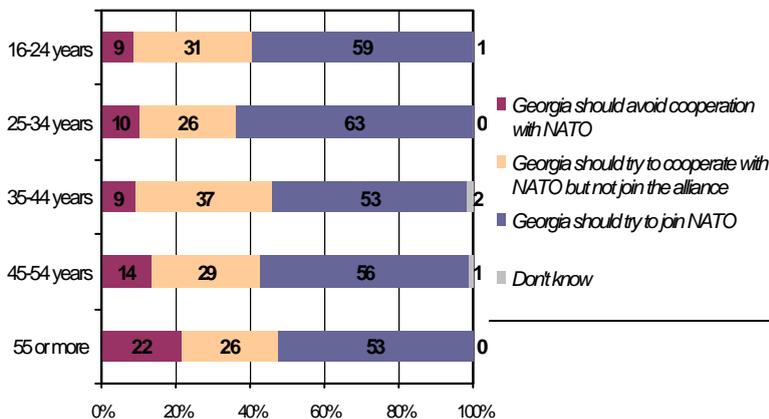
rather large difference by country concerning responses to the third option - “The country should avoid cooperation with NATO”. In Armenia the percentage was 31% while in Georgia, the rate was 13%.

Which Of The Following Three Options Best Describes What You Think Your Country's Relationship With NATO Should Be?

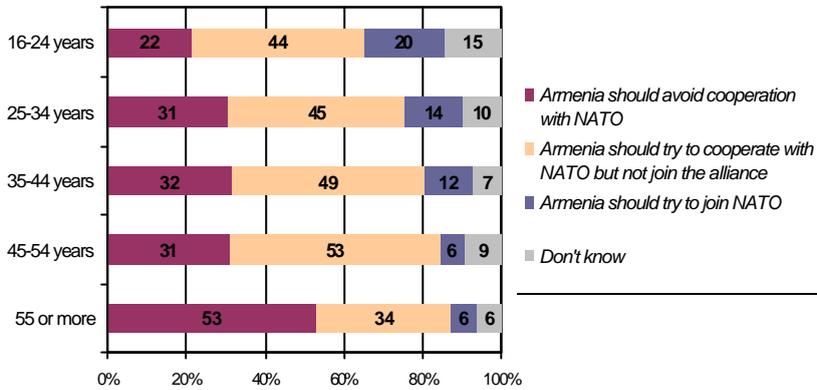


Significantly, in Armenia the responses to this question varied slightly according to age, with younger respondents more often stating that “Armenia should try to join NATO” (20% for the youngest age group versus only 6% for the oldest). In Georgia, answers were distributed fairly evenly among age groups.

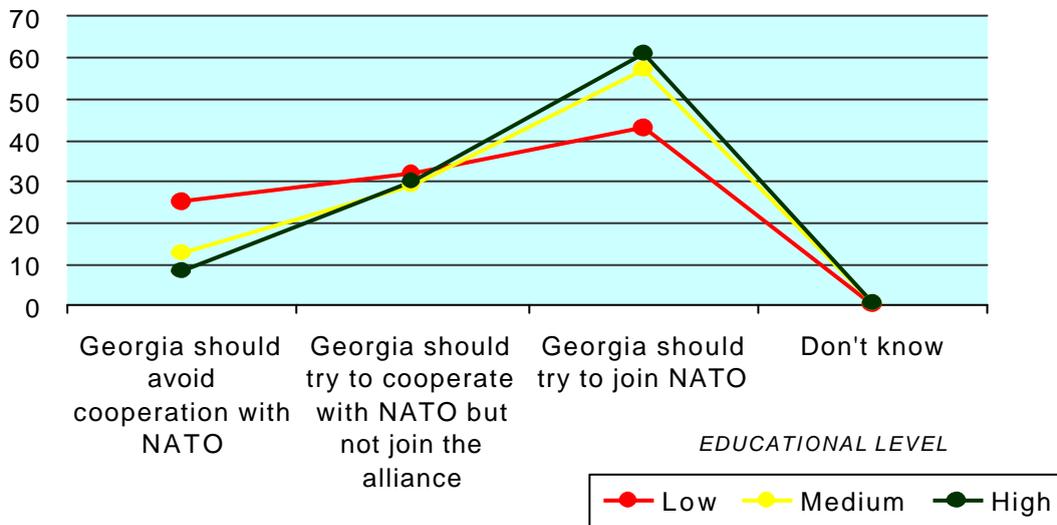
Which Of The Following Three Options Best Describes What You Think Your Country's Relationship With NATO Should Be? by age in Georgia



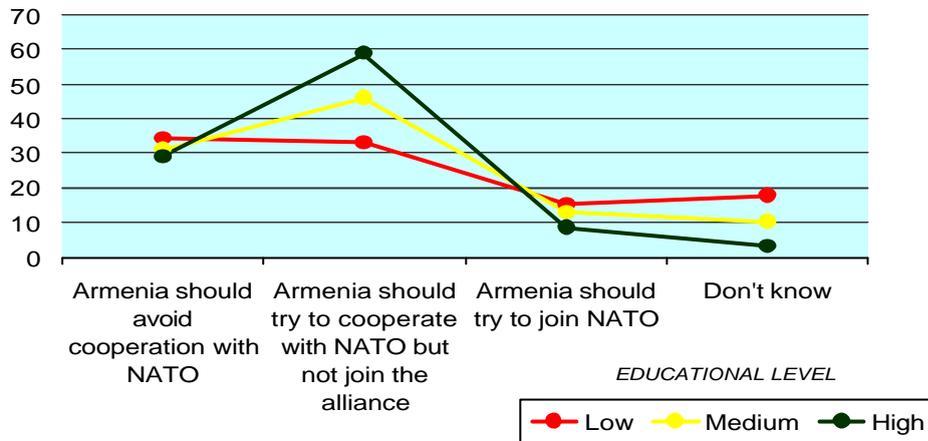
Which Of The Following Three Options Best Describes What You Think (Your Country's) Relationship With NATO Should Be? by age in Georgia by age in Armenia



by educational level (Georgia)



by educational level (Armenia)



Relatively the same picture is in answers on this question by the regions. In Georgia in majority of population (54% in capital city, 59 % in other regions) responded that country should try to join NATO, while 10% in capital and 14 % in provinces are against cooperation with NATO. 35% in capital and 27% in regions answered that country should try to cooperate with NATO but not join it.

In responds from Armenian percentage of in favor country's cooperation with NATO without joining it was prevalent (48% in capital and 46% in regions). Only 16% in capital and 10% in regions were in favor of joining NATO.

According to media public opinion in another Caucasian state – Azerbaijan is quite favorable to countries Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Unfortunately we were not able to get precise data of public opinion surveys conducted in Azerbaijan during the 1990s but all information available in media proves that level of public support to the NATO expansion is high. Statements of Azeri politicians (no matter pro-governmental or opposition) and articles on this issue which were appearing in media and academician sources are generally sympathetic toward NATO.

Ukraine

After the collapse of the Soviet Union image of NATO as an “aggressive Block” aimed on intervention, that has been established by the Soviet propaganda machinery in eyes of Ukrainian society started to change. Public opinion regarding the NATO gradually started to become more favorable throughout 1990s. Signature of NATO-Ukraine Charter and institutionalization of NATO-Ukraine council provided positive impulse to this process.

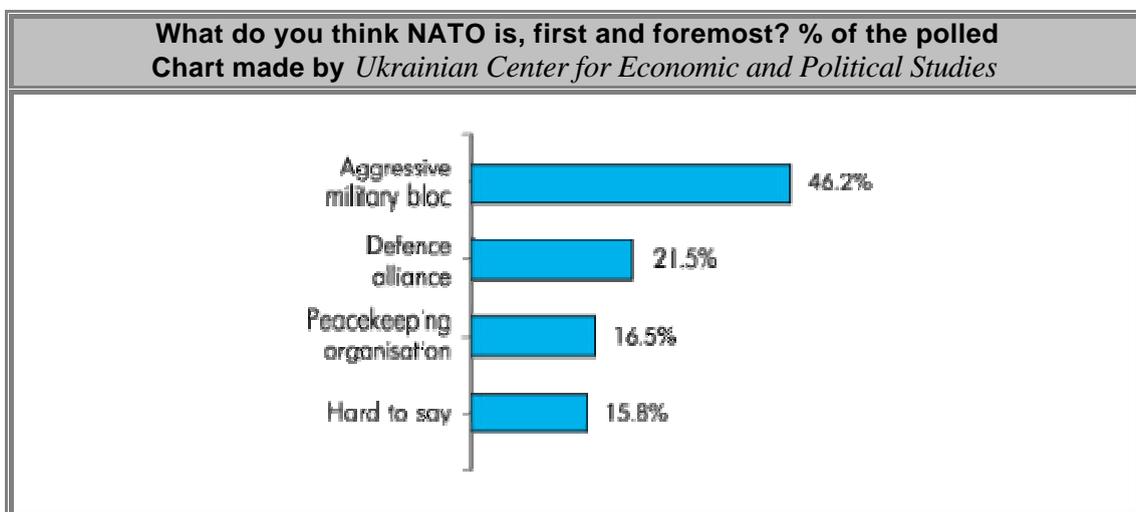
According to the “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation, in January, 1997, only 17.3% of Ukrainian citizens considered NATO to be an aggressive bloc. In the Analytical Report of Mr. Igor Galin on Mass Public Opinion In Ukraine About NATO And NATO-Ukraine Relationships conducted under the NATO Fellowship in 1996-1998 in Ukrainian public opinion NATO and its members are not considered as threat for Ukraine. One in six respondents believed in the existence of external military threat to Ukraine. One in three believers in the existence of military threat to Ukraine think that this threat is coming from Russia. Russia emerges as the prime source of the military threat, followed by the USA, Western Europe and finally Eastern Europe. Simultaneously, according to the same research, one in three respondents was not concerned with the status of the relationships between NATO and Ukraine, which suggests that – bearing in mind that 42 percent failed to give any definite answer – the Ukrainians were not preoccupied with the NATO question in March 1998. Among those who answered the questions on NATO opinion about the possible positive consequences of Ukraine joining NATO was as follows:

- Enhance Ukraine’s international standing (agreed 31% and disagreed 17%)
- Ukraine’s army fighting strength will increase (agreed 28% and disagreed 22%)

Therefore, the public opinion was more or less supportive of Ukraine joining NATO. First of all the respondents were worried about deterioration in the relationships between Russia and Ukraine. The respondents felt the membership in NATO would put extra burden on fledging Ukraine’s economy, as the purchasing of new military equipment and weaponry from NATO countries would be required. Another important concern was the possible restriction on travel between Ukraine and Russia. Finally, the respondents did

not believe that military capacity of Ukraine would increase as the result of the country's membership in NATO.

NATO strikes against Yugoslavia in 1999 partially reversed the trend of positive attitude of Ukrainian society toward the NATO. Public opinion survey by the *Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies* in 1999 indicated that nearly half of Ukraine's population (46.2%) perceived NATO as an aggressive bloc. Evidently, the average Ukrainian was not entirely convinced that the main purpose of the NATO action was to defend Albanians, rather than punish "disobedient" Serbs. Only 8.6% of those polled considered NATO actions to be a forced, but necessary measure to protect Kosovars, and only 8.5% suggested that military intervention was needed to stop Yugoslavia's aggressive policy. By contrast, 33.6% of polled Ukrainians thought that NATO actions in Yugoslavia were acts of aggression, while another 19.3%, considered it as war crimes against the civilian population. 14.1% of those polled remained neutral, as they were certain that neither NATO nor Yugoslavia should be blamed for the conflict, but the UN, which appeared unable to resolve the situation through peaceful means.

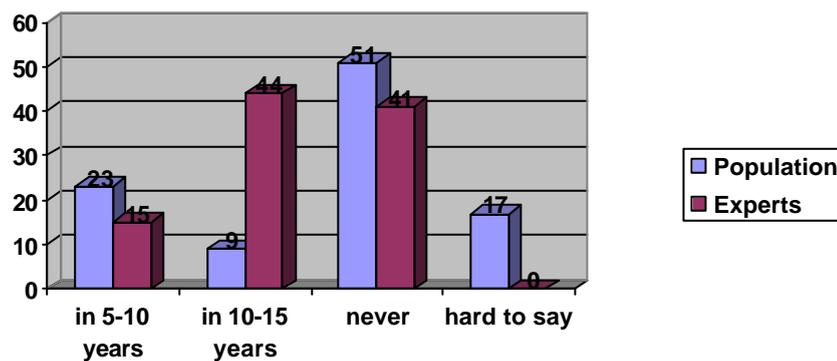


According to the *Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies* the reason for such assessments probably lies not in a specific attitude toward Yugoslavia, but in the fact that, according to the majority of respondents, NATO had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state (even for purposes of resolving humanitarian

problems). This view is shared by 55.1% of those polled. Only 11.9% of respondents believes that NATO has such a right, and 26.1%, that NATO should have such a right under a UN mandate. Perhaps, if KFOR spared no efforts to protect Serbs from Albanians, as NATO did last year to protect Albanians from Serbs, more Ukrainians would believe in the Alliance's peaceful intentions.

In line with the same research after Kosovo events, even in the most pro-NATO inclined Western Ukraine, as much as 29.8% of respondents considered NATO to be an aggressive military bloc. It is interesting to note that on this issue, pro-NATO Western Ukraine did not significantly differ from the pro-Russian Crimea, where 32% held the same opinion. Only 15.3% of Crimeans believed that Ukraine should never join the Tashkent Treaty, while among all Ukrainians, this view was shared by 42.2%. When choosing between Russia and NATO, Crimeans were probably motivated by their traditional pro-Russian sentiments, rather than by hostility toward NATO.

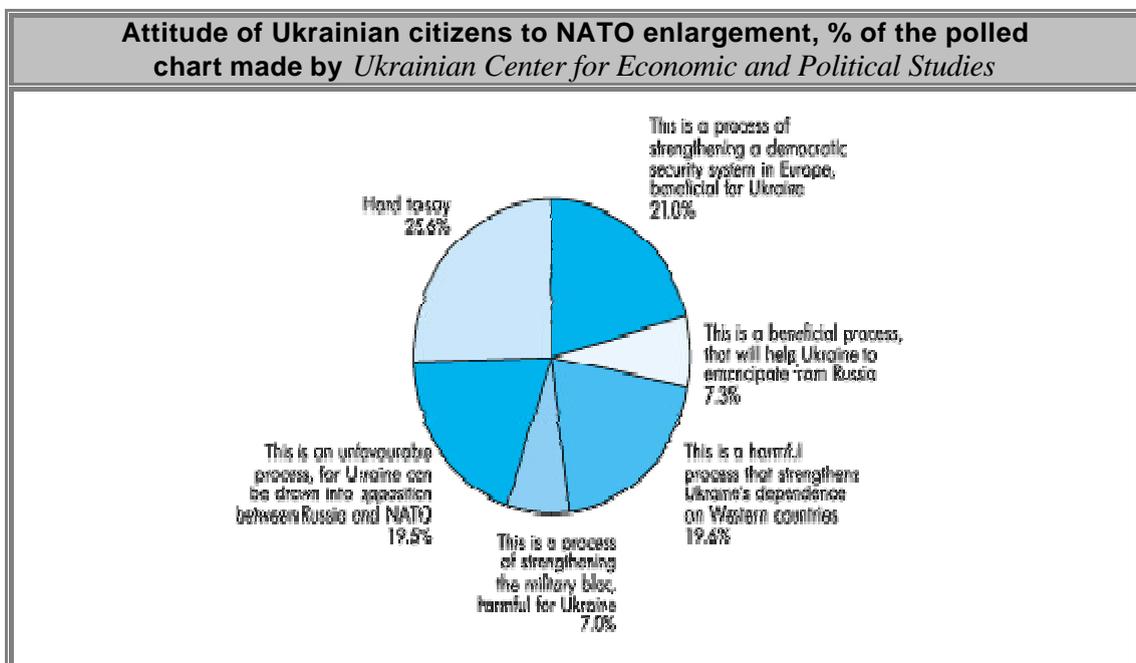
Following chart represented position of the population regarding Ukraine's possible accession to NATO. Half (50.6%) of respondents considered that Ukraine should never join NATO, a quarter (23.4%) said that it should join the Alliance in 5-10 years time, and 9.3% of those polled responded that Ukraine should join NATO within 10-15 years.



This chart shows that in general even after the NATO-led operation, in Yugoslavia, very unpopular in Ukraine, which was unpopular in Ukraine, almost two-thirds (59%) of the country's elite and one-third (32.7%) of its population supported NATO membership.

Researchers noted that Ukrainians treat NATO quite differently from Byelorussians and Russians. Only 8.2% of Byelorussia's population believes that Belarus should ensure its security by joining NATO. In Russia, only 19% of respondents names their country joining the Alliance a priority, while the share of those that consider NATO an aggressive bloc is higher in Russia (56%) than in Ukraine

According to the survey there were no overwhelming majority on the assessment of the process of NATO enlargement. 21.0% of polled considered that this process means the strengthening of a democratic security system in Europe, and is beneficial for Ukraine. 7.3% thought this process as favorable, or the one that would help emancipate Ukraine from Russia. Almost half of our citizens gave a negative assessment of this process. 19.6% of those polled considers NATO enlargement to be an unfavorable process, as it would strengthen Ukraine's dependence on the West. Almost as many — 19.5% — fears that as a result of NATO enlargement, Ukraine can be drawn into opposition between Russia and NATO. At the same time, only 7% of those polled see an immediate military threat in NATO enlargement.



For the time of the research conducted by *Ukrainian Center for Economic and Political Studies*, researchers concluded that in the opinion of the population of Ukraine, NATO was seemingly aggressive block but not posing any threat to Ukraine. Attitude toward joining NATO among Ukrainians is much stronger than among their Eastern Slavic neighbors — Belorussians and Russians.

“Therefore, the attitude toward NATO on the part of Ukraine's population is rather contradictory. Ukrainians are clearly sympathetic to the “western way of life”, but unprepared to fight for it; they would like to stay away from any disputes between Russia and the West, and not take any sides” – was stated by researchers.

It has been mentioned that the experts and people who knew NATO its activities and policy better demonstrated most positive attitude toward NATO. Negative attitude mostly has been considered as an impact of poor information about NATO in the Ukrainian press, and anti-NATO materials of Russian media, which were more accessible to the average Ukrainian than Western one.

When it became obvious that NATO was successful in enforcing peace in the Balkans, and the process of the NATO and European Union's enlargement does not cut Ukrainians from the West, in Ukrainian public opinion the positive trend toward the NATO appeared to be serious. NATO's close cooperation with Ukraine has played very important role in this direction. Media has already reported these positive trends. But, as it was reported by Jamestown foundation, despite the fact that public opinion is again on the upswing, ordinary Ukrainians are still less enthusiastic about NATO than their government is.

Conclusions

It seems that in 1990s general trend in public opinion of post soviet countries with regard of NATO was rather positive towards the Alliance. Growing cooperation within the framework of PfP, MAP process, and successful peace enforcement operation in Balkans

played positive role in overall. It is obvious that public sympathy towards the alliance has been raised. It is quite difficult to overestimate the importance of winning of public opinion in conjunction with deepening of security cooperation. Free media, academicians and politicians can play very important role in this regard, especially in the countries with the aspirations to join NATO. Rafael Estrella- President of NATO Parliamentary Assembly in its address to the V-10 Riga Summit in March 2002 stated: “Public support is essential for the success of enlargement. Members of parliament are the closest to their electorates. They are in the front line of any campaign to win public opinion. ...

It is essential that public opinion in both full members and candidates alike should understand and support the policies of their governments and the responsibility and obligations that go with the benefits of membership. And in this respect, we should always remember that it is countries and their societies, not just military establishments, who are being invited to join the Alliance.”

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