

NATO Democratic Institutions Fellowship Program

Research project

*Russia and NATO: Problem of NATO Expansion to the East in Russian Politics and Public
Opinion (1992-1997)*

FINAL REPORT

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Table of contents

1. Formal report	2
2. Historical view	4
3. Theoretical scheme	5
3. Mass media landscape and NATO expansion	7
5. NATO expansion in parliamentary and party politics	11
6. Position of Government and Foreign Ministry	14
7. Public opinion surveys	16
8. Nonconclusions and recommendations	21

1. Formal report

This final report is the concise version of the end-product of the study of the interpretation of the NATO expansion to the East by Russian mass media, political elites and public opinion undertaken in the frame of NATO Democratic Institution Fellowship Program. The end-text (end-product) consists of 120 pages in Russian language.

On my opinion the main result of the study is the detection of the *deep gap* between the positions of Russian politicians and officials on the one side and the attitudes of the general public regarding NATO expansion on the other side. Insofar as I know, the dominant impression of reviewers of Russian politics and public opinion in Russia as well as in the Western countries is the impression of the absolute unanimity of the Russian reactions to NATO expansion. This opinion is grounded not so much on the study of the real situation in Russia as on the extrapolation of the themes and methods of the traditional Russian discours centered on the problems "Russia and Europe", "Russia and the West". The interpretation of detected discrepancy inside the Russian politics and public life is given in the concluding chapter of the end-text and in the last section of the present final report. On the base of these findings I draw some recommendations concerning the future direction of informational and PR politics of the Alliance in Russia.

Besides that I have worked out during the period of the project the more or less elaborated conception of the difference between the expansionist ideologies, defining and directing the opinions and arguments of the Russian and Western parties in the modern Russia-NATO debates. That is the difference between traditional geopolitical mode of thought and

contemporary global approach. On the base of this conception one can draw the conclusion about the *assymetrical nature* of the last foundations of the corresponding discourses, the *heterogenity* of the rethoric and the *different potentiality* of both competeng ideologies. This conception is set forth in the chapter 1 of the end-text and shortly summarized in the second section of the present final report.

These two things (the detection of discrepancy in the Russian political and public life and the attempt to explain the nature of competing ideologies) are, on my opinion, the only finding with a good perspectives of further development.

The present two documents (end-product and final report) are only the small part of the total output produced under the roof of the project. During the fellowship time I took part in some scientific conferences, seminars and arrangements for general public in Russia and abroad (Germany, Swiss) where the following lectures have been held and reports have been made on the themes related or directly connected to the problematic of the project. Texts of the lectures and reports under # 3 and # 5 are incorporated into the end-text (end-product) of the fellowship.

1. Conference of Ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany, called by the German Foreign Ministry, Bonn, March 15, 1997. Theme of my report was "Foreign politics in the area of culture".
2. International conference "Römerberg Gespräche (Talks at Römerberg)", Frankfurt am Main, Germany, June 18, 1997. Theme of my lecture was "The Russia's Way - Eastwards or Westwards?"
3. Guest lecture at the East European Institute of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, May 6, 1997. Theme of the lecture: "Russian Geopolitical Thought and the Problem of NATO Extension to the East".
4. Discussion at Radio Hessen, Wiesbaden, Germany, March 1997, on the theme "NATO Osterweiterung (NATO Expansion to the East)". Other participants: Karsten Vogt, Member of Bundestag, former Chairman of the NATO Parlamentarian Assembly, Ernst-Otto Czempiel, Professor of Political Science from Frankfurt.
5. "Russian Views at the NATO Expansion". Lecture at the conference "Neue Russische Ideologien" (New Russian Ideologies) held in Berlin (Germany) by GSFP (Society for Social Research and Publicistic) on 17-18 of May, 1998.

Above that I have published during the fellowshps time in Russia and abroad following articles and essays related or directly connected with the theme of the project (article under # 4 is partly incorporated into the end-product):

1. Geopolitische Diskussionen in Russland. Zivilisationstheoretische und ethnosozilogische Grundlagen. (Geopolitical Discussions in Russia. Their Foundations in the Theory of

- Civilisations and Ethnosociology). In: Oswald I. u.a. (Hg.) Sozialwissenschaft in Russland. Bd. II. Deutsch-Russischer Monitoring II. Berlin: GSFP - Edition Berliner Debatte 1997, p. 205-229 (*in German*)
2. Allgemeine Rechte und Russische Partikularitäten (Universal Rights and Russian Particularities). In: Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch, Stuttgart, Germany, April 1997, p. 15-21 (*in German*)
 3. V teni imperii. Geopolitika v rossiyskoi nauke (In the Shadow of Empire. Geopolitical Themes in Russian Political Science). In: Leonid Ionin. Svoboda v SSSR. Stat'i i esse (Freedom in the USSR. Articles and Essays). Sankt Petersburg, p. 65-117, 1997 (*in Russian*).
 4. Konservativnaya geopolitika i progressivnaya globalistika (Conservative Geopolitics and Progressive Globalistics). In: Sociologicheskie issledovaniya (Sociological Research), 11, 1998, p. 34-44 (*in Russian*)

2. Historical view

The content of the corresponding chapter in the end-text: Russia and Europe: traditional views. Westerners and Slavophiles - two main traditional orientations in regard of the relations of Russia and Europe - Communist revolution of 1917 from the standpoint of East-West relations - The Communist time: two blocks strategy. NATO and Warsaw pact in the struggle of superpowers - Resurrection of the old contradiction (westerners-slavophiles) after the fall of the Soviet Union - Geopolitical stance in traditional and modern Russian politics and public discourse - The most influential paradigms in Russian international and security politics.

It seems to me, that the material of this part is relatively new and original from the point of view of western as well as russian audience. I pay special attention to the most modern theories and positions reflecting the nowadays situation in the relations of Atlantic countries and Russia. Generally speaking, there are two such positions: the Atlantistic one, which concentrate itself on the common grounds of Western and Russian cultures and histories, and so called Euroasian position accentuating the problems of Russian specifics in regard of cultural tradition and mentality as well as geopolitical situation and imperatives of security politics. The last one is position of Russia's selfdependence. The ideas of pure atlantists (as the typical speaker of this group can be called the former Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev) are not very popular at the time in Russia. In the end-text a detailed analysis of causes of unpopularity of the atlantist position can be found.

On the contrary, the Euroasian approach is deep rooted in the Russian historical tradition as well as in the heritage of Soviet mentality and in the very characteristic details of the modern social and psychological situation in Russia. The adherents of the Euroasian position (which is more salient in the academic thought and publicistic and therefore can exert more influence on the public opinion, although its influence is limited to the relatively closed political and academic circles) are not representing the point of view of the Russian public in general.

However it would be a grave mistake to look at the "euroasianists" as at the enemies of the West and the proponents of Russian isolationism. Euroasianism is very diversified stream of thought; one could roughly divide politically related euroasianists in two branches - hardliners, as, for example, the Chairmen of Russian Communist Party G. Zyuganov (details of the different parties positions on regard of NATO should be represented in the fourth chapter of the end-text), and soft or moderate euroasianists, who are ready to collaborate with the West and NATO countries, but retaining their own, i.e. Russia's, interests and priorities. Soft euroasianists with their balanced position in regard to Russian interests and Russian specifics, on the one side, and to global situation and general social and cultural trends, on the other side, rather than one-sided atlantists should be natural allies and collaborators of the West. This conclusion will be strongly discussed and substantiated in the corresponding chapter of the end-text.

3. Theoretical scheme

On the base of study of theoretical works of different authors of Russian and Western origins and on the base of my own previous historical and sociological knowledge was elaborated large-scale theoretical model of the explanation of the events in question (NATO expansion to the East), which produce a real alternative to the widespread in Russia geopolitical explanations. Its most salient point is the contrasting of two types of geopolitical or geostrategical discourses. The *first* one is traditional geopolitical thinking closely connected with conservative ideologies, especially in the traditional Russian and German thought (in Russia different Slavophilic tendencies in 19 century, the theory of social and cultural cycles of N.Danilevsky and N.Gumilyov, modern so called Euroasian doctrines of different kinds¹, in Germany - conservative thought of the 19th century (J. Moeser, A. Mueller and others, early versions of geopolitics, ideologies of the so called conservative revolution in the beginning of 20th century). With this tradition could be related some important movements of the modern Western thought, for example, the influential idea of the "clash of civilization" of S. Huntington. The core of his ideas could be localised as lying in the mainstream of the traditional geopolitical thought of the mixed German-Russian origin.

The second type of the modern geopolitical or geostrategical discourse have just nothing to do with traditional geopolitics. It is a part of the large-scaled "project of modernity", which presupposed at the last end the annihilation of particularities of social, national and individual differences and the universal domination of the abstracted view of man and society. There are two principal kinds of this view: the marxist one, represented in the idea of the forthcoming worldwide dominance of communism, whatever form can it take, and traditional liberal-

¹ V teni imperii. Geopoliticheskiye temy v rossiyskoi politologii (In the Shadow of Empire. Geopolitical Themes in Russian Political Science) In: Leonid Ionin. Svoboda v SSSR. Stat'i i ocherki (Freedom in the USSR. Articles and Essays

progressistic view with its idea of the universal dissemination of the human rights with all corresponding forms and types of political, social, economic and juridical organisation.

The main difference between the former and the latter is the difference between particularistic and universalistic views of human development. On the one side, traditional geopolitical thought would be impossible without the idea of the different qualities of conflicted states, societies and civilizations. The aim is the preservation and proliferation of the "own" specific quality. It should be impossible without the existence of the specific quality of the "other". This idea logically presupposes the coexistence of different civilizations and world-views (the another side of the coin is that this coexistence become inevitably the coexistence of different "fundamentalisms").

On the other side the communist as well as the liberal views, based on the idea of inevitable progress of history in the predestined direction, are intolerable according their inherent nature to the idea of preservation of particularities, needless to say about fundamentalization of social life².

Hence, the geopolitical approach, which make a foundation of the Russian reaction to the ideological, cultural and strageical expansion of the West, and the universalistic globalistic approach, practised by the Western side, are not *equipotential* ideologies. They have been equipotential at the time when Soviet Union have been exist. The periods of the cold war and so called peaceful coexistence were the periods of conflict of two simmetric and equipotential ideologies both having ambitions and well equipped for the achieving of world dominance. Now, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation have princilally changed. Russia of today, even with her so called imperial ambitions has nothing to do with the late Soviet Union. Russias existence nowadays lacks the motivated force of Soviet ideology, its geopolitical ambitions are not going farther as to preserve in any way the particular character of its life in the ongoing flux of globalization.

Therefore, the actual conflict of NATO and Russia concerning NATO expansion to the East is *assymetrical* conflict. This assimetry can not be reduced to the differences of economical situation or to the technological and military prevalence on the NATO side. The assimetry lies on the level of the corresponding ideological projects. On the side of Russia we have a *particularistic* project, a priory concentrated on the preservation of its specific quality (although not exluding limited expansionistic or even agresive movements, motivated for example by the idea of the unity of all slavic or all orthodox peoples). On the side of the Western alliance we have to do with *universalistic* project, a priory oriented to the aim of global domination, producing corresponding motivation and liberating great potential of ideological, cultural, economical energy.

² This idea was expounded in details in: Conservative Geopolitics and progressive Globalistics. In: Sociological Research, 11, 1998 (*in Russian*)

That is the schematical representation of the theoretical model elaborated for the analysis of the empirical data in the course of realisation of the project.

3. Mass media landscape and NATO expansion

The content of the corresponding chapter in the end-text: Russian mass media in the NATO expansion debate - Mass media landscape in Russian Federation: general characteristics - The biggest and most influential newspapers and magazines - Financial sources, editorial stuff, ideological orientations - Content analysis of main publications on the problem of NATO expansion. - Typical lexica and typical "pro" and "contra" arguments of rival parties in mass media - The change of attitudes to the problem during last years.

The modern Russian printed media can be divided into three groups. The first one is the group of journals and newspapers of the liberal-democratic orientation. To this group belong the big national daily newspapers "Commerzant" (The Commercial), "Segodnya" (Today), "Nezavisimaya gazeta" (The independent daily), "Izvestiya" (Messages), "Moskovskiye novosti" (Moscow News) and some others. They enjoy the high status in the national politics, exercise a high class journalism, have the hard financial foundation. The "Commerzant" is edited along with two weekly journals "Commerzant Money" (a financial weekly) and "Commerzant Power" (a political weekly) by a private holding "Commerzant Press".

"Segodnya" is a daily newspaper of the holding "Media Most", led by media magnate Vladimir Gusinskyi, to whom belong besides "Segodnya" three weekly journals, one national TV channel (NTV), two cable channels (NTV Plus and NTV Sport), radiostation "Echo of Moscow", a big national newspaper in Israel and some minor mass media enterprises.

The owner of "Nezavisimaya gazeta" is Logovaz financial group under the leadership of the supposedly richest man in Russia and nowadays active politician (the Executive Secretary of the CIS) Boris Berezovsky. Berezovsky plays the leading role at the first national TV channel ORT (Public Russian Television). Although the 51% of ORT shares belongs to the state, Russian government pursued by permanent financial problems practically abandoned its financial and political partaking in the affairs of ORT and handed the driving wheel to the second big shareholder Berezovskiy who exercises very strong influence on the politics of the channel.

These three (besides "Izvesti'a", "Moscow News" and some others) are the politically most influential national newspapers. But the problem is that their influence is concentrated in the narrow circle of the Moscow politicians and politically engaged population. Their editors and some leading journalists are permanently included in the list of 100 most influential personalities in Russia. But these newspapers received very weak response in the Russian province. According

the statistical figures in typical Russian big city with population about 500 000 people are distributed from 200 to 500 copies of 8 big national daily newspapers.

The second group is a series of newspaper of communist and nationalist orientation. The most noticeable among them are "Pravda", "Zavtra" (Tomorrow), "Sovetskaya Rossia (Soviet Russia)". The first and the last are the successors of the Soviet dailies of the same name. They are modest newspapers with limited financial possibilities, low rank journalism. They are not so much news-papers as propaganda-papers oriented to the low middle and low classes of population suffering under the really hard conditions of reforms and financial crisis. Although their critical points against ruling regime are clear and genuine, their circulation is very limited. They are caught in the magic circle: having ambitions of national newspapers they are deeply provincial and even archaic in style, because of all-Russian ambitions they have very limited access to provincial public, because the provincial journalism they have no perspective in the capital.

To the third group belong the thousands and thousands of regional and local daily and weekly newspapers, which can not be clearly defined politically in the terms of traditional classifications (liberal, democratic, socialist and so on). Regional and local media in Russia (as everywhere though) are deeply involved in the fourfold net of the permanent political, administrative, commercial and criminal struggle. In the contrast to the national media in Moscow, which are under permanent control of the powerful rivals and of central financial and law-enforcing agencies, sources of decision making, editorial politics and financial connections of the local printed media are opaque and impenetrable. Shortly speaking, the local media in Russia, born in the turmoil of perestroika and radical reforms, represent until now *terra incognita* for political analysts and political technologists. Nevertheless they are playing the role of uttermost newsmaker and propagandist for the great majority of Russian population.

Another important source of influence are electronic media. In contrast to the newspaper world central TV channels enjoy the higher rating as the local channels because of their technical level, financial funding and artistic quality. There are six national channels in Russia. The first one, ORT (Public Russian Television) - is a joint-stock company managed practically by Boris Berrezovski. The second channel, RTR (Russian Television and Radio) belongs to the Russian State and is under directorship of the high official appointed by the Government. The third channel, TV Center stands under the control of the group of powerful Moscow banks closely connected with one of the favourites of the future presidential race Moscow Major Yury Luzhkov. TV Center is well known as the Luzhkov's political mouthpiece. The fourth channel, NTV (Independent TV) belongs to holding "Media Most" of Vladimir Gusinskiy. Another two national channels (state owned "Kultura" and private TV 6) are producing mostly entertainment and educational programs and have no pronounced political profile.

Communist and nationalist parties and groups have practically no influence other TV channels. First, second and fourth channels express liberal-democratic views of their owners. The third, TV Center demonstrate the moderate patriotic overtones characteristic for the Moscow Major. The communists and their allies have no access to TV except in the news and ongoing political debate. But they have a good understanding of TV as a propaganda weapon: 79% of Russians obtain information about international development from television, 60% from radio and 33% from the press. The communist majority of the Parliament have undertaken many attempts to intercept the control over the major channels through organizing Supervising Councils from the representatives of the Parliament and leading intellectuals with the function of political and "moral" censorship. All the attempts failed.

The depiction of the features of Russian media landscape is important in view of the almost unanimous representation of the NATO-Russia debate on the NATO expansion in Russian media. In the Interim Report one and a half year ago I have wrote that all important newspapers, excluding the communist and nationalist publications, such as "Zavtra" and "Pravda", and some other nonsignificant papers, have taken for the time being then not pro-NATO, then at any rate sane and tolerant position, expressed in the practical detailed discussion of consequences of the expansion for Russia and for Europe in general.

An year and a half ago the balance of materials in the national newspapers and magazines was not on the side of NATO. At that time due to the large-scale arrangements, such as the undersigning by Foreign Minister Primakov of the agreement between NATO and Russia and the results of the Denver Summit of the Eight, the Russian media have come to the conclusion, that Russian President and Foreign Minister have carried on successful negotiations and the whole deal with the NATO expansion was arranged with the minimal possible loss for Russia. That is why the general attitudes were changed. The media newsmakers and analysts have switched themselves in regard of NATO-Russia situation up to (1) the debating of successful joining to the Club of Eight, that partly neutralize the negative influence of NATO decisions on the Russian public opinion, (2) the discussion of internal problems of NATO (financial problems, relation of NATO to European Council, problems between members of the Alliance and so on), (3) on the debating of the prospects of Russian politics regarding NATO and Europe for the next ten or twenty years. The more elaborated interpretation of the interrelations of themes and materials on NATO in the process of developing of the NATO initiatives are to be found in the end-text.

Before the NATO Summit were existed unclear points about the practical consequences of joining of the East European countries to NATO. Although it could not be a great surprise, the invitation of these countries to join the Alliance made at NATO Summit in Madrid in July have produced a kind of shock to the Russian media. They began to discover more and more flaws, defects and inconsistencies in NATO-Russian agreement.

I'd like here to sum up the arguments from the mass media debates about the agreement and about NATO expansion in general. Now we have to do with the paradoxal situation: the NATO-Russia Fundamental Act has been signed in Paris but the most important problems were not solved. Too much depends now upon good will of the Atlantic partners of Russia, but almost nothing from the mutual commitments of the parts of agreement. In May 1997 Russian expert A.Pushkov wrote about the unsolved problems of NATO-Russia relations in future³. His exposition could be seen as the summary of the opinions expressed by Russian media of very different political orientations. The NATO-Russia document doesn't contain the juridical guarantees against the deployment of the nuclear weapon on the territories of the new NATO members. The declarations of NATO officials on this theme were quite ambiguous: for example the former NATO General Secretary W.Klaas have promised to abstain from the stationing of nuclear weapon but found necessary the creation of the infrastructure for the nuclear weapon. In regard to the problem the Russian experts and politicians put the decisive question: could one interpret the statement of NATO highest official that NATO "have no intentions and plans" of deployment of nuclear weapon in East Europe as a clearly formulated obligation or as a depiction of the actual state of events which could be lightly changed in the course of time?

These and another questions were not answered in the NATO-Russia official documents signed in Paris. Russia had to sign this document in order to "save" its image of equal partner of the agreement; it had and has until now in its disposal practically no means diplomatically or otherwise to oppose the joining the East-European countries to the Alliance or to the potential expansion of the nuclear infrastructure or even deployment of the nuclear weapons at its border in Eastern Europe. From the side of NATO the politics of coordination its action with the Russian side was the politics of "soft blackmailing", as newspaper "Segodnya" ("Today") said. Russia have had no choice except to sign the agreement, which have not contained the real obligations from the side of NATO, preventing NATO from the actions which could be interpreted as directed against Russian security.

Now, after signing the NATO-Russia agreement in Paris (formulated rather as declaration of good intentions than as the obligatory document) and invitation of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic to join NATO it became clear that the document have not solved the previous problems but have originated new ones. Nobody have illusions regarding the perspective of ratification of this agreement by the Russian parliament. The parliamentary opposition, which consists from the left parties (communist, agrarians, "Narodovlastye" group) and enjoyed (together with nationalists of Zhirinovskii) the absolute majority in the State Duma, looks at the agreement as the certificate of high treason of the President. But even more dangerous seems to be the striving of left opposition to bound up the ratification of NATO-Russia agreement with the ratification of the SALT II.

³ Internationale Politik, 5, 1997 (Russian edition), p. 28-34

Not very inspiring is the fact that oppositional majority reflects the attitudes of the majority of the parliamentarians of the center and of the right wing too. Russian media formulated two main reasons to be uneasy and suspicious in regard to real intentions of NATO planners. In the middle of the year 1996 the Foreign Ministry of Russian Federation have published the excerpts from the official records of the negotiations of the leaders of the former Soviet Union (Gorbachov and Chervodnadze) with the leading politicians of western countries on the problems of European security in the years 1990-91. From these documents one can clearly see, that the Soviet leaders have received reiterated assertions, that after the removal of Berlin wall NATO will make no steps (literally "not an inch", as State Secretary Backer said) eastwards. The positive statements in the same spirit were made by Prime Minister John Major and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The main mistake of Soviet leaders consisted in that they trusted the words of their counterparts and haven't tried to get the juridical codification of the future relations between Russia and Western countries. That's the first reason why the Russian leaders are willing to achieve the formal agreement containing codified rules of behavior in military sphere and juridical formulations of mutual rights and obligations. The agreement signed in May 1997 doesn't contain such formulations; that's why the Russian political establishment, to say nothing about communist and nationalist opposition, are not very trustful to benevolent declarations of NATO politicians.

The another reason for Russia to be unsatisfied with NATO-Russia agreement is the practical experience of its realisation. NATO took the decisive part in many conflicts (former Yugoslavia, Iraq) and its action during these conflict were not coordinated with the Russian side. NATO is not sincerely disposed to take into account Russian interests and Russian position on the problems of European security. Not only opposition, but even the politicians which are friendly disposed to the Alliance, are absolutely sure now that the restrained attitude of NATO in regard to further expansion in the direction to the East (i.e. acquiring of Baltic republics and maybe of Ukraina) and the absence of positive reaction to the corresponding declaration of Baltic states are to be explained by tactic calculations and unwillingness to bother the Russian bear before the time comes. At the right time the proper steps would be done, if necessary, without turning head to Russia and taking into account its position.

5. NATO expansion in parliamentary and party politics

The content of the corresponding chapter in the end-text: The problem of NATO expansion in Russian party politics - The changing party landscape in RF. Results of parliamentary elections in December 1995 - Changes in the party landscape to the end of 1998 - Analysis of contents of parties manifests and declarations, of decisions of parties congresses, of speeches of the leaders - Positions of communist and other left-wing parties. The transformation of communists to national-

communists - Nationalist parties and groups) - Westernist liberal wing parties - The parliamentary activity of different parties concerning the problem of NATO expansion to the East. The integrated parliamentary decisions.

Parliamentary and party politics in regard of NATO was not self-dependent and have no strict profile during years 1992-96. Only communists and some connected with them little leftist and nationalist groups and fractions have hold the independent and consequent political direction based on the common for them general anti-western attitudes. For them the problem of NATO expansion were only one more example of the old hate of the West against Russia. Other parties have been playing a game according the rules prescribed by the President and showed no noticeable opposition with the exception of small tactical questions.

Partly it was due to the fact that parties and the Parliament were almost absolutely excluded from the process of decision making. Now then the process of NATO expansion have gone to far to be ignored and on the agenda stands the improvement and ratification of the agreement between Russia and NATO, the Duma having been controlled by communist, left wing and nationalist parties and groups is demonstrating a great activity and attempts to play the leading role in the process of consolidation of Russian political elites.

The Russian parliamentary system as it exists nowadays was born in 1993 when by the President Yeltsin's decree was dissolved the Soviet-style Supreme Soviet, peoples referendum voted for the new constitution and according that constitution was elected the new Parliament (State Duma). From the very beginning the majority of places in the Parliament was taken by the representatives of left-wing and nationalist parties and groups. The left parties had even more success at the parliamentary elections in 1995. Since that time communists and their allies have relatively stable majority in Duma, and although they have not in their disposal enough votes to make any of their suggestions to proceed automatically, they are strong enough to be able to reject any objectionable suggestion.

The majority of places in the Parliament belong to CPRF (Communist Party of Russian Federation) and its allies Agrarian Party and "Narodovlastie" group. To so called democratic opposition belongs the Yabloko (Apple) movement of Grigoriy Yavlinski, which votes sometimes together with left parties.

To the right wing can be counted the governmental party NDR (Our House - Russia) led by former Prime Minister Viktor Tchernomysdin and "Russian Regions" group. The second strong parliamentary fraction LDPR of Vladimir Zhirinovski is in the process of constant redefinition of its position; its members vote situationally and often join the side which can promise more benefits for their party and Zhirinovski personally. Nevertheless they are anticommunist in their fundamental attitude.

Such a distribution of places in the Parliament (one have take into account the strong party discipline in left-wing section, which prevented the voting not in accord with the decision of party leadership) leave for the government practically no chance to design clear and coherent reformist course. During all these years every urgently needed political and economical measures weres blocked by the communist majority and the formation of the reformist policies took place by means of the quite ambiguous mechanism of presidential decrees instead of fully legitimate prliamentary decisions.

All the more interesting that the problem of NATO expansion to the East have unified all parties and groups in the Parliament and created almost full consensus in Duma practically at the first time in its short history. In order to give organisational expression to this consensus some left-wing Duma members under leadership of Deputy Chairman of the Duma Sergei Baburin have initiated in February 1997 the organisation of the interfractional group "AntiNATO" with declared aims of consolidation of the Parliament against NATO expansion, information of Russian and international public about the dominance of antiNATO attitudes in Russian society, the initiating and support of the laws necessary for Russian and international security, the acceleration of the integration (including military) of the CIS countries. The AntiNATO declaration was signed by almost 300 Duma members including practically all members of communist and Zhirinovski fractions, almost all the agrarians and "Narodovlastie" members, about half of the members of the right-wing and centrist NDR and "Russian regions". Only Yavlinski's Yabloko group refused to join AntiNATO group.

Although that group have not demonstrated extraordinary activity inside and outside the Parliament it have made some successfull steps in the direction of consolidation of partliamentary and public opinion regarding NATO expansion. Not very typical, i.e. relatively moderate attitude of the representatives of this Duma "Resistance Committee" have been expressed in the text, prepared by the "Russian regions" parliamentary group. The analysists reveal the "play factor" in the NATO expansion debates: they are "attempts to inveigle Russia into play battles against virtual dangers in the informational space, against shadows and mirror reflections of real dangures"⁴.

One can formulate the main aims of this play. *First*, the western players are pursuing the aim to aggravate the relations between Russia and another CIS respubliks and to prevent the possibilities of any kind of integration. *Second*, they are trying to provoke Russia to enter into strategically unperspective alliances with the "pariahs" of Muslim world (Iraq, Libia and others). *Third*, they want to compell Russia to ratify the SALT II treaty, what would be a real loss for the Russian security. *Fourth* - last but not least - the hard position of NATO countries concerning expansion to the East have an aim to push Russia to the proclaimed by its enemies position of

⁴ Rasshirenje NATO. Antirossiyskaya igra (NATO expansion. Antirusian game). Moskva, 1997, p. 29

the sharp confrontation with the West. Last scenario could bring a series of deadly dangerous consequences.

(a) Russia will be compelled to take some necessary mobilisational and military economical measures which will instantly produce Russia's international isolation and marginalisation; the first reaction to these measures should be the end of the integration with Belorussia.

(b) The process will be accompanied by the sharp growth of custom and tariff barriers against the Russian wares and introduction of different export and import limitations, what leads automatically to the disappearance of Russia from the world markets.

(c) The new acquired image of Russia as the real danger should secure the consolidation of Europe against the enemy and unproblematic further expansion of NATO to the East up to Baltic states, Ukraina and other CIS republics.

(d) Inside Russian elites the old split along the line "westerners - slavophiles" will be resurrected lessening the possibilities of integration among the Russian elites and in the society in general.

(e) These processes will stimulate the whole system of the interregional and transregional splits and dissenses in Russia and provoke the explosion of national and regional separatisms beginning from Kaliningrad region, which have yet demonstrated its "european" strivings, up to autonomic republic of Caucasus.

(f) The deterioration of economic situation together with the regional and political dissenses will create in Russia very convenient situation for the application of the proved technologies of NATO of the kind of "special operations" executed yet in former Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries.

6. Position of Government and Foreign Ministry

The content of the corresponding chapter in the end-text: The fluctuations of governmental politics to the NATO expansion problem. Analysis of interest groups and power constellations in the ruling elites - Role of presidential administration - Structure and positions of secret services - The so called "force" ministries: defence ministry, ministry of internal affairs, federal security service. Their role in the state politics - The president as the decision-maker, his constitutional function - Positions of Foreign Ministry in regard to NATO - Positions of Defence Ministry and General Staff - Positions of different industrial lobbies in government and parliament).

The elaboration of the position regarding NATO, as the Russian foreign politics in general, is the exclusive prerogative of the President and his Foreign Minister. That is why it is too hard to find in the media direct expression of the positions of different groups in the government regarding our problem. In the end-text I review the problem proceeding from the objective

analysis of the structure of the governmental agencies, of the power constellations in these area and from the insiders information got from some interviews I have held with some persons close to government.

According the general opinion in the political circles especially in the circles close to government three or four years ago Russia have been able to win NATO expansion game, i.e. to prevent by diplomatic means the decision of the Alliance to expand itself to East European countries. The fatal role for Russia have played former Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who against the instructions of the President Yeltsyn and Prime Minister Tchernomyrdin have made many ungrounded concessions and have created the atmosphere of tolerance and even acceptability from the Russian side of very problematic at that time question of NATO expansion. In a certain sense Kozyrev's politic concerning NATO is interpreted as a continuation of irresponsible actions of the former USSR President Michail Gorbachov, who make a concessions in exchange to his own personal success in Western media and public opinion.

Actually this interpretation is an attempt to create the scapegoat in order to decline responsibility from the highest state officials. Of course, Kozyrev have established too close relations to his western counterparts and was not persistent enough in pursuing Russian interests. But this euphorical attitude was typical three or four years ago for many Russian officials during their excursions to the West. Even Prime Minister Chernomyrdin have said in spring 1996 in Washington that he personally "sees no danger for Russia in NATO expansion".

Another cause of Russian seemingly careless attitude to NATO expansion at those days could be found in the "antiimperial" position of many representative persons in Russian leadership. They thought that unconditioned surrender of Russia and even division of the country into pieces, some of them ripe enough to join the Alliance, would be a proper price for the rejection of the imperial mentality and joining to the family of democratic states. Kozyrev have been belonging to that group; among other members are named Chubais, Burbulis and others.

The situation have radically changed with the coming of Evgeniy Primakov to the office of Foreign Minister. Just his persistent, cosequential and relative conservative position, based on the conception of the national interests of Russia as a whole have led to consolidation among Russian political, administrative and business elites in regard to NATO expansion. The previous "antiimperialists" have changed their positions too; Anatoliy Chubais spoke at the Davos meeting in 1997 as a devoted defender of Russia's interests. In March 1998 some attempts have been undertaken from Western (artickles in "the Wall Street Journal") as well as from Russian side to dismiss Primakov and to change the political course; they turned to be unsuccessful. Due to the governmental crisis Primakov has got the office of Prime Minister.

The ascention of Primakov means the farther consolidation of the approach of Russian elite groups to the problem of NATO expansion to the East. Primakov himself is a living embodiment of this consensus. As the former Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service he can

secure for himself the support of different special services. He have got the unarguable authority among the academicians, diplomats and former Soviet high bureaucrats now representing new conservative (by no means communist!) wave in politics, business and administration after the failure of radical reformers of Gaidar and Chubais type.

The essence of Primakovs (and Russian) position in regard to NATO expansion is the principal non-agreement with the Alliance politics and at the same time openness and readiness to cooperate with the Alliance in order to minimize the possible negative consequences of this irresponsible and mistaken politics for Russia and for Europe in general. The positions of secret services, of General Staff and Defence Ministry (as it can be drawn from open sources) are the literal reproduction of the principal features of Primakov's stand.

7. Public opinion surveys

The content of the corresponding chapter in the end-text: Monitoring of public opinion research on the problem of NATO expansion to the East. - Results of questionnaire surveys in the years 1996-97.

The public opinion surveys in such research have their own specific value, because the media as well as parliamentary politicians, caught in their own political utopies, not so far reflect the state of the public mind, as express the political views and predelections of their editors, redacteurs and collaborators. They are making news in the literal sense of the word from their prejudices. This is another questions, if it is a general trait of all media or a specific Russian phenomena. I think it is in certain sense a malady of growth and acquiring the independence by Russian media. Is it right or false we have no another source of reliable information about the state of public mind exsept public opinion research. At the time of the designing of the project. I had an intension to carry on my own small-scale research, i.e. to include one or two questions on the problem of NATO expansion into some large questionnaires disseminated by large public opinion agencies and research centres. Unfortunately I have not succeeded. This area is fully commercialized and the modest financial possibilities of the project didn't allowed me to carry on the research of the kind. Because of it I have reduced my plans to the secondary analysis of the relatively scarce information aquired from the current publications of the following agencies: "Public opinion" Foundation, Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research and some others. The detailed research was made in the year 1997 by E. Bashkirova ("Romir" Public Opinion Centre) in the frame of NATO Democratic Institutions Fellowship Program. I shall not concentrate on her results here in the final report (you will find it in the end-text). Instead of it I'll try to make an interpretation of some data by the Public Opinion Foundation in Februar-March 1997 (Table 1)⁵.

⁵ Buletен' Fonda Obschestvennoe Mnenie (Bulletin of the Public Opinion Foundation), Moscow, Mai-June, 1997; Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 10.04.1997. According represatative sample were interviewed 1500 respondents in 56

Table 1

	December 1996	Februar 1997
Russia have to struggle against the NATO expansion to the East	31	29
Russia have to become NATO member state	22	19
Russia can let NATO to expand under condition of the cooperation with the Alliance	9	17
Russia have not to resist to NATO expansion	3	6
have no opinion	35	29

At the very first look the table shows the slight change of the public attitudes from the direct unconditional opposition to NATO expansion to the admissability of the neighbourhood with NATO and the possibility of cooperation. But at the second look we can observe even more important changes. *First*, lessening of the number of people who oppose the expansion is accompanied by the slight lessening of the admirers of the Alliance who are eager to see Russia among the NATO members. Although the changes in the firsts two lines are not very persuasive and stay in the borders of statistical bias, the figures in the third line (expansion in exchange to agreement) demonstrate significant growth. On my opinion it is the change from affectively conditioned direct resistance and direct agreement to more realistic and more rational position. The growing part of Russian population is coming to opinion that Russia have no possibilities to resist successfully to NATO expansion and at the same time it have no chance to instant change of status from loser to winner (i.e. to acquire a full membership in NATO).

Second, we can see the significant (6% against 3%) growth of people, who don't want Russia to resist NATO expansion. Both the people who think "positively" (fourth line) and think "realistically" in 1997 are recruited from the part of population which an year ago either actively resisted to NATO or had no definite opinion on the problem.

To sum up one can say that according the results of opinion survey in the period 1996-1997 (i.e. before fatal summer of 1997) the problem of NATO expansion in the growing measure became the problem of public interest and the public opinion. That period demonstrated the significant change of attitudes from negative (in regard to expansion) to realistic and positive. In the spring of 1997 almost the quarter of Russian population - 23% - got the position "let it go"

communities of urban and agricultural type from 29 autonomic republics and administrative regions of Russian Federation.

(under certain conditions or unconditionally) against 12% in the end of 1996. That is the unexpected result of active anti-NATO campaign in mass media during winter- spring 1996-97!

But even more important result of this research consist in the demonstration of the deep discrepancies between the attitudes of the general public and the position of government and the parliament. As one can conclude from previous sections of present text, the parliamentary groups and government officials express almost unanimously the sharp rejection of the NATO expansionist tendencies; this position does not reflect more complex and differentiated state of public opinion.

"Public Opinion" Foundation collected some data on the supposed motivation of politicians, who take the rejective position on the problem of NATO expansion. The question was: "Nowaday almost every politician in Russia expresses negative attitude towards NATO expansion to the East. How could you explain this attitude?" Answers were distributed as follows (Table 2)⁶.

Table 2

by the striving to defend Russia against the real military danger from the West	18
by the striving to lose the control of the former Russian allies	14
by the striving to catch the attention of population from sharp economical problems	14
by the striving to get more economical and financial help from western countries or to get more economical and financial help	13
by the striving to catch the attention of electorate, to win political "scores"	11
have no opinion	30

The data demonstrate that less than 1/5 (18%) of Russians percieve the resistance of the politicians and officials to NATO expansion as the striving to defend the country against the real danger. The majority of respondents evaluate the arguments of politicians as mere political rethoric (about 52%). The rethorical arguments can be evaluated positevely (for the benefits of Russia) and negatively (for own personal benefits of political players). Striving to preserve control and to get additional eonomocal help (lines 2 and 3) can be evaluated positively, striving "to take off the attention" or "to win political scores" (lines 5,6) can be evaluated rather negatively than positively. Being questioned about the motivation of politicians in their resisstance to NATO expansion almost 1/4 of resondents (24%) have given the answers that presupposed the negative evaluation. Although in regard to this answer one can speak only about implicate evaluation, one can not help but conclude, that more than the half of Russian population either have no opinion or have a negative opinion about the motives of politicians in their resistance to NATO expansion.

⁶ Data from February 8-9, 1997

But one have not to pay too much attention or to ascribe too much weight to these figures and to attempt to construct on them elaborated informational and political strategies. They reflect the typical for Russian public opinion today protest sentiments, which are the results of unsatisfactory economic condition and the deep rooted distrust against the power elites. The population evaluates its own perspectives very pessimistic. This can be illustrated by some figures from the same survey of "Public Opinion" Foundation (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3.

	How do you think, will the life in Russia after the Presidential Election change to better, to worse or will not change?	How do you evaluate the change in Russia after the elections?
	June 1996	February 1997
better	37	7
without change	33	32
worse	16	59
no opinion	13	2

Table 4

The percent of people who have expressed agreement with one of the following statements.

I've found my own place in today's life; I have now a better life as before reforms	8
I have adjusted myself to today's life and I live the same way as before reforms	23
I have not managed to adjust myself to today's life; I live now worse as before reforms	64
It's hard to answer	5

These data doesn't need expanded commentary. They reflect the background of the attitudes to NATO politics and of the evaluation of the motives of the members of Russian elites by the Russian population. Both attitudes are the product of the protest sentiments. Russian politicians have learned to manipulate these protest feelings. In the course of elections on the different levels (local, regional, parliamentary) it's enough for a candidate to demonstrate that the local elite tried to exclude him (or her) from the election race to secure his (her) victory. And vice versa: the massive support of authorities in most cases produce the negative reaction of electorate. The unexpected victory of Zhirinovskiy party at first Duma elections was result of protest voting. Since that victory the story of Zhirinovskiy is the story of decreasing influence. In a certain sense the positive relation of the Russian population toward NATO expansion can be explained as a reaction against the consensus achieved by Russian political elites. According the

above cited data (Table 1) the sharp growth of proNATO feelings among Russian population have coincided with the period of massive antiNATO propaganda in mass media preceding the important decisions in May and July 1997.

There is another argument against overevaluation of the positive attitudes of Russian population to the problem of NATO expansion. Drawing their conclusion about the state of public opinion and looking at the public opinion as the basis of policy construction sociologists and political planners are proceeding from the implicit assumption that the respondents are well-informed citizens. The findings of E.Bashkirova demonstrate clearly that the respondents are often ignorant concerning the substance of the questions. According her paper, in June 1997, i.e. at the moment of the sharpest debates about NATO expansion, only 33% of respondents stated that they were aware of the plans to expand NATO, and another 18% believed that they were "somewhat aware". In other words, only half of the Russian population were aware or somewhat aware about the subject of the opinion survey. Only 43% of interviewed heard at that moment that the Fundamental Act NATO-Russia was signed a month ago. 17% said they have not heard about it, while the remainder found it hard to answer⁷.

Even more surprising look the ideas of respondents about the states which should be the first to join the Alliance (Table 5⁸)

These finding make highly problematic the widely accepted appellations to public opinion as the last criteria of correct politics as well as the habit of contrasting the manipulative ideas of corrupted politicians and the simple and sane opinion of a man from the street.

Table 5

State	Share of respondents who think that this state should be the first to be admitted to NATO (%)
Latvia	24,5 - 24,7
Lithuania	24,2 - 25,1
Poland	24,1 - 18,4
Estonia	20,5 - 20,0
Czech Republic	17,3 - 9,5
Ukraine	13,4 - 10,5

⁷ Bashkiriva E. Democracy, Foreign Policy and Media in Russian Federation. Final Report for NATIP, Moscow, 1998, p. 12

⁸ Ibid., p.13. The first figure in the right column relates to the survey in June 1997, while the second one - to the survey in January 1997

Nethertheless, being compared with the data of the research of E. Bashkirova (the detailed comparison you can find in the end-text) the survey of "Public opinion" Foundation demonstrate the existense during the years 1996-97 of the stable tendence of growth among Russian population of the positive and realistic attitude toward NATO expansion to the East. Unfortunately I haven't in my disposal the newest results of public opinion surveys on the problem. I am afraid that there is no systematic research of the kind because after the joning of three East-European countries to NATO, the problem of NATO expansion lose its weight in Russian public debates until the time the next round of the expansion come.

8. Nonclusions and recommendations

Review and analitical account of the positions and arguments of Russian public opinion and of different types of decision makers in Russian politics regarding NATO expansion to the East reveals the next characteristic features:

(a) Contrary to the prevailing media reports Russian society is not essentially unified in the negative attitude regarding NATO expansion. On the one side we have to do with a relative consolidation of the Russian elites against expansion of the Alliance. This negative position is differently grounded in the different interpretations of the process but basically unified concerning the necessity of diplomatic resistance and of strengthening of military and economic potential of Russia at the face of possible farther expansion from the Western side.

On the other side there are relatively positive and realistic attitudes of the Russian population partly motivated by the ignorance about the real state of events and by protest sentiments directed against the opinion of authorities.

One can draw a conclusion about twofold dissent in Russian political and public life; first, the dissent between political class and general public, second, the dissent inside the general public itself: almost equal parts of the population (about 30-35 % on the each side) hold divergent opinions on the problem of NATO expansion. In the course of time preceding the Madrid Summit and the invitation of three East-European countries to join the Alliance these divergent attitudes have not undergone noticeable change.

(ñ) Nevertheless one can count on the significant opinion change, which can take place after during the next two or three years. On the previous stages of the process the sharpness of conflict was reinforced by the possibility (though imaginal) to achieve the change of NATO

expansionist plans or to negotiate the honored conditions for the Russian part. Now when all the sources of influence are exhausted and NATO movement to western borders of Russian Federation became the real fact, three important consequences of that fact for the Russian public opinion became obvious.

First: the drastic and general loss of interest to the problem of NATO expansion. Russian diplomacy continues its struggle against NATO actions in Serbia and against participation of NATO troops in conflict around Iraq, but for the officialdom as well as for general public the expansion of military infrastructure and the presence of NATO troops along the Russian borders is almost accomplished fact. Now it's the problem of specialized agencies and not of public interest. This loss of interest is confirmed by the decrease of the number of publications on the problem during last year.

Second: there is taking place the curious process of habituation of Russians to the possibility of existence under the circumstances, which in beforehand seemed to be impossible and even unthinkable. During the last ten years Russian population had experienced a series of shocks of the kind: collapse of the Soviet Union, transformation of the Soviet republics into independent states, loss of Sevastopol and Black Sea fleet, failure in Chechnya and so on. NATO expansion is of the same kind. The impossibility of influence dictates the necessity to adapt to the objective state of events. Russia has learned to lose, to suffer, to tolerate - new habits and skills for the former superpower.

Third: the achievement of NATO aims in Eastern Europe have opened the perspectives of its farther expansion. The Russian state now has no economical and military means of counteraction. The public opinion too: it became more fatalistic. For example, the joining of Ukraine or Moldova to NATO would not arouse a storm in the Russian public opinion or active political counteractions (it's another question if such an expansion is necessary or advisable for NATO itself).

Unfortunately there were no public opinion surveys on the problem of NATO expansion after the end of 1997. Since that time the problem practically disappeared from newspaper pages and sociologists' questionnaires. It proves once more the loss of interest to the problem and the growing of fatalism. From the objective point of view just now is the time for the Alliance to define its strategy and undertake some decisive strategical steps.

(d) The main problem at the time consists in the choice of strategy from the western side. Speaking generally there exist two strategical possibilities. The *first* one is the continuation of the strategy of *soft blackmailing* in regard of Russia. It's a high time now for this kind of action. First, Russia demonstrates its economical and military weakness and strongly depends on the economic help of western governments and international financial organisations. Second, Russia could be blamed to be the center and main source of criminal activity in Europe and partly in USA. Third, Russia can be shown to stand on the eve of the communist revanche and

resurrection of totalitarian state with all tragic consequences for all her neighbour-states and for her own population. (The second and third points are mythical constructs, but western mass media have prepared yet European and American public for the acceptance of very bad and even worse news from Russia). Fourth, western leaders have not to be loyal as earlier to President Yeltsin personally and to the reformist circles in general. The President demonstrate more and more the signs of political autism. and radical reformers have discredited themselves; to support these people and even to keep acquaintance with them is not good recommendation in the Russian (and not only Russian) politics.

Therefore it is high time now for the exercise of the politic of soft blackmailing of Russia i.e. for its isolation and creation of the new cordon sanitaire between Russia and Europe. It would be the continuation of the traditional western politics regarding Russia. The decisive flaw of this kind of action is that it inevitably reinforces the isolationistic attitudes inside of Russia and proves the truth of the communist and nationalist arguments of the critics of NATO expansion, as they were cited in sections 4 and 5. On the manner of self-fulfilling prophecy such actions can bring to the light of day the worst potentials of the modern Russian situation: perspective of militarisation, mobilisational economy, supression of the civil rights and coming back of the communist rulers of Russia.

On the Western side the continuation of the politics of soft blackmailing, i.e. the farther expansion eastwards without seriously taking into account Russian interests would mean the treason to the spirit of global democratic project (as it was formulated in the section 3 of this text) and the transition on the position of the archaic geopolitical thought. Among the practical consequences of this course of action could be humanitarian, demografhic and maybe military catastrophe on the giant Eurasian space and maybe the deep change of the geopolitical and geostrategical situation on the global scale.

The *second* strategical choice for the Alliance (and for the West in general) is the cooperative *reconstruction of North Eurasia*. This is the concept, borrowed from the works of social scientist D. Dragunski⁹. The idea of reconstruction consists in the transformation of Northern Eurasia into the integral part of the democratic industrial Northern "belt" of the globe. From this point of view the task of Western politics in regard to Russia corresponds to the principles and the spirit of the global progressistic ideology of the West in the contrast to conservative geopolitical implications of the poilitics of soft blackmailing.

It is not the place here to get into details of this politics. I only want to show the meaning of the choice of the NATO politics regarding Russia and to warn against the simple choice (blackmailing) wich looks very suggestive at the face of the obvious weakness of Russia today.

⁹ Dragunski D. Etnopoliticheskie protsessy na postsovetском prostranstve i rekonstruktsiya severnoy Evrazii (Ethnopolitical processes on the post-soviet space and reconstruction of Northern Eurasia) / Polis, 3, 1995

(e) Even the best politics presupposes two partners. Because of imperial and Soviet heritage and because of its complex situation today Russia is the hard partner and have to be treated very cautiously to be induced to cooperation. The first and, on my opinion, absolutely necessary steps in the direction of cooperative politics have to be the following:

first: the carrying out of systematic public opinion research combined with deep clinical interviews of the representatives of the different social and political groups, governmental agencies and parliament; this research have to give not the general abstract but deeply differentiated concrete picture of the views and opinions in Russia regarding the NATO expansion eastwards and the perspective of relations Russia's with NATO in European and Eurasian contexts;

second: the carrying out with active participation of Russian mass media and Russian and foreign PR agencies of the series of PR campaigns, oriented to the concrete groups and persons with the aim of change of the attitudes of key groups of population responsible for the policy formation in the area of interest.

These arrangements could be seen as the opening and organisation of the field for the exercise of the positive and cooperative politics of the Alliance regarding Russia.