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Russian Dispute around NATO expansion

Soviet leadership annihilated its conventional predominance in Central Europe and agreed to the German reunification only under condition that in future we'll live in "nonblock Europe" (European Charter, signed in Paris by all OSCE countries in November 1990). NATO's January 1994 decision to admit the new members to the Alliance produced vehement reaction in Russia, creating almost national consensus protesting Russia's treatment as still unwelcomed member of the Western Community of nations. Three opposing points of view have revealed itself.

1. *Democrats* point out that this kind of Western alienation will produce inside Russia a feeling that the West has lost all hopes for a new, friendly, democratic Russia and is going to create the new military vigilance measures. This Western posture may paralyse influence of the democratic, basically prowestern forces inside the country.

2. *Left-wing, all shades of communists* are interpreting NATO expansion as a sign of the Western desire to see Russia encircled semi-colony, exploited outcast, having no "say" in the most important councils.

3. *Patriotic* opposition is evaluating NATO eastward expansion from the geopolitic point of view. The West was waging Cold War not against Communism, but against Russia as a mighty counterbalance in Eurasia.

Aggravated situation put under question the ratification of START-II Treaty and opens a dangerous possibility of starting working schedule once again in the closed cities like Arzamas-16 and Cheliabinsk-70, producing nuclear warheads.

The optimal and realistic way out of this dangerous development could be only an open and official invitation, sent to Russia and inviting her into the ranks of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation while the power in Kremlin belongs to the prowestern political forces.