

**NATO'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND
UKRAINE**

by

Özlem Tür

*Middle East Technical Univesity,
Department of International Relations,
Ankara, Turkey*

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze NATO's relations with Russia and Ukraine since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Russia and Ukraine has developed close relations with NATO since 1991. Russia has pursued a pro-Western orientation in foreign policy and continued its close cooperation with the Alliance until the issue of NATO enlargement has been proposed, which Russia considers against its vital interests. Later, NATO's operation against Yugoslavia in March 1999 to end the conflict in Kosovo led to Russia's suspension of all relations with NATO. The main part of the problem on the Russian side seems to have psychological roots and lie in the difficulty in accepting that "history is being made, but not by Russia".¹ The negative response towards both the enlargement issue and the Yugoslav crisis should be seen from this perspective.

Ukraine on the other hand, as a self-declared neutral and non-bloc country cooperates closely with NATO, with the main drive to remedy its security concerns. In the process of state-building, Ukrainian policy was shaped with the desire to guarantee its independence, thus refraining from being left out of the security structures formed around her. With the slogan of embracing Europe at the beginning and later embarking on a more balanced foreign policy since 1994, Ukrainian relations with NATO should be seen from the perspective of security demands of a new state.

The first part of this paper focuses on the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the foreign policies of independent Russia and Ukraine. While talking about Russia, the pro-Western attitude of the Yeltsin government despite opposition and the positive environment for cooperation between NATO and Russia in the initial years of the post-Cold War is given attention. Ukraine's desire to be

a part of Europe under the Kravchuk regime is emphasized while at the same time talking about the nuclear issue and the persistent Ukrainian demands for security guarantees.

The second part of the paper talks about the 'adjustment period' in NATO after the end of the Cold War and the debate of NATO Enlargement. Having a chilling effect on relations with Russia, NATO's step to incorporate new members are studied. Negative Russian reactions and welcoming Ukrainian attitude is examined in this part of the paper. Special cooperation efforts with NATO materialized with the Founding Act signed with Russia and Charter on a Distinctive Partnership signed with Ukraine are the subjects of the following parts.

The last part of the paper focuses on the Yugoslav crisis and NATO's operation in Kosovo and how this affected the relations between the parties. Russia's suspension of all relations with NATO, as well as the negative responses from Ukraine are the main focus of the paper, followed by conclusions.

From Soviet Union to Independent Russia and Ukraine - the Foreign Policies of the Two Countries

Winds of change started to take hold of domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Union with the Gorbachev period. While implementing the *glasnost* and *perestroika* internally, a new policy and understanding towards the Western "controversies" was initiated. Remarkably on 7 December 1988, Gorbachev was already announcing at the United Nations that his country had intentions to undertake unilateral force reductions in Central Europe, marking the start of "change".

Decades long Soviet rejection of all transformation attempts in Eastern Europe has turned this area "from a safety zone to a zone of danger and instability" and this division of Europe has brought USSR in confrontation with all the Western powers.² Being aware of the transformation within the East European countries, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was saying that Soviet diplomacy towards the states of East and Central Europe "should undergo profound restructuring in essence, methods and style", while explaining to the Supreme Soviet that "new alternative forces are emerging on the political arena in some of these countries for the reason that this is what the people want."³ The way to resolve these

transformation efforts and the ongoing economic burden of sustaining the Union was “to end the division of Europe and for it, to end the division of Germany”. By the end of January 1990, Gorbachev was saying that “no one casts doubt about the German unification”. While the discussions as to whether the unified Germany should be in NATO or not and what its implications would be for the Soviet security and interests were continuing, Western assistance in convincing both Gorbachev and the Soviet public that a unified Germany should be free to remain in NATO was pressing. Against the criticisms and the proposals to the contrary, Gorbachev had to wait until his victory over conservative rival Yegor Ligachev and the NATO London Declaration of 6 July 1990, where both parties have agreed that neither would be the first to use force against the other, in order to announce his agreement to the surrender of all Soviet rights in Germany.

These changes were signifying the end of the Cold War, much before the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Raymond Garthoff, Cold War ended with the “fundamental change in the worldview of the Soviet Union which was brought by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev”, who is “willing to act within the lines of that changed perception”.⁴ In the initial stage of the end of their Cold War, it was thought that the Soviet Union would continue to act as an actor in the international arena. Preference of the United States and the West for a “democratic, voluntary union of Soviet Republics” was made clear in many instances, mainly because of the possible destabilising results of the breakup of the Soviet Union for the security and stability of the continent. According to Garthoff, even Yeltsin would have preferred to keep a voluntary union, so would the leaders of the five Central Asian Republics, mainly because of the fear of a cut in Russian financial assistance. The bloodless dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991,

making the twelve constituent republics of the USSR (three Baltic states having seceded in August- September) independent states, was an extraordinary development which took the world unprepared and surprised as to which step to take regarding the new situation.

Despite the drastic changes in the foreign policy of the country during Gorbachev, he could never completely abandon the notion that USSR and US were rivals. As expressed in his book, *Perestroika, New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, Gorbachev was saying that “economic, political and ideological competition between capitalist and socialist countries is inevitable”. However, it should be noted that Gorbachev did in fact revolutionize Soviet foreign policy by ending the antagonism whose roots went back to Lenin. Yeltsin went further than that. Building upon Gorbachev’s foreign policy achievements, Yeltsin sought to create a genuine partnership with the West and especially the United States. The initial foreign policy of Boris Yeltsin was unmistakably pro-Western. President Yeltsin during his speech to the US congress on 17 June 1992 said that: “In joining the world community, we wish to preserve our identity, our own image and history... At the same time Russia does not aspire to remake the world in its own image. It is the fundamental principle of the new Russia to ... share experience, moral values and emotional warmth, rather than to impose and curse.”⁵ The Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev expressed the new policy of Russia succinctly saying that: “The developed countries of the West are Russia’s natural allies.”⁶

Kozyrev told in his first article as Foreign Minister, in a pro-Western orientation that “the harsh Bolshevik experiment had crushed the individual and divided mankind for a long time and must be considered a ‘total failure’. But fortunately for Russia, in 1992, unlike 1917, “around us are the not states

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exhausted by war and bristling against each other, but a civilised international community which values human interests above all else and which is open to intercourse and cooperation".⁷ Kozyrev declared the aim of Russia as becoming a full member of the international community and to being viewed as a democratic, peace-loving state that threatens neither its own citizens nor other countries. Proceeding to specifics, Kozyrev indicated that "the chief priority for Russian diplomacy is to shape the Commonwealth of Independent States"(CIS), whose viability will be far stronger if linked by "natural ties" than by "the shackles of the totalitarian system, which virtually turned us all into prisoners of one huge Gulag." Accordingly, difficulties must be expected, but "we must simply learn to live as independent states and to look on one another as equal partners". With the explicit acceptance of the independence of the former union-republics of the Soviet Union, he called, in remarks directed as much toward west as toward CIS members, for patience and goodwill in coping with "the whole complex package of problems that attend the processes of gaining independence by all of us".⁸

One important consideration in pursuing a pro-Western policy by the Yeltsin government was the transformation of the economy and Russia's almost desperate need for assistance. Another was Yeltsin's desire for Western support against domestic reaction. Thus, he would rely on the political support from the United States in both the August 1991 and October 1993 crisis. The communists and the nationalists were generally against reforms and opposed harshly against the pro-Western policies of the regime. This can also be seen in Kozyrev's remarks, when he said that the democratic Russia's course toward rapprochement with the West was not yet the mentality of the entire society.⁹

When talking about the differences on foreign policy issues, existence of two main groups are mentioned in Russia. Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's position was named as the Atlanticists. According to the Atlanticist view, West's goodwill and support was crucial as well as the integration into Western civilisation and international institutions, for the success of Russia's reforms- both economic and democratic. Yeltsin government often emphasized that Russia has "painlessly" replaced the Soviet Union in the United Nations and its affiliated organisations, developed close ties to the G-7 nations, thus ensuring Russia's entry into the IMF and had moved relations with the United States "from the sphere of rapprochement to the sphere of friendly and in the future, allied relations".¹⁰

The opposition is called as the Eurasians, who contended that Russia should look south and east, not West. China, India and the Muslim world were more natural allies than Europe and the United States. Russia's political and economic interests were viewed as more connected to the Pacific rim and the Middle East. Among those countries Russia could be an ally, even a leader. With the West, they argued, Russia would never be more than a second-class citizen. There were even those who argued that the Yeltsin government was selling the country to the Americans. Of course, this division between the Atlanticists and the Eurasians is not definite and there are other views and moderates that would want to take the best of both worlds. However, this distinction between the two camps is quiet visible and useful for understanding the foreign policy discussions of that period.

Thus, against the allegations from the 'Eurasians', Kozyrev was saying:

"You can drive a tank in the wrong lane defying the traffic rules. But our choice is different: to progress according to the generally accepted rules. They were invented by the West, and I am a Westerner in this respect.... The West is rich, we need to be friends with it. But we will also maintain contact with the rest of the world with no preferences. Thus the allegations

about my pro-American orientation to the exclusion of everything else are rubbish".¹¹

In February 1992, draft of a document titled "On the Concept of Russian Foreign policy" was circulated in the offices of Russia. There was extensive debate over its contents and a month later Kozyrev have submitted a revision of the document to the Duma. The "Concept" document presented an optimistic view of global trends and of Russia's relationship with the United States and the rest of the world. It posited that the new Russian state was of "a democratic nature, and shared a common understanding of the basic values of world civilisation and commonality of interests in maintaining peace and security, that Russia does not take a priori view of any state as hostile nor as being friendly, but rather proceeds the desire to build maximally friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all". It also notes that it will not use force for any purpose other than defense. This document defined national interests as the achievement of a 'dynamic economy', 'concern for human rights', 'democracy' and 'integration into the world economy'.¹² The Foreign Policy Concept noted that "the West is ceasing to be a politico-military alliance in the traditional meaning of the word; it is becoming a world center for collectively regulating the world economy and international relations... Russia must resolutely embark on the road of promoting relations with the countries which might help it accomplish the top-priority tasks of its national revival, first of all with the economically powerful and technologically developed Western nations and newly industrialized countries in different regions."¹³ The views expressed in the Concept were rejected by Russian Parliamentarians, especially by the national-patriotic faction. Kozyrev was not surprised for the rejection of the document. Yeltsin government would continue to pursue a pro-Western foreign policy, until

1993-94 when Russia starts to pursue a more aggressive and assertive tone and problems start regarding NATO's new policy of enlargement.

In short, we can say that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has drawn its foreign policy orientation towards the West and Western institutions, despite opposition from the anti-reformist circles. The situation in Ukraine was not very different than that. President Leonid Kravchuk pursued a policy for the embracement with the West. "*Nasha meta: Evropa!*- Our goal: Europe" has been the slogan of Ukraine since independence, trying to build close ties with Western and Central Europe as well as the United States.¹⁴

According to Taras Kuzio, Ukrainian independence was accompanied with the qualifications of quasi-state and quasi- nation as a part of the Soviet heritage. Thus, the Ukrainian policy since 1991-92 is based "on the process of state and nation building, transforming the country from a quasi to a more developed modern state possessing positive sovereignty".¹⁵ Being a quasi state in a period of transition, the central characteristic of the Ukrainian policy has been its "search for security". Russia, as the successor state of the former USSR, from which Ukraine gained its independence, constitutes the "other" against which the Ukrainian national identity is being created since 1991. By some circles, Russia is still seen as having imperialist designs over Ukraine. Russia's refusal to treat Ukraine as an equal state and refusing to sign an inter-state treaty with it seemed to confirm their suspicions about Russian designs over Ukraine. Thus, some argue that it was this refusal of Russia to respect Ukrainian independence and signing an interstate treaty with it that pushed Ukraine into Western arms and to search security from the West with a desire to "return to Europe". However, despite Ukrainian pro-Western policy, West showed little attention to Ukraine and her security concerns at the

beginning. Western powers focused almost exclusively on Russia and gave preference to enhancing relations with Russia which further raised Ukrainian security concerns.¹⁶

In addition to the lack of Western interest at the beginning, the necessity to pursue close economic and political links with Russia- especially in energy matters- have made it difficult for Ukraine to realize a strict pro-Western orientation to the expense of its Eastern relations. The formula for this was seen in the principles of declared neutrality and non-bloc status which was announced in the declaration of independence, as early as 16 July 1990. It has given Ukraine the ability to resist Russian demands for political or military integration with the CIS, while enabling her to have close contacts with the Western security structures. Neutrality and non-bloc status seem to provide a “breathing space” and a window of opportunity for Ukraine. Policy makers often repeated that:

Our state requires the neutrality not just for the sake of it, but as a vehicle to achieve our main national interests: full real sovereignty and independence, the strengthening of statehood, the ensuring of our territorial integrity and the non-infringement of our borders, political stability and economic revival.¹⁷

Under Leonid Kravchuk, who served until 1994, Ukraine kept her non-bloc status, while seeking close cooperation with Europe and United States in her search for security.

At this point looking at the nuclear issue and the developments within this sphere in early 1990s is important and might help us to further understand the security concerns of the Ukrainian regime and its demands for recognition as an independent, sovereign state. Russia has retained Soviet Union’s status as a nuclear weapons state but Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan have also nuclear weapons

stationed on their territory which they inherited from the Soviets, although it is generally assumed that they lack the operational control to launch them.

On the policies of the nuclear disarmament, Yeltsin built upon the policies established by Gorbachev, notably the INF agreement in 1987, the CFE treaty of 1990 and the START I agreement in 1991. During the Washington Summit of June 1992, Yeltsin agreed with Bush to reduce strategic weapons well beyond the numbers specified in the 1991 START I Treaty. Under START I, United States and Soviet Union have already agreed to reduce their strategic nuclear inventory from 11,602 for the United States to 8,592 and from 10,877 to 6,940 for the Soviets. When the Soviet Union dissolved and Yeltsin took responsibility to continue the arms control negotiations, he quickly challenged the United States to even deeper cuts. In January 1992, he proposed reducing the nuclear warheads in long-range missiles to between 4,500 to 5,000 and signing the START II Treaty for such a reduction.

The fate of START II, however, became linked to the separate issue of Russia's relations with Ukraine. Before START II could be implemented (or even ratified) Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine had to agree to give up all the nuclear weapons they inherited from the USSR. Legally that entailed ratification of both the START I Treaty and the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) by the three newly endowed nuclear states. On May 23 1992, all three signed the Lisbon Protocol to the START Treaty, agreeing to ratify START I and become non-nuclear weapons states. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, however, failed to follow up on his commitment because of the nationalist sentiment at home. Particularly the Parliament did not want to give up the country's 1800 strategic nuclear warheads and wanted some guarantees. During 1992 and 1993, Kravchuk pressed both

Russia and the United States for security guarantees against military threats of blackmail. In addition to that, Ukraine sought substantial Western financial assistance to pay for the cost of dismantling its nuclear weapons and from Russia compensation for the value of the nuclear fuel.

Given Belarus's close attitude towards Moscow and Kazakhstan's low profile on nuclear weapons, Ukraine's uncooperative attitude towards nuclear disarmament has received widest attention, and has developed a source of tension. Peter van Ham notes that Ukraine has used the issue of nuclear weapons for three purposes: 1) to address its perceived insecurity; 2) for domestic reasons, particularly as a part of the nation-building process; 3) as bargaining chips to obtain economic, political and security guarantees from Russia and the West.¹⁸ Ukraine and Belarus officially declared their accession to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states in Alma Ata Agreement of December 1991. With the Minsk Agreement on Strategic Forces, it was agreed that the member states of the Commonwealth recognize the need for joint command of strategic forces for maintaining unified control of the nuclear weapons, and other types of weapons of mass destruction of the armed forces of the former USSR. Under these agreements, Ukraine would have to dismantle all its nuclear weapons by 1995, and transfer (an estimated) 3,000 tactical weapons to Russia by 1 July 1991. The removal of the latter category of weapons started without delay, but relations between Ukraine and Russia was deteriorating during this period because of their Black Sea Fleet disagreement. It nevertheless came as a surprise, when in mid-March 1992, President Kravchuk announced the suspension of the transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Russia. Kyiv declared that it was not fully assured that these weapons would be destroyed immediately, as had been agreed the previous December. Kravchuk proclaimed:

“We cannot guarantee that weapons transported to Russia will be destroyed or that they will not fall into undesirable hands... We want guarantees that they can't be used elsewhere. I don't want to make anybody else stronger.”¹⁹ Kyiv subsequently proposed building a new weapons dismantling facility in Ukraine itself. The removal of these tactical nuclear weapons only continued after a Russian-Ukrainian protocol regulating control over the destruction was signed, and by May 1992 all these weapons had been withdrawn from the Ukrainian territory. On 23 May 1992, the foreign ministers of the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed a legal supplement (protocol) to START I wherein the latter 3 countries promised to join the NPT “in the shortest possible time”. Moscow had made its final approval of START I contingent upon the ratification by Ukraine. Russia made it clear that until START I comes into force, it does not intend to ratify the START II treaty. By mid- 1992, it had become evident that Ukraine's nuclear ambiguity had major consequences for the global disarmament process as well as for European security.

Although these weapons have little practical military value, and have alienated the West, Kyiv considered that possession of nuclear weapons is a demonstration of Ukrainian independence. The main reason for this is the “search for security” motive in Ukrainian policy as argued above. Being in the period of nation-building, Ukraine wanted to maintain a secure environment by keeping its nuclear status. The words of Boris Tarasyuk, the deputy foreign minister and chairman of the National Committee for Disarmament Questions confirm this point:

In the event that Ukraine ratifies the START I treaty and accedes to the Nonproliferation Treaty as a nuclear state, the most important question for it will be national security. Ukraine is a young state which is going through a period of establishment of the main institutions of statehood, including the

Armed Forces. We cannot yet claim Ukraine has its own Armed Forces; they are at the stage of being reshaped and formed...In addition Ukraine is not a member of any military- political bloc... In this situation, the question of safeguarding national security arises especially when calls to change the borders can be heard and territorial claims are being made in neighbouring states... We also need guarantees as a state which has every right to be a nuclear state, as an equal legal successor of the USSR, but which itself wishes voluntarily to get rid of nuclear weapons.²⁰

Ukrainian side wants to rule out the possibility of an attack against Ukraine with nuclear or conventional weapons and to guarantee the recognition of its territorial integrity. The signing of the Trilateral Accord in January 1994 by the United States, Russian and Ukrainian presidents helped to attain some progress on the negotiations. The accord met Ukrainian demands for compensation for nuclear materials in the warheads and provided some security assurances, thus paving the way for Ukraine's accession to NPT in November 1994. Only after the security assurances were given, in December 1994, Ukraine deposited the instruments for the ratification of START I and the treaty entered into force.²¹

Kyiv was repeating that the only way to guarantee its security was to create an all-embracing European security system, and the elimination of the "security vacuum" that has developed in Central and Eastern Europe. When the issue of enlargement of NATO came to be discussed, Ukraine was a staunch supporter of the idea, which it thought would enhance its politico-military security and bring stability to her borders.

Developments Within NATO Regarding Its New Mission

With the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the threat against which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been founded disappeared. With the elimination of its

controversy, there was a search within NATO for a new mission, while in some circles its very existence was being questioned. What role NATO should play and how much power it should be delivered in the European security system was questioned and debated widely.

Britain had a strong voice for keeping NATO as the main organization for the security of the Continent. It was written in the British defense White Papers:

NATO is the only security organization with the military means to back up its security guarantees. It secures the vital link between Europe and North America: vital in political terms because of our shared values and common interests, and in military terms because no other European country or group of countries is likely to be able to field the intelligence capabilities, sophisticated firepower or strategic lift supplied by the United States. We believe that the Alliance remains the best vehicle through which to ensure that were a strategic threat to the United Kingdom to re-emerge, our interests could be defended.²²

Britain was joined by Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal, as well as Canada and the United States, and formed the “Atlanticist” group within the discussions. For the Atlanticists, the new security architecture of Europe should be based on NATO, rather than on the United Nations, Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) or some new organization. For the United States, keeping NATO would mean keeping its foot on Europe and to continue its economic, political and military interests with the security of the continent. NATO was seen as a vehicle for this end. On the other hand, France had advocated more of a European initiative for the security apparatus and wanted to see a stronger role given to the Western European Union (WEU). Atlanticists were also encouraging a stronger role for WEU but they saw it as the European pillar of security, which was embedded in NATO framework. France was joined by Belgium, Italy, Germany and Spain and formed the “Europeanist” group.

What came out of these discussions was the triumph of the Atlanticists. NATO was kept as the main security organization as the Cold War ended and its new mission was decided in November 1991 Rome Summit where NATO adopted its Strategic Concept. The Strategic Concept outlined a “broad approach to security based on dialogue, cooperation and maintenance of collective defence capability”.²³ The Concept foresaw cooperation with the new partners in Central and Eastern Europe as an integral part of the Alliance’s strategy. North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established within this understanding to “support for the steps being taken in these countries towards reform, to offer practical assistance to help them succeed in this difficult transition, to invite them to participate in appropriate Alliance forums and to extend to them Alliance’s experience and expertise in political, military, economic and scientific consultation and cooperation.”²⁴ Russia had reacted positively to the strategic concept and the formation of NACC. Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Vitaliy Churkin was saying that “hardly anyone could have imagined just five or six years ago even how radically the change in our relations would now be”, adding that the purpose of NACC, incorporating the NATO countries and those of the former Warsaw Pact, including all states of the CIS is “dialogue, but mainly, cleansing Europe of the legacy of the Cold War and eradicating the feeling of hostility and mistrust under conditions where stockpiles of arms and equipment persist on the continent”.²⁵ Ukraine also reacted positively and joined NACC immediately after its formation. As can be seen, initially there is a harmony of interests and good relationship between NATO on the one side and Russia and Ukraine on the other. Although problems between Russia and Ukraine continued, the pace of developments in cooperation efforts between the former controversies is striking. While Ukraine

maintained close relations, this honeymoon period with Russia will soon be over and problems will start especially with the “enlargement” issue.

NATO Enlargement

Russian government had assumed, perhaps naively, as they embarked on an unequivocally pro-Western course, that the end of the Cold-War would be the end of the NATO as well. The Russian side tried to avoid the idea of its former controversy gaining a redefined and strong role in the Euro-Atlantic security that might exclude Russian interests. What Russia wanted was a new security agenda in which it can play an active role. Russian Foreign Ministry expressed this view saying that: “provision of security in Europe and in East European region in particular, should be looked for along the path of creating and strengthening pan-European structures, and not at the expense of enlarging military-political unions”.²⁶ Things did not develop along Russian preferences, however. Generally the domestic politics of the United States is shown behind the formation of the policy of NATO enlargement. It is mentioned that the inability of the Clinton government to pass a health care bill in the fall of the 1993, and the continuous criticisms it received in foreign policy issues on Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia, made it look for a new foreign policy doctrine to enhance its staggering prestige. In a series of rapid-fire speeches, the Clinton Doctrine of Enlargement emerged: on 21 September, the National Security adviser Anthony Lake proclaimed the shift from containment to enlargement; and on 27 September, President Clinton added a universal dimension to the aims of enlargement. It was thought that the NATO enlargement would accomplish the tasks of assuring the continuity of NATO, with an enlarged role and mission and the continuation of the role of the United States

in Europe. It would provide a politically acceptable framework for German role in Central and Eastern Europe while at the same time satisfying the growing demands of the Poles and Czechs (supported by the large Polish-and Czech American domestic political constituencies) to be a part of the Alliance. Such an enlargement of NATO and the incorporation of the Eastern and Central European states would help boosting pro-Western, democratic and market societies in these countries, as well.²⁷

Russia's response to the proposed NATO expansion was negative. Although Yeltsin endorsed Poland's application to join NATO in a visit to Warsaw in the summer of 1993, he quickly reversed himself after the visit. Yet, at a press conference in Warsaw on 25 August 1993, Yeltsin said that NATO membership was the Pole's decision alone. He signed a statement with Polish President Lech Walesa that said:

The presidents touched on the matter of Poland's intention to join NATO. President L. Walesa set forth Poland's well-known position on this issue, which was met with understanding by President Yeltsin. In the long term, such a decision taken by a sovereign Poland in the interests of overall European integration does not go against the interests of other states, including the interests of Russia.²⁸

Russian newspapers gave the news of initial Russian approval of Polish accession to NATO, saying that Poland, "having gotten rid of its old, tiresome husband- the Soviet Union- is preparing for another marriage- with the North Atlantic Alliance... and Yeltsin blessed this marriage during his visit, obviously playing the role of "big brother" for the last time."²⁹ While Yeltsin was "blessing" this event, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was saying that Poland's joining NATO "smelled musty like mothballs".³⁰ The next day in Prague, when asked about Czechs joining NATO, Yeltsin said "Russia does not have the right to prevent a sovereign state from joining a European organization".³¹

In a response to Russian concession on the issue of Eastern European countries joining NATO, German Defense Minister and the NATO Secretary-General Manfred Woerner for the first time took up the enlargement argument and said that:

In my view, the time has come to open a more concrete perspective to those countries of Central and Eastern Europe which want to join NATO and which we may consider eligible for membership... Even if there are no immediate plans to enlarge NATO, such a move would increase the stability of the whole Europe and be in the interest of all nations, including Russia and Ukraine. I am happy that President Yeltsin also sees it this way. We intend to build bridges and not barriers. Nobody will be isolated.³²

However, soon after the visit Yeltsin joined those in his administration- particularly the military- in opposing NATO expansion with the concern that “Eastern Europe’s close ties with the West may end up isolating Russia”. To express his criticisms, Yeltsin sent a letter to Western capitals, arguing that “the enlargement would be illegal under the terms of the international deal leading to the German unification in 1990”.³³ Russian side hold the belief that the incorporation of a unified Germany into NATO precluded the possibility of further enlargement of the Alliance. Analyst Sergei Karaganov is noted to express such views when he said:

In 1990 we were told quite clearly by the West that the unification of Germany would not lead to NATO expansion. We did not demand written guarantees because in the euphoric atmosphere of the time it would have seemed indecent- like two girlfriends giving written promises not to seduce each other’s husbands.³⁴

The issue of whether such promises were made to Russia remains a controversy. However, Russian side keeps repeating that the promotion of NATO enlargement is an abandoning of promises made during the time of German unification, thus creating a “sense of betrayal” on the Russian side. It reopened

psychological, if not ideological, division which can only complicate the task of securing peace in Europe.

A report prepared by Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS), headed by Evgeii Primakov, in late November 1993 entitled "Prospects for the Expansion of NATO and Russia's Interests" summed up the government's objections against a proposed NATO expansion. It argued that NATO's expansion to the proximity of the Russian borders would occasion "a drastic revision of all defense concepts" because of the threats to Russia's vital interests. Among the specific consequences of NATO expansion would be a fundamental rethinking of Russia's defensive posture and a restructuring of the armed forces; Romania as a member of NATO would be encouraged to absorb Moldova; the Baltic states would seek admission if the Visegrad states were embraced. In sum, "if the countries of Central and Eastern Europe join that organization (NATO), the objective result will be the emergence of a barrier between Russia and the rest of the continent".³⁵ As an alternative to NATO admitting new members and expanding, Yeltsin proposed that "NATO and Moscow provide joint security guarantees for Eastern Europe"³⁶, an idea that appealed neither to NATO nor to its new potential members.

The Clinton administration's answer to the dilemma of Eastern Europe's quest for NATO membership and Russia's opposition was a plan known as the "Partnership for Peace" (PfP). First brought up at a meeting of NATO defense ministers in late October 1993, the PfP idea was in part designed to keep Russia from being isolated and to avoid strengthening the hardliners within Russia. At the same time, by holding out the promise of eventual membership for the former Warsaw Pact states, NATO sought to elevate Eastern European concerns. The proposal about PfP was received positively in Russia. During the discussion period

on its impact on Russia, it was perceived as being concordant with Russia's notions to construct a new European architecture, while at the same time concern persisted against "the drawing of demarcation lines between European countries and emergence of unequal security areas."³⁷ At a NATO summit meeting in Brussels on 10-11 January 1994, President Clinton formally proclaimed the Partnership for Peace (PfP) proposal, which held out the prospect for NATO membership for Central Europe, the Baltic states, and the republics of the Former Soviet Union, including Russia. At once an invitation to join in the evolutionary process of the "enlargement" of NATO, it was also a dampener of the expectations, leaving purposely vague the timing and procedure for admission. Foreign Minister Kozyrev generally supported the initiative, notwithstanding the findings published in late November 1993 by the Foreign Intelligence Service report. Moscow responded positively to PfP plan, not only because it undermined Eastern-Central Europe's pressure to join NATO, but additionally because it gave Russia an opportunity to influence the structure of European security. Public sentiment in Russia, however, understood well that PfP was designed to counter the fear of Russian aggression and its root was "anti-Russian". There was thus from the beginning an ambivalent attitude as to whether Russia itself should join the PfP and if it joined, what conditions should be linked to its participation. On the occasion of President Clinton's visit to Moscow in January 1994, Yeltsin strongly endorsed the PfP initiative. Several months later, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin advised US Defense Secretary William Perry that his country was prepared to join the PfP unconditionally. But there was a strong opposition within the Federal Assembly, Russia's parliament. Sergei Yushkenov, chairman of the Duma's Committee on Defense, expressed the widely held view that Russia should join the PfP only if

consideration was given to its special status, “the status of a nuclear power, the status of a state with a mighty potential”.³⁸ Doubts about the PfP were kindly rekindled by the military activity of NATO in Bosnia in the winter and spring of 1994. NATO military strikes were made without consulting Moscow, raising the deep-seated fear that Russia was not accorded the equal status to which it felt entitled. While the country debated whether or not to join the PfP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was pressing for a security arrangement for Europe that would downgrade NATO’s primary role. Russian Foreign Ministry was proposing an all embracing security framework “to construct a single pan-European space which would allow nobody to feel isolated rather than to fill in the vacuum of security in several European regions by increasing the closed blocs which is inherited from the past”.³⁹ For this aim, early in 1994, Foreign Minister Kozyrev pressed for a new concept. He proposed: “that the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) be transformed into an independent structure of military-political cooperation, but one that is closely linked to the CSCE”.⁴⁰ Under this proposal, the CSCE is assigned the role of coordinator of the efforts of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Western European Union and the CIS in the areas of strengthening stability and security, peacekeeping and protecting the rights of national minorities in Europe. In a word, NATO would be subordinated to CSCE (which later became OSCE).⁴¹ NATO refused to accept such a proposal and Russia was forced to look again to the PfP for whatever formal impact it might have on European security. On signing the PfP document in Brussels on 22 June 1994, Kozyrev was still repeating his proposals about an initiative that would involve treating the two former Cold War adversaries on an equal footing and that would provide NATO an opportunity to continue its adaptation to the “real needs of European security”; to change its

activities with those of the CSCE, which plays the key role in matters concerning European security and cooperation.⁴² On June 23, Kozyrev signed the same basic framework document as the other states joining the PfP. No special consideration was given to the Russians, though a protocol signed at the same time affirmed that NATO and Russia will prepare a wide-ranging individual program of partnership, that will comply with Russia's size, importance and potential".⁴³

The November 1994 elections in the United States resulted with the Republican victory in the Congress and brought a more critical stance towards Moscow. In particular, the Republican leadership was committed to NATO expansion, a position supported by the Clinton administration. While the United States had no timetable for expansion, it was determined that Russia would not be in a position to veto the admission of new members. In December, Russia's two foreign policy leaders shocked the West with an attack on NATO policy. At a meeting in Brussels before the NATO Council, Andrei Kozyrev gave a speech postponing Russian participation in the PfP. He gave the reason for such a move as "hasty and unwarranted expansion of the Alliance is not to Russia's liking."⁴⁴ This was followed by an equally harsh speech by Boris Yeltsin at the Budapest summit meeting of the CSCE. He repeated his idea of using CSCE rather than NATO as the foundation of a European security system. Pushing NATO up to Russia's borders, he said, risked plunging Europe into a "Cold Peace."⁴⁵ This hard-line rhetoric was in fact a part of a general shift to the right in Russian foreign policy.

At the same time, Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin was warning that the expansion of NATO will split Europe. Among Russian democrats who had seen NATO as an institution that was important for the promotion of stability in Europe,

developed a “sense of betrayal”. As for the ultranationalists, the anti-American Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, PFP is a threat to Russia and the evidence of “American expansionism in the Slav world”.⁴⁶ Critics go on saying that the Cold War may be over, but according to Georgii Arbatov, its legacy “remains a nest of dangerous mines on the path of Russian-American reconciliation”. For First Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin, PFP’s enlargement is a containment policy though “this time the target is not communism ... but Russia as a great state and even as a certain type of civilization that made a huge contribution to the evolution of the world culture”.⁴⁷ Andranik Migranian who is one of Yeltsin’s advisers, warned his countrymen against allowing Russia to be strategically isolated. “We must not ignore even the theoretical possibility of creation of a cordon sanitaire between Europe and Russia and the threat of excluding Russia from Europe.”⁴⁸ The more the Americans try to convince the Russians “of the inevitability of NATO’s eastward expansion”, the greater the tendency in Moscow, notes a Russian report on Russia-United States- NATO Seminar, to see in the PFP a conscious design “to isolate Russia and eliminate her from decision-making of key European issues”.⁴⁹

Among Russian officials and analysts the broad consensus opposing NATO’s expansion was further reinforced by the US-led NATO airstrikes against Bosnian Serb positions in August-September 1995. The demonstration of power brought the fighting to an end, leading to the Dayton accords and the de facto partition of Bosnia, but it also infuriated the Duma, which called for the reconsideration of the PFP, a unilateral withdrawal from the UN sanctions against Yugoslavia (Serbia) and the reassessment of Russia’s foreign policy options. A senior liberal figure in Duma is noted to say:

The massive air attacks on the Bosnian Serbs from the Summer of 1995 demonstrated that force, not patient negotiations, remained the principal

instrument of diplomacy and that Moscow's position was only taken into account so long as it did not contradict the line taken by the United States. In the eyes of the majority of Russians, the myth of the exclusively defensive nature of NATO was exploded.⁵⁰

The harsh criticism of the Russian side on enlargement will continue even after a Founding Act is signed between parties. It is a widely held view that the reason behind Russian opposition to NATO enlargement has psychological roots. Historically, NATO and the former Soviet Union viewed each other as enemies and that "this psychological mindset cannot be broken painlessly." Foreign Minister Kozyrev was saying that the Central and Eastern European countries "had never stopped being the subject of Russia's interests" and added that "Russia had cast aside its former imperialist policies but could not avoid the reality that it was the biggest state in the Eurasian region."⁵¹ James Sherr, a fellow for conflict Studies at Britain's Royal Military academy at Sandhurst, says that the problem of NATO expansion for Russians is as much psychological as geopolitical: "The Russians have discovered since 1992 that history is being made around their borders and around the borders of the Soviet Union, but it is not being made by them. And that is an extremely difficult reality for people who continue to think of themselves as a great power... to accept". Sherr added that it is difficult "to convince large circles of people in Russia that NATO enlargement is not conducted for geopolitical reasons..." He said many Russians see expansion as "part of a general Western policy designed to further weaken and enfeeble Russia and marginalize it not only from Europe, but from other strategic centers of the world."⁵²

Despite the initial opposition to NATO operations in Bosnian crisis, Russia and NATO cooperated closely in the implementation of the military aspects of the 1995 Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina, adding "a new dimension to the evolving NATO-Russia security partnership".⁵³ Beginning of the deployment of

Russian troops on 13 January 1996 in the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) and subsequently in the Stabilization force (SFOR), for the maintenance of peace and security of the region indicate that despite differences of opinion on some points, cooperation for the enhancement of stability of the region continued between the two parties, especially when Russian interests complied with it.

However, NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 will only help to accentuate Russian concerns and the severing of relations between Russia and NATO. These issues will be discussed below.

Ukraine and NATO Enlargement

Ukraine, unlike Russia welcomed the idea of NATO enlargement. President Kravchuk had never opposed to the expansion of the Alliance or the possibility of a future Ukrainian membership to NATO. This is reflected in his disdain for military cooperation with Eurasian structures such as the Tashkent CIS Collective Security Treaty, in favour of European security structures.

Kravchuk said that "the best guarantee to Ukraine's security would be membership to NATO".⁵⁴ Against those opposing the expansion of the alliance, in line with the Russian view; the reformists saw joining NATO as a part of Ukraine's "return to Europe" from which it was artificially torn from by communism and Russian imperialism. Reformists have named those opposed to expansion as carrying "vestiges of past ideological narrow-mindedness, also including deliberate attempts on the part of those forces to hamper Ukraine's admission to the circle of civilized states".⁵⁵ Thus, President Leonid Kravchuk had never opposed the expansion of NATO or even future membership of this military alliance.

Within this perspective, in February 1994, Ukraine became the first CIS country to enter the PfP. President Kravchuk repeated his support for an immediate Ukrainian membership to NATO and saw PfP as a step towards this aim. This policy of pro-Western orientation, had a change with the victory of allegedly 'pro-Russian' Leonid Kuchma in July 1994 elections. From the second half of 1994 onwards, Ukraine pursued a more balanced approach in foreign policy and some criticisms were raised against NATO enlargement and PfP. President Kuchma said that "Ukraine does not have any objections to NATO's eastward expansion but believes that it is necessary to respect Russia's interests at the same time. If we do not want Europe to be split into opposing camps again, we should not oppose Russia's interests."⁵⁶ But soon, the position of Kuchma moved towards a more Western context, approving NATO's policies. An important role in this change was given to the political and academic elite in Kyiv, supporting the pro-Western structures and standing against Eurasian security proposals. During Bill Clinton's visit to Ukraine in May 1995, this position became more visible as Kuchma said he believed NATO was the guarantor of stability in Europe, adding that any expansion should be evolutionary and "Ukrainian security should not be harmed by being left in a no man's land between two expanding blocs".⁵⁷ After joining PfP, Ukraine participated extensively in alliance activities taking part in military exercises within this context, under Kuchma regime. Ukraine has made significant contribution to the Implementation force (IFOR) in Bosnia and participated in Stabilization Force (SFOR) subsequently.

It is generally among the elite and the young people that NATO is more popular. At this point it will be interesting to look at the results of some polls conducted about Ukrainian public opinion on NATO. According to a survey made

among the elite by the Ukrainian Centre for Peace, Conversion and Conflict Studies, it can be said that the majority of Ukrainian elite support NATO enlargement. Only 2.4 per cent of the elite openly opposed the enlargement while 50 percent believed that it conformed to its interests. 58 percent of the respondents said that it expanded the zone of stability and cooperation in Europe, while 46.5 percent said that it served to halt Russian expansionism and 34.9 percent felt it led to greater integration into European structures. In another poll conducted among the elite in Winter 1997, none of the respondents wanted a military integration with the CIS, while 60 percent supported NATO membership and the remaining 40 percent wanted to maintain Ukraine's current neutrality and non-bloc status.⁵⁸ When opinion among other segments of the society is considered about NATO membership, the figures are not as favorable as among the elite. According to research conducted in December 1996 by Socis-Gallup and the Democratic Initiatives Fund, only 36 percent of the Ukrainians favor NATO membership, 19 percent says Ukraine should not become a member and 45 percent was undecided. Foreign Minister Udovenko was saying that "minds are penetrated by communist ideology which said that NATO was enemy No. 1. And now suddenly we say that NATO does not pose a threat to us. This is strongly challenged by a part of our society...".⁵⁹

It is generally noted that the worries about the role of Ukraine in the region revolve around the concern to be left as a buffer between two expanding blocs or to undermine relations with Russia. President Kuchma has announced that "We do not want Ukraine to become a buffer, because love from both sides can lead to squeezing. At the same time, I do not want Ukraine to be a bridge, because many will trample on her".⁶⁰ The balanced approach towards both the east and the west

will continue during this period, giving signs of a pro-Western attitude from time to another with the statements of Kuchma calling for the efforts to achieve integration in European and transatlantic structures a foreign policy priority.⁶¹ Relations will further be enhanced between Ukraine and NATO with the Charter to be signed in 1997, increasing the cooperation between the parties.

The NATO-Russia Founding Act

While Russian opposition against NATO enlargement was continuing, talks about a special agreement to be signed between NATO members and Russia was being prepared. The main reason behind such a special agreement with Russia is to ease the Russian worries about NATO enlargement before the accession of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic to the Alliance. It was in December 1996 that NATO made the offer for a special agreement to Russia, which Russian side accepted during the then Foreign Minister Primakov's visit in Brussels on 11 December. Drafts were being prepared by both sides and discussions were held about the content of the agreement. Russian side continuously repeated its demand that the agreement should be legally binding, thus giving Moscow the power of veto. Especially Russian concerns and demand for veto revolved around the key NATO decisions like the accession of new members and decreasing to a minimum the impact of such an enlargement like the stationing of troops and deployment of nuclear weapons to the territories of newly admitted members. Yeltsin kept repeating that the spread of nuclear weapons and NATO military arsenal to the territories of Eastern European countries would mean the creation of a 'cordon sanitaire' around Russia which is unacceptable. Yeltsin was reiterating the need for a legally binding agreement, adding that "such an agreement should include

guarantees that NATO's military infrastructure would not advance eastwards and that no foreign troops, conventional and nuclear weapons would be deployed beyond the territories where they are currently located".⁶² Against these demands NATO held a position that it will not place nuclear weapons to the territories of new members while holding back on the point that the agreement should be binding. NATO did not want to accept any limitations to its decision-making. The high level dialogue for the agreement did not change Russia's opposition to the NATO's enlargement plans. A month before the agreement was signed, the Russian then Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin had voiced opposition against NATO's eastward expansion describing it as "nearly the worst and the biggest error" since the end of the Cold War, also adding that the agreement to be signed should be binding to the maximum degree and should guarantee Russia's interests.⁶³

Despite all the difficulties in the wording of the document, it was finalized by mid-May 1997, before the Madrid Summit where NATO would decide which countries would become full fledged members of the Alliance in 1999. The main problem with the document was how binding it would be under international law. The proposal to call the document "Charter" was rejected by the Russian side saying that it downgraded its importance. The name "Treaty" proposed by Moscow was opposed by NATO saying that it would mean *de facto* acknowledgement of a Russian right of say with respect to internal alliance matters.⁶⁴ Agreement was reached on the term "Founding Act".

The Founding Act is composed of a preamble and four chapters. The NATO-Russia Founding Act starts with a preamble which says that "NATO and Russia do not consider each other as adversaries" and that "they share the goal

of overcoming the vestiges of earlier confrontation and competition and of strengthening mutual trust and cooperation".⁶⁵ The aim of building a "lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on principles of democracy and cooperative security" as well as "a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe, whole and free, to the benefit of all its people" is written as the main objectives of both parties.⁶⁶ The first chapter, titled as "Principles" is about the guiding lines on which future security should be based. The wish to "work together to contribute to the establishment in Europe of common and comprehensive security" is noted, with special emphasis on OSCE. Chapter II, lays down the mechanism for consultation and cooperation and when appropriate for joint decisions and joint action between the two parties, namely the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council. The objective of the Council is "to build increasing levels of trust, unity of purpose and habits of consultation and cooperation between NATO and Russia, in order to enhance each other's security and that of all nations in the Euro-Atlantic area and diminish the security of none".⁶⁷ It should be noted that the provisions of the Act do not provide NATO or Russia with rights of veto over the actions of the other.

The third chapter deals with the areas for consultation and cooperation between the parties on issues like the security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area, conflict prevention, joint operations, exchange of information, arms control issues, conversion of defense industries, combatting terrorism and drug trafficking. It is noted that other areas can be added by mutual agreement.

The fourth chapter deals with the political- military matters between the parties. It is in this part of the Act that Russia's concern over the expansion of NATO nuclear capabilities to the territories of the new member countries is addressed. It is said in the Act that the member states of NATO "have no intention,

no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy- and do not foresee any future need to do so".⁶⁸ In the Act, there is special emphasis on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), signed in 1990 and both parties' commitment to adapt it to new realities of post-Cold War period. An agreement on national ceilings for weapons and soldiers, which are to be reviewed in 2001 and at five year intervals thereafter is the goal of both parties. In addition to that, improvement of contacts between the military authorities on both sides that will lead to regulary scheduled dialogue on military matters, joint exercises and training is also an objective.

The NATO-Russia Founding Act is signed in Paris on 27 May 1997. Boris Yeltsin was saying during the signing of the document that "The Founding Act will protect Europe and the world from a new confrontation and will become the foundation for a new, fair and stable partnership, a partnership which takes into account the security interests of each and every signatory to this document".⁶⁹ Secretary General Javier Solana welcomed the document and the cooperation environment brought with it by saying that "The task is clear: to give life to this document by making full use of the newly created opportunities. The Atlantic Alliance, for its part, is determined to embark on a far-reaching partnership that will help to leave behind the divisions of Europe for good. This is not just a vision. This will be a practical guide to our policy as we step across the treshold of the new century".⁷⁰

Significant progress has been made between the parties for enhancing cooperation on both security and defense issues. NATO-Russia Joint Council, created under the Act has helped building a forum for a new dialogue and contacts

at different levels. However, all this cooperation efforts did not ease Russian concerns for the NATO enlargement and calls for the reconsideration of the issue continued even after the Act was signed. It is striking that on the same day NATO and Russia was signing the Founding Act, the Poles, Balts and Ukrainians were holding their first regional summit to demonstrate their support for each other in the process of joining NATO and Western security structures. Russia on the other hand kept calling all countries to alternatives other than NATO. Not attending the Madrid summit of 1997, where the three Eastern European Republics were invited to join NATO, Russia continued to search for alternative security structures with CIS members, thus continuing its relations with NATO and participating in NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council. Relations between the parties continued on a regular level, with enhanced forums for dialogue and consultation- opposition against NATO enlargement continuing- until the NATO operation in March 1999, to end the crisis in Kosovo.

Charter on a Distinctive Partnership Between NATO and Ukraine

Ukrainian leaders thought that they have exhausted every possible measure within the PfP framework to enhance their cooperation with NATO and the next step was the signing of a special agreement with the Alliance. The NATO part also thought that such an agreement would be a good opportunity to thank Ukraine for not opposing the enlargement process, as well as a good balancing approach after the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Ukrainian side, like Russia, wanted the agreement to be a legal and a binding one, thus guaranteeing Ukrainian security. Although the agreement did not become a “treaty” but remained as a charter, it can be regarded as a success for the Ukrainian foreign policy firstly because the Charter

recognized Ukraine as a “Central and Eastern European country”, realising the Ukrainian desire to be a part of Europe. Secondly, it left the enlargement door open for Ukraine, for a future application, and it addressed Ukrainian isolation, moving it closer to European military and political structures.⁷¹

The Charter on a Distinctive Partnership Between NATO and Ukraine, signed in Madrid on 9 July 1997, starts with a commitment on both sides to “further broaden and strengthen their cooperation and to develop a distinctive and effective partnership, which will promote further stability and common democratic values in Central and Eastern Europe.”⁷²

In the second part the parties lay down the commitment that they will base their relationship on the principles of international law and international instruments. The third part of the Charter deals with the areas for consultation and cooperation between the parties, covering the issues from “political and security related subjects” to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The fourth part, talks about “Practical Arrangements for Consultations and Cooperation between NATO and Ukraine” and proposes the formation of a NATO-Ukraine Commission to “assess broadly the implementation of the relationship, survey planning for the future, and suggest ways to improve or further develop cooperation between NATO and Ukraine”.⁷³ The last part talks about the cooperation between parties for a more secure Europe. The statement: “NATO allies will continue to support Ukrainian sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, democratic development, economic prosperity and its status as a non-nuclear weapon state, and the principle of inviolability of frontiers, as key factors of stability and security...”⁷⁴ is what Ukraine was looking for since its independence, thus relieving main worries about Ukrainian isolation and insecurity.

President Leonid Kuchma was saying on the day of the signing of the Charter that “Madrid 1997 will undoubtedly go down in history as a city where the dividing line left by the Cold War in the centre of Europe was eliminated”.⁷⁵ Secretary General Javier Solana was saying at the same time that “Today is a truly historic day in NATO-Ukraine relations. Today’s signing of the Charter between NATO and Ukraine is the beginning of a new era in our relations and a visible symbol of new Europe”.⁷⁶

The enhanced cooperation between the parties will continue, with some deterioration with the Yugoslav Crisis.

The Impact of the Yugoslav Crisis on Relations

NATO strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the end of March 1999 came as a shock to many Russians. Use of force by NATO, against a sovereign country without the sanction of the United Nations Security Council “devalued not only Russian veto right but also the former superpower’s actual international weight”.⁷⁷

Immediately after the air strikes against Serbia began, Russia suspended its participation in the Founding Act and the PfP, withdrew its military mission from Brussels, terminated talks on the establishment of NATO’s military mission in Moscow and ordered the NATO information representative in Moscow to leave the country. The Ministry of Defense told that it saw “no opportunity today to continue cooperation with NATO- the organization which committed an aggression, an organization which has destroyed agreements reached in a persistent joint search, as well as ruined those constructive foundations on which this cooperation was beginning to form”.⁷⁸ Defense Ministry was saying that:

NATO, as an organization that has committed an act of aggression and a crime, has no right today to be a part of a European security system. Europe

needs other institutions that will guarantee the security, firstly of all the states of Europe and secondly, that will not threaten... acts of aggression even outside of Europe.⁷⁹

Against such measures and criticisms by Russian side, NATO's Secretary General Javier Solana was talking about the Alliance's mission for Kosovo at a White House conference just before the Washington Summit as a necessity . He said:

if Europe is to enjoy a stable, democratic peace, it is essential that our values prevail in Kosovo and not those values of Milosevic... We will not be diverted from our objective and the objective is clear- the removal of Serb forces from Kosovo and ... an international force that will be able to ensure that the refugees- the people who are really suffering now- can go back to their country, to their homes, with security.⁸⁰

In another speech Solana invited Serbian people to work with NATO, saying that "Our quarrel , as I have said many times, is not with the Serbian people, but with the government of Milosevic". He said the Serb people "deserve an alternative, a vision of a democratic Serbia integrated under the scheme into the rest of Europe and enjoy the same benefits- cooperation and integration of the other countries in the region. We will offer them such an alternative".⁸¹

However, few people in Russia agree with Solana's ideas, that NATO took this action to stop a humanitarian catastrophe. On the contrary there is the idea that United States and NATO designed this attack to "divide and immobilize Yugoslavia as the last pillar of the post-war balance" and to increase its military presence in Balkans, "that will help to encircle Russia".⁸² Opinion polls of the time showed that 90 percent of the Russians opposed the bombing.⁸³ There were questions in Russian Duma as "who could guarantee that, if not Russia, someone close to Russia will not be punished in the same way." The verdict "Today they are bombing Yugoslavia but are aiming at Russia" is a widely held opinion at different levels of the society.⁸⁴

NATO's New Strategic Concept, adopted during the air-strikes did not help to alleviate the Russian concerns. For some years the need of NATO to adjust to new developments and future threats was being discussed in meetings. NATO's core function of collective defense against future threats like the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear threats from rouge states was given attention. Russia has told that it is concerned about some aspects of NATO's new strategic concept. Russian deputy foreign minister Yevgeni Gusev told that "it appeared that NATO wanted to expand its competence to embrace Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet space".⁸⁵ Gusev said Russia wanted the new NATO document to guarantee that NATO would act in compliance with international law. Russia also wanted a clear indication that the United Nations Security Council is primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security. He said: "We hope that the new strategic concept will be free of the vestiges of the cold war, and that the role of NATO will be rather political than military." He also said: "We hope the NATO Alliance would act in common European interests as an important element of the European security structure. We do not want a recurrence of confrontation with NATO."⁸⁶ On 26 April 1999, NATO approved the strategic concept issued in a communiqué in Washington and the NATO leaders agreed to expand the alliance's focus beyond members borders. The concept sets out a role for NATO in fighting ethnic conflicts such as Kosovo, battling terrorism and organised crime, and trying to prevent the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Clinton said: "For five years now, we have been working to build a new NATO prepared to deal with the security challenges of the new century. Today, we have reaffirmed our readiness, in appropriate circumstances, to address regional and ethnic conflicts beyond the territory of NATO members. I am

pleased that our strategic concept specifically endorses the actions, such as those are now undertaking in Kosovo.”⁸⁷

Russia sees that with the adoption of the New Strategic Concept, NATO will continue to embark on out of area operations like in Kosovo, without a Russian saying in the process. Seen from the prism of Chechnyan experience, where would NATO’s next operation take place raised questions in Russian public opinion.

On 11 June 1999, a surprise deployment of 200 Russian troops to Pristina Airport took NATO unprepared, but it also guaranteed the Russian place in the Kosovo operation. The costly involvement in Kosovo was justified by the Russian regime saying that they aim “to prevent NATO from unilaterally setting up a permanent military presence in the region; to protect the Serbs from Albanian ‘terrorists’ and watching the implementation of the UN resolution on Kosovo Liberation Army’s disarmament; and preservation of Yugoslavian territorial integrity”.⁸⁸

By the end of the NATO bombings, Russia supported the international demands for Serbian withdrawal thus playing an active role in this decisive move. Russian special envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin and US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott are both involved in the diplomatic efforts. Solana said: “we still have some differences with Russians, but we are making progress.” By August 1999, an opinion poll conducted in Russia was showing that there was an improvement in the attitude towards NATO. To the question “How do you think relations between NATO and Russia will develop after the Kosovo crisis, only 17 percent expected Cold war tensions, while 52 percent supported gradual normalization.”⁸⁹ Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said against the poll results saying

that “Russia should be and will be a part of the civilised world and in this context we will cooperate with NATO.”⁹⁰

Ukraine also reacted to the Yugoslav crisis in parallel lines with Russia. The Foreign Ministry’s statement as the air strikes began, voiced deep concern saying that “the use of military force against a sovereign state without the sanction of the UN Security Council is unacceptable”.⁹¹ There were even calls from the parliament that Kyiv should rearm with nuclear weapons in response to the NATO airstrikes but had failed to adopt a resolution for this.

Ukraine continuously repeated its demand to play a mediator role between the parties in the conflict and thus proposed a three stage peace plan for the settlement of the conflict on 15 April. However, NATO was not very interested about the mediation efforts of Ukraine, rather paying attention to Russian efforts by Viktor Chernomyrdin, as the special envoy to the conflict. Regarding this issue, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Tarasyuk was telling that “Ukraine does not want a monopoly on mediation”.⁹² Thus, there was a growing agreement and cooperation between Russia and Ukraine on the issue. James Sherr and Steven Main note two striking points in Ukrainian pronouncements from 20 April onwards: first is that “the Yugoslav conflict cannot be resolved without the participation of Russia” and the second that “the positions of Russia and Ukraine fully coincide”.⁹³

The Yugoslav crisis seem to open some new questions and concerns for the Kuchma government concerning European security. Seeing NATO as the guarantor of stability and security since independence, the Yugoslav crisis opened the question to what extent NATO was fulfilling that role by bombing a sovereign country. However, this concern seems to remain as a part of the past.

Conclusion

The main source of the problem between NATO and Russia during both the enlargement issue and the Yugoslav crisis was that Russia believed the promises it was given were not kept, and NATO's promises cannot be trusted. But, Russia cannot remain outside the security structures in Europe. As Robert Blackwill notes, "there is no problem in Europe that is not more manageable through Russian cooperation, and none that does not become more intractable if Moscow defines its interests in ways that oppose Western interests".⁹⁴

After the suspension of relations, it was in February 2000, that NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson has paid a visit to Moscow, in order to "improve relations and set back the differences encountered by the Kosovo crisis".⁹⁵ It was agreed during the meeting that the relationship should be restored to a normal level and issues for cooperation should be developed. With the election of Vladimir Putin as the President of Russia on 26 March 2000, the foreign policy priorities of the country seems to pay more emphasis on relations with CIS. On defense issues, Putin put attention to increasing the defense budget by 50 percent, saying that Russia cannot be a great state "without strong armed forces".⁹⁶ On relations with NATO, Putin repeated his thoughts saying that it is difficult to imagine NATO as an enemy, but Russia wants "equal and trusting relations with its partners. The sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states cannot be violated under the slogan of a so-called humanitarian intervention. ...Anyone who insults us is not long for this world".⁹⁷

During the 24 May 2000 NATO-Russia Council meeting, a positive environment in relations was witnessed, with Putin's answer to the question if Russia might become a member of NATO as "Why not? My position is the same.

But it is not on the current agenda". Lord Robertson said that it is necessary for misunderstandings to be cleared up between the two sides over NATO's strategic concept and Russia's new military doctrine, which he said has raised questions in the West especially over the provisions of strengthening the role of the nuclear weapons."⁹⁸ It was said by the Russian Foreign Ministry that it is not possible to expect that the relations between NATO and Russia will be as it was before the Yugoslav crisis. A new agenda of a program "of cooperation that would meet Russia's interests will be proposed". Accordingly, such a program will replace Russian participation in the PfP, which "cost considerable efforts and resources but failed to produce an effect"⁹⁹ Thus Russia wants to further relations within a new framework where Russia will have power over the relations, and will be able to have a say in the decisions of the Alliance. The close ties with CIS might give Russia more power in dealing with the West, having secured its ties with its Eastern neighbours and curbing the opposition from the Eurasians.

The proposal of President Putin to build up a joint European anti-missile defense system "together with Europe and NATO, that will enable us to avoid all problems linked to the imbalance of force and would allow a hundred percent guarantee for each individual European country with the support of our U.S. colleagues and partners"¹⁰⁰, was positively perceived by NATO. NATO official spokesman said that this is a sign that Moscow is willing to cooperate with international community "both on arms control and threat posed by weapons of mass destruction."¹⁰¹ This is another indication that Russia will not abstain itself from the security structures of Europe and will open ways for cooperation that is in its interests. This also shows that Russia wants to put forward its own points and

initiatives in its relations with NATO and be not only the party who complies with what it is given, but the one who proposes and leads.

Ukraine continues to further its cooperation with NATO and it seems that this relationship will gain more depth in the coming years. NATO's Secretary General Lord Robertson was saying during his visit to Kyiv in January 2000 that "a self-confident, democratic Ukraine is a strategic benefit for the whole of this continent. We share a common interest in making Ukraine strong, stable and secure".¹⁰²

Ukraine cannot remain neutral for long time. As early as 1997, Foreign Minister Henadii Udovenko was saying that "the current politics of neutrality become obsolete. Although we orient ourselves as nonaligned,... geopolitically, Ukraine cannot be a neutral state."¹⁰³ It seems that Ukraine will decide which path to follow soon, and most probably she will make her choice for the West. United States President Bill Clinton, speaking in Kyiv square on the 5th June 2000 was saying that "we reject the idea that the eastern border of Europe is the Western border of Ukraine... We can and we will keep the door to the trans-Atlantic community of democracies open to Ukraine". This was met with chanting "Long live NATO" by a group of people in the crowd he was addressing.¹⁰⁴ However, a pro-Western and integrationist policy by Ukraine is not an easy task, especially considering the Russian position. Russia would perceive a possible Ukrainian accession to NATO as an attack on her national interests and this might cause further problems in the process. Russia's repeated opposition to a new NATO enlargement that will take former Soviet Republics into its ranks must be kept in mind at this point. In case discussions with Ukraine for membership would start,

relations with Russia might again take a dramatic stance and lead to instability of the whole continent.

NOTES

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- ⁷ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "The Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy" in The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transition in Russia and the New States of Eurasia, Karen Dawisha (ed.), (New York: M.E Sharpe, 1997), p. 34
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- ³² Ibid
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