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## **The Issue of NATO Enlargement in Polish – Russian Relations** **(final report for NATO Fellowship , 2000-2001)**

### **Introduction**

The rapid changes which took place in Europe towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century affected all areas of international relations. Constructing a new security system, however, was undoubtedly one of the most sensitive questions. The profundity and speed of the processes inevitably aroused anxiety among all members of international society, and a sense of instability was all-pervasive. The old order built on two ideologically and politically antagonistic blocs - although not accepted by most Europeans, and rejected in the end even by the Soviet Union - at least allowed allies and enemies to be clearly demarcated, and national goals and tasks of organisations to be defined. In the new Europe, emerging after 1989, most elements of that bipolar order came into question – the borders and territorial integrity of states, international relations, the role and aims of international organisations, as well as the internal political, social and economic order of many countries. Simultaneously, fundamental processes on a global scale, stemming from the technological revolution and the development of the global economy, began to be seen as vital for all mankind, leading, as they did, to growing interdependence, to the increasing importance of global problems, and to the necessity for reforms in international organisations and foreign policy. The beginning of the '90s brought, on the one hand, hope for truly peaceful relationships at last, if not on a global at least on a European scale. This raised the prospect of multidimensional co-operation in pursuit of the common values of democracy, human rights, and sustainable and more equal economic development. On the other hand, the new decade brought fear stemming from the unpredictability inherent in so sudden and so novel a reality.

This complicated situation embraced Poland as well, which could now enjoy its “fresh”, full sovereignty and the possibility of an independent foreign policy, but was simultaneously challenged by fundamental questions – how to make its own borders safe against every threat, how to establish relationships with neighbours and other European

countries that served the cause of stable development, how to be strengthened, not weakened, by the opportunities stemming from pro-democratic and pro-market reforms.

The relationships on the western and eastern borders were among the key issues because they were a crucial element of security (broadly understood). The relationship with Germany, one of the most difficult and painful problems in the past, was resolved beyond expectations. Poland became convinced that in a country, defined through the ages as “an eternal enemy”, it now had an ally and a democratic, peaceful neighbour. At the same time it became possible to make a breakthrough in the most difficult field – human feelings; in spite of past tragedies, Polish society has accepted the idea of reconciliation and the policy of close co-operation with Germany.

The eastern border has definitely posed a more complicated challenge. Relationships with the Soviet Union, and from 1992 with Russia and other republics, were marked not only by painful memories about the past but above all by uncertainty about the present foreign policy and internal situation of these new states. Conversely, post-soviet countries had similar fears concerning their western neighbour. Poland was associated in the minds of Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarussia with expansion and oppression in the past, and potential (even if remote) threats in the future. Peoples from all these countries remember their collective wounds, though they do so from different perspectives. So, unquestionably, the fact that these fears and emotions have been replaced by dialogue (almost as quickly as in the case of Germany), and later by close co-operation, even called “strategic partnership” (in the case of Lithuania and Ukraine), or at least “good neighbourhood” (Belarus), can be treated as a success.

Russia has remained a separate question. It adjoins Poland only in the Kaliningrad region but nevertheless it was obviously the key problem in all considerations of security and Polish foreign policy in the East. The importance as well as the difficulty of establishing mutual relations in the new reality were shaped by various factors. It is not easy to order them in an unmistakable hierarchy of importance because they have played different roles in different spheres and periods. Undoubtedly, one unchangeable determinant is the disparity between the potentials of both states. Russia, in spite of its internal problems, is a big state with interests and ideas extending beyond its nearest neighbourhood and, because of its geographical location, beyond Europe. While the 1990s, notwithstanding the costs and problems of transition, were considered in Poland as opening new opportunities for the country, Russian society and politicians could, quite justifiably, see the transformation of their

state and its international environment in negative terms, compelling a complete rethinking of their foreign policy goals, and the methods of realising them.

These different views concerned also the increasing independence of the former Soviet republics from Moscow. These changes, which in Poland had to be seen as positive developments for national security, especially when the new states chose democracy and co-operation, in Russia were perceived as involving the disintegration and weakening of the state. Consequently, Polish-Russian relations have become also an aspect of broader Eastern relations.

This latter remark applies no less to relations with the West. Here the relationship between Poland and Russia was connected with the whole integration process and development of international organisations. The firm support of all political groups in Poland for membership of NATO and the EU defined the broader and fundamental context of Polish-Russian relations in the 90s.

In the contemporary world, economic factors are crucial in strengthening or weakening interstate relations; common interests in this field permit states to break free from old prejudices and establish long-term co-operation. In this regard, both countries should be interested in opening each to the other but their high levels of economic instability deter them from developing greater trade relations: both states search rather for partners who can offer bigger capital and modern technologies.

Also non-material, even highly subjective, factors play an important role in Polish-Russian relations, in the form of the doctrines shaping the foreign policy of both countries, the dominant views among political elites, and historical prejudices. Political strategies stem also from these factors, and because of them mutual relations can develop along a different pathway. In the case of Polish-Russian relations it is necessary to see two levels in this respect. The first one is not connected directly with either state and stems from perspectives on the wider international situation; the second one relates to common historical experiences, fears and hopes.

In the first context, the paths of Poland and Russia have frequently, though not always, been different. A belief in the real possibility of establishing a European and global order which would be built on a basis of co-operation, mutual understanding, common values and non-confrontation, was characteristic of most influential political groups in Poland. On the other hand, many Russian politicians held views typical of the realist approach, where international relations are seen as eternal competition and conflict, and in which a zero-sum game is the only possibility. Hence fear and distrust had to be included in policy. And such an

approach inevitably produced its mirror image outside: a sense of instability and doubts concerning the true intentions of this state. At the same time, that part of the Polish political elite which shared this dominant Russian perspective, and also did not believe in non-zero sum games, tended to see potential threats mainly in the East. Hence the situation in the doctrinal sphere has become doubly difficult. Such views led to strong reactions about sensitive matters, such as the strengthening of Polish relations with Lithuania and Ukraine, or the Eastern enlargement of NATO. Past memories were not likely to make this situation any easier. The period of communist domination, Stalinist crimes, and the areas of mutual relations which could not be solved, have stuck in the memory. Negative emotions, albeit restrained by the officially decreed friendship, have sometimes exploded, damaging both the positive elements of the past as well as the possibility of quickly establishing a good relationship grounded on new, common values. It is inevitable that these two nations will interpret parts of history differently. Although one should not exaggerate the importance of the human factor in mutual relations since it is usually secondary to objective conditions, in this case it has played an important role.

As mentioned earlier, the Polish-Russian relationship has been strongly related to the broader context of security, both on the bilateral level and on the multilateral one connected with relations within Central-East Europe, the activity of NATO and, to some extent, the EU. My analysis concerns only this latter aspect of relations between Moscow and Warsaw. The nineties, in each dimension of Polish-Russian relations, have brought rich enough materials for more than one book, so I use data connected with economic, social, cultural, political (non security) dimensions only as a background to the main issue. This report is in essence an outline of a larger study on the same topic which I am writing in Polish. So the chapters of this report mirror this larger elaboration, though their contents are reduced to the main data and thesis.

The first chapter describes briefly the process of NATO enlargement in the context of Polish-Russian relations. It contains three parts: firstly the schedule of NATO enlargement until 1999 with the characteristic features of particular periods (NACC, PfP, Madrid, Washington); secondly, the debate on the pros and cons of this step in the West with a focus on the Russia question; thirdly, the Russian position towards enlargement until 1999 and after. The Western literature on these questions is large, so I try only to order the main facts and arguments, and analyse them from the perspective of time. Hence this chapter summarizes both events and academic analyses of them.

The second chapter is focused on the security debate in Poland in the context of NATO and Russia, and on the consequences of this debate for Polish-Russian relations in the 90s and beyond. The first part describes the political situation in the region and the relations between Poland and Russia in the 1990s. The second part concentrates on debates in the Polish parliament (Sejm). I used here mainly primary sources such as reports of parliamentary debates (1989-2001), official statements and opinions of leading Polish and Russian politicians, state documents as well as data and articles from newspapers and journals related to official Polish-Russian meetings and agreements.

The third chapter considers the issue of NATO enlargement in the opinion of Polish and Russian society. The materials for this part came mainly from public opinion surveys from both countries (in full in the Polish version as well as from newspapers and journals where publicists participated in political debate).

The conclusions both summarise the past decade in Polish-Russian relations and also look ahead - how will the relationship unfold in the future, mainly in the context of security but also in other dimensions, at the dawn of a new century.

## Chapter I

### The process of NATO enlargement and Russia's position.

#### 1. NATO– Central Eastern Europe relations after 1989

The first signs of deep changes in the international environment in 1989 opened up new opportunities for European co-operation. The security question was obviously among the most important issues. A delegation from the Warsaw Pact participated in the meeting of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in October 1989 - the first time in the history of NATO. Countries of Eastern Europe began to establish formal diplomatic relations with NATO ( Poland in August 1990), officials exchanged visits (the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs – Krzysztof Skubiszewski was in Brussels, the Secretary of NATO Manfred Woerner was in Warsaw in the same year. Observer status at the North Atlantic Assembly was given to parliamentarians from Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Soviet Union (November 1990). 1991 brought the final breakdown of the old order: the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union became a fact. <sup>1</sup> In October 1991 the presidents of three Central European states, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, declared during their meeting in Krakow that their countries were interested in membership of NATO. From this moment, the so called Visegrad Group unreservedly upheld this commitment.

NATO responded to this enthusiasm carefully, stressing that Eastern European security should be built on the foundations of the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), and that the Central European zone should base its security on co-operation within the Visegrad Group. External relations with NATO were established in the form of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) – a forum for dialogue and collaboration with Central Eastern Europe (December 1991). <sup>2</sup> This situation lasted through 1992, but the next year signalled new opportunities, especially for the four Visegrad states (Czechoslovakia now having divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia). The countries of Eastern Europe began to be formally accepted as allies during possible peacekeeping operations and participated in troop manoeuvres ( “Baltops 93”). However, this dance was conducted in the style of one step forward, two steps back. NATO considered different variants like extending

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<sup>1</sup> NATO in the 90s., in Polish literature, see: Kupiecki R, *Od Londynu do Waszyngtonu. NATO w latach dziewięćdziesiątych*, Stowarzyszenie „Szkoła Liderów”, Wyd. Askon, Warszawa 1998

<sup>2</sup> For a very interesting analysis of why “dialogue” has become a central feature of NATO and should ( in intention ) replace enlargement, as well how intersubjective discourse let NATO to be entangled in its promises: Fierke K.M, *Dialogues of Maneuver and Entanglement: NATO, Russia, and the CEECs*, Millennium: Journal of International Studies, vol. 28, No 1 (1999), p. 27-52 .

the waiting period for membership, without any commitment by NATO to an exact time schedule, excluding former Soviet republics from this process, and offering earlier admission to WEU membership. This hesitation stemmed from many factors, including the absence of any clear idea of how the new security order should be created, what kind of role NATO should play, fears about the instability which the new countries could bring into Western Europe, and the problem of cost.<sup>3</sup> But among these reasons, the question of Russia, its role in the new security landscape, and its possible reaction to NATO expansion rapidly emerged as the most important.<sup>4</sup>

In September 1993 Boris Yeltsin sent a letter to the leaders of the USA, Great Britain, France and Germany in which he warned that Russia might see an enlargement of NATO as a threat to its national security. This statement clarified the situation after his visit to Warsaw in July and his unexpected acceptance of Polish membership of NATO.<sup>5</sup> In this situation the states of NATO decided to offer a new project of military co-operation which gained some time, gave Russia a sense of participation in building the new security order, and the candidates a substitute for the alliance. This idea of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) was introduced to Central-East European (CEE) countries in January 1994 and was accepted, though all governments were aware that it was only a substitute without real value for national security. After signing the documents of agreement in February, Poland was the first state to present an individual programme for PfP in July. In October, the United States Congress empowered the President to pursue enlargement with Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary (Brown's amendment). And in December NATO foreign and defence ministers stated that the alliance was ready to admit new members. But it was clearly evident that only the Visegrad group was being given serious consideration.

*The Study on NATO Enlargement*<sup>6</sup>, presented in the autumn of 1995, set out the criteria for enlargement among potential new members: a democratic political system (both constitutional and in real political terms); a free-market economy; a solution of minority problems; open borders; civil control of the military; capacity for full participation in NATO;

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<sup>3</sup> See : Eyal J, NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of Decision, *International Affairs*, vol. 73 (1997), afl. 4, p. 695-719

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. discussion of the role of Russia in the security system, Tiller H, Sicherheit in Europa. Die außen – und sicherheitspolitische Rolle der Russischen Föderation in einem veränderten Europa, teilen I-II, Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Köln, October 1994; Weiss G, Die Modernisierung der Europäischen Sicherheit und das Russische Problem, Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Köln, 61/ 1995; Vogel H (ed.), Russland als Partner der europäischen Politik, Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Köln, 8/1996.

<sup>5</sup> More detail about Russia and NATO is given in part 3 of this chapter

<sup>6</sup> Study on NATO Enlargement, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, September 1995.

ability to share the costs of enlargement. Fulfilment by candidates of these conditions would reassure the 16 existing members that enlargement would not decrease the existing coherence in NATO, and that its efficiency would not be diminished. But arguably a central element in efficient operations would be the ability to station US troops and nuclear weapons on the territory of the new members, and here again the position of Russia (consistently against expansion of NATO to its borders) played a crucial role. This was apparent during all the discussions in the North Atlantic Assembly from 1995 to 1997, in which delegations from the CEE countries also participated. The question of Russian opposition was considered many times, and even dominated the debates. Delegates from Western countries, particularly Great Britain, stressed that the enlargement process should be slow, and the Russian position taken carefully into account. The statements of some Polish politicians welcoming nuclear weapons on Polish territory were criticised.<sup>7</sup>

In October 1996, President Clinton in a speech in Detroit mentioned a possible date for enlargement, expressing his hope that the first countries could become members by 1999.<sup>8</sup> Candidate countries wanted to be certain that this membership was not “second class”, and such a promise was given in the spring of 1997. NATO foreign ministers, at a meeting in May 1997, established a new forum for all countries participating in the PfP: the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), and gave further consideration to the possible membership of Slovenia and Rumania in the first wave. This latter question was solved definitively by the American administration which in June accepted only three countries from the Visegrad Group: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. In July, at the Madrid summit, these states were officially invited for negotiations.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously a “Charter” between NATO and Ukraine was signed. Earlier NATO also made a concession towards Russia with the establishment in May of the Founding Act.<sup>10</sup> This document, though politically obligatory, was not a treaty according to international law, as Russia had originally wanted. But it created the NATO-Russia Council for permanent consultation, and NATO

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<sup>7</sup> See Karpinski R, Rudkowski D, Zgromadzenie Polnocnoatlantyckie/ Zgromadzenie Parlamentarne NATO i udział Polski w jego pracach 1995-1998, Biuletyn Informacyjny No 2/1999, Kancelaria Sejmu, p. 23-27; for more about enlargement and Great Britain see also: Sharp Jane M.O, Reassuring Central Europe, in: Sharp Jane M.O, (ed.) About Turn, Forward March with Europe. New Directions for Defence and Security Policy, IPPR/Rivers Oram Press, London:1996, p. 141-161.

<sup>8</sup> For the American point of view see: Goldgeier J.M, Not Whether But When. The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO, Brookings Institution Press, Washington 1999

<sup>9</sup> Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Co-operation, in: SIPRI Yearbook 1998. Armaments, Disarmament and International Security, Oxford University Press 1998, p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> Founding Act of Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security Between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation, in: : SIPRI Yearbook 1998...., p. 168-173. See also, Muellerson R, NATO Enlargement and the NATO-Russian Founding Act: the interplay of law and politics, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly, vol. 47 (1998), afl. 1, p. 192-204.

repeated that it had no intention of deploying nuclear weapons on the territory of new members. This decision built three pillars within NATO: the North Atlantic Council, the NATO-Russia Council and the EAPC.

In March 1999 the admission of new members became a fact. Officially enlargement occurred during the celebrations of NATO's 50th anniversary in April. The Kosovo war gave this act a special atmosphere: Russia rejected an invitation to this Washington summit and relations between the enlarged NATO and Moscow were cooler for some months. The 'rejected' countries were assured that the admission process would continue but without any promises concerning the stages of this process or the time schedule. The Washington Summit Communiqué from April 1999 contained some statements directed towards Russia. "We remain firmly committed to our partnership with Russia under the NATO-Russia Founding Act", it said, and went on "NATO and Russia have a common objective in strengthening security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic Area. Throughout the Kosovo crisis, NATO and Russia have shared the common goals of the international community: to halt the violence, to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, and to create the conditions for a political solution. These goals remain valid(...). Close relations between NATO and Russia are of great importance to stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Since the conclusions of the Founding Act in May 1997, considerable and encouraging progress has been made in intensifying consultation and cooperation with Russia. (...)".<sup>11</sup> And this motif about the necessity of further, deeper cooperation was repeated by NATO's leaders, Javier Solana and George Robertson during the next few months.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. The enlargement debate in the West

The whole process of NATO enlargement in the nineties was strictly connected with the broader question of the new vision of European security. So the debates on the advantages and disadvantages of such a step took into consideration possible alternatives (of varying probabilities). These included the idea of a "single-community solution" created from the Atlantic to the Urals;<sup>13</sup> "collective security" established on the basis of a transformed

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<sup>11</sup> Washington Summit Communiqué, issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council on 24 April 1999, p. 26,27

<sup>12</sup> See: *Atlantic News*, No 3156, 17 XI 1999, p.1; *NATO Review*, No 4 Winter 1999, p. 1; *Atlantic News*, No 3149, 22 Oct. 1999, p.1; Solana J, Nato's Future, *Army&Defence Quarterly Journal*, Summer 1999, p. 144-145.

<sup>13</sup> Reychler L, A Pan-European Security Community: Utopia or Realistic Perspective?, in: L.Reychler (ed.) , *Vredesonderveken Internationale Conflictbeheersing* ,Leuven: Centrum voor Vredesonderzoek, 1992.

OSCE; an “institutional web” of many organizations concerned with multidimensional security. The first was unrealistic, the second was supported by all of Central Eastern Europe after 1989 but two years later was abandoned by most of the countries of this region as too weak a form of security in favour of membership of NATO. (So only Russia tried to keep such an option open); the third was (and is) most popular because it keeps existing institutions, among them NATO, alive; it offers also alternatives for other countries and builds ties on various levels and in diverse fields – not only military security.<sup>14</sup> For example Ole Waever presented such a compact system in the shape of an isosceles triangle, whose three sides are NATO, the EU and the OSCE, responsible respectively for military questions, the politico-economic order, and drawing up rules and supervising observance of them. Other institutions would exist, among them: the WEU between NATO and the EU; the PfP, the NATO-Russia Agreement and the European Council of Partnership between NATO and OSCE; the Stability Pact in Europe, and the EBRD between the EU and OSCE.<sup>15</sup> Some authors, sceptical about the necessity of NATO enlargement, though not precluding this step, argued that a comprehensive cooperative-collective security regime (with NATO, EU/WEU, and Russian security guarantees) should be implemented prior to the proposed enlargement.<sup>16</sup>

Richard Kugler, describing the above mentioned alternatives and evaluating them according to the criteria of feasibility and desirability, also saw the “institutional web” as most realistic, but as a supplement to it he suggested either “open-door enlargement” or the “two-community solution”. The first scenario accepted the possibility of NATO embracing not only the Visegrad countries, but also, in the future, the Baltic states, Ukraine and Russia. The latter solution assumes that Europe and Eurasia will be two separate clusters, Russia playing the leading role in the democratic CIS community, and Poland linking the two separation between them.<sup>17</sup> He also considered destabilizing scenarios in the absence of NATO enlargement - local turmoil, neo-imperial Russian domination, regional multipolarity, tripolarity - as well as instability stemming from unsuccessful enlargement in Central East Europe, bipolar standoff, and bipolar confrontation or a new geopolitical division in Europe.<sup>18</sup> In conclusion he saw enlargement as an opportunity to admit the new European democracies

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<sup>14</sup> For the economic dimension of security, see: Sperling J, Kirchner E., *Recasting European Order. Security Architectures and Economic Cooperation*, Manchester University Press 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Waever O. ‘The European Security Triangle’, *Working Papers* No 8 (1994). See also: Seidelmann, NATO’s Enlargement as a Policy of Lost Opportunities, in: *Revue d’integration europeenne*, vol.20 (1997), afl.2-3, p. 233-245; and the fullest Polish analyses of all institutions in the security area: Zieba R, *Instytucjonalizacja bezpieczeństwa europejskiego: koncepcje – struktury – funkcjonowanie*, Scholar, Warszawa 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Gardner H, *Dangerous Crossroads: Europe, Russia, and the Future of NATO*, Praeger, Westport 1997, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Kugler R.L, *Enlarging NATO: the Russia Factor*, Santa Monica CA Rand Corporation, 1996, p. xx.

<sup>18</sup> *Ib.*, 180-193.

into the Western community, but also as a serious challenge including the necessity of a stable relationship with Russia.<sup>19</sup>

The question of Russia dominated the debate on NATO enlargement to the East and in most cases determined the position of the discussants – either for or against this step.<sup>20</sup> In the 90s it was evident that NATO was trying to reconcile two contradictory tasks: to expand the alliance ( which was seen by Russia as an act against its interests) and to force Russia to accept new co-operation in the framework of an enlarged NATO. Many politicians and academics participating in this debate thought that this task was like trying to square the circle. This often led to individuals taking up strong positions, for and against the expansion of NATO. These deep divisions cut across the adherents of different theories in international relations, building a kind of very rare unity among them.<sup>21</sup> In the opinion of John Lewis Gaddis, scholars almost universally opposed the enlargement policy: “ my normally contentious colleagues seem to be in uncharacteristic agreement: it is that the NATO expansion initiative is ill-conceived, ill-timed, and above all ill-suited to the realities of the post-Cold War world”.<sup>22</sup>

E. Reiter summarized the arguments of this group as follows: “ ... enlargement could lead to a new confrontation with Russia, promote anti-Western reflexes within Russia and bring about a solidification of new East-West conflict structures. Since not all Eastern European countries can be admitted immediately, the countries not admitted would again come under Moscow’s influence. NATO enlargement would be a relapse into the thinking categories of the Cold War, and Europe would be again divided into blocks. (...) The support of the Russian reform and transformation process by avoiding any sign of an isolation of Russia on the one hand and the consolidation of the development towards free-market economies in the East-European post-communist countries by their integration into the EU on the other hand, would thus be a sufficient alternative to NATO enlargement.”<sup>23</sup> At the same time - as a supporter of enlargement - he critically evaluated the cons and pointed to the pros . Among the latter he thought that limitation of the Russian sphere of influence in Europe

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<sup>19</sup> *Ib.* , p. 267

<sup>20</sup> For differences between NATO members (France, Germany, Great Britain, and others) in this context, see Wood J. R, NATO: Potential Sources of Tension, INSS Occasional Paper 23, February 1999, USAF Institute for National Security Studies, Colorado

<sup>21</sup> For an interesting analysis of the pros and cons from the point of view of the realist and institutionalist traditions, see: Kay S, NATO and the Future of European Security, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, Md., 1998 , p.103-114.

<sup>22</sup> Following: Kay S. NATO and... , p. 103

<sup>23</sup> Reiter E., The Effects of NATO and EU Enlargement, Landesvereidigungsakademie. Informationen zur Sicherheitspolitik, No 15, March 1999, p. 21.

should be regarded as positive, all the more so since numerous Russian positions indicated that Eastern Europe was still seen as its own hegemonic area. Moreover, democracy in Russia was still unstable. But in the medium to long term NATO enlargement to the East could also bring advantages for Russia (if it was a democratic state) since the stability of Central Europe was a prerequisite for co-operation between Russia with Europe in order to protect common interests in the Far East.<sup>24</sup> One can find many small articles and statements about the coming enlargement of NATO in the same tone, which served also to calm down Russian fears about this process. All arguments pointed out that NATO enlargement was not against Russia, and not even against its interests as a power. The Central European countries were simply returning to their natural and expected area of interests which was and is in the West. They were also entering a strongly democratic community of states which could also guarantee for Russia that its Western borders would be stable, and peaceful.<sup>25</sup>

The necessity of stabilizing Eastern Europe was one of the main motives of the proponents of enlargement. They advanced a number of arguments. For example, history demonstrated that this region was unstable, that without the control of NATO these countries might choose nationalism and become once more a field of conflict between the West and Russia. The West had a moral duty to release them from the fear of being in a security vacuum, in a grey zone between Russia and Germany. Additionally, enlargement would also serve NATO's own interests – enlargement meant a new, vitalising mission for this organisation. Opponents replied that the Visegrad countries were stable and democratic in any case, that cuts in their military budgets proved that they had no fears about their security, and enlargement meant drawing new lines in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

Among the group of supporters of “larger NATO” there existed strong views about the necessity of a simultaneous deal with Russia. They stressed that NATO enlargement was not directed against Russia and one proof of this thesis was the paradox (especially noticeable in the case of the Baltic States) that NATO would hardly accept new members whose eagerness to get beneath the NATO umbrella was dictated by the Russian factor.<sup>27</sup> The low probability

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<sup>24</sup> *Ib.*

<sup>25</sup> see e.g., Jesse Helms (chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee), *NATO Expansion Has All the Safeguards It Needs*, The Wall Street Journal Europe, 23 III 1998; Hunter R., *This Way To a Safer Europe*, Washington Post, March 23/ 1998

<sup>26</sup> See more: Blackwill R.D, *Trilateral Policies Towards Russia*, in: Blackwill R.D, Braithwaite R, Tanaka A, *Engaging Russia. A Report to the Trilateral Commission*, New York, Paris, Tokyo, June 1995, *The Triangle Papers* No46, p. 43-46

<sup>27</sup> See eg. Muellerson R., *op.cit.*, p. 195-196.

of Russian claims towards the Visegrad states had determined their successful admission. But this deal with Russia should be (which also was stressed) without loss to Western interests, and without any special restrictions or limitations on the interests of candidates (such as, for example, a special status for Poland) because: “If East-Central Europe were to perceive that Poland’s defence was being decided in Moscow, the political impact would be devastating”.<sup>28</sup>

Some authors argued that it was less important to accommodate short-term Russian fears of NATO than to provide support for Russia’s internal reforms. Amongst them, the ambassador of the US to NATO from 1993-1998, Robert E. Hunter, was a strong supporter not only of enlargement but also of close co-operation with Russia - because Western goals of security “cannot be achieved if Russia is isolated, neglected, or marginalized”.<sup>29</sup> However he, as well many holding similar views, observed that Russia had not made impressive progress in democratisation and reconstructing its economy during ten years of transformation. This led some authors to conclusions about NATO enlargement which tried to be “honest” and state directly that this step was also against Russia, especially if it clung to its undemocratic ideas about ruling its neighbours (which did not exclude a chance for close cooperation if it was possible).<sup>30</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that the group of opponents had prevailed or at least they were more “expansive”. Their arguments stemmed from different motives. They proposed another solution for the European security system, such as strengthening the OSCE or the WEU, or broadening the EU. The latter was suggested not only because it was more acceptable for Russia but also because Central Europe was not seen as an area of military, but rather economic, dangers. Apart from that, a decision not to enlarge NATO was interpreted as giving an opportunity for the development of other structures of co-operation between East and West, and as encouraging Russia to act collaboratively within the framework of international institutions.<sup>31</sup> These opponents of enlargement worried about the future of NATO and its efficiency, arguing that it should concentrate on the challenges of dealing with

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<sup>28</sup> Asmus R.D, Kugler R.L, Larrabee F.S, NATO Enlargement: A Framework for Analysis, in: Philip H. Gordon (ed.) , NATO’s Transformation: the Changing Shape of the Atlantic Alliance, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, Md., 1997, p. 112

<sup>29</sup> Hunter R, Solving Russia: Final Piece in NATO’s Puzzle, The Washington Quarterly, vol. 23, No 1, Winter 2000, p. 131; Hunter Robert E., ‘Maximizing NATO: A Relevant Alliance Knows how to Reach’, Foreign Affairs, vol. 78, No 3, May/June 1999, pp. 190-203

<sup>30</sup> See e.g.: Krauthammer Ch, Good Geopolitics. Is NATO Expansion Directed against Russia? Of course It Is, Washington Post, 17 April 1998; Zoellick R, A Go for NATO, Washington Post, 28 April 1998.

<sup>31</sup> See: Meyer B, NATO – Enlargement: Path to Unity or to a New Division of Europe, Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt a.Main: 1995. Kahl M., NATO Enlargement and Security in a Transforming Eastern Europe. The Question of Adequacy, in: Dutkiewicz P, Jackson R, (ed.), NATO Looks East, Praeger, Westport 1998, p. 32-33.

regional conflicts rather than channelling resources towards expansion. Indeed, effective solutions to existing conflicts in Europe were impossible without the support of Russia. Hence, antagonising Moscow was pointless.<sup>32</sup>

Most arguments referred to the situation in Russia and the consequences of NATO expansion for democracy there. Authors agreed that NATO's decision would strengthen all undemocratic forces in Russia, who would have received "proof" that the West wanted only to mislead Russia, and in reality surround it by its own allies. Russia, which made the end of cold war possible and enabled it to happen in a peaceful way, had every right to feel betrayed.<sup>33</sup> Their analysis tried to show that at present there was no military need to move toward NATO enlargement, and even if NATO did not pose a military threat for Russia it could deepen Russia's sense of being discriminated or ignored.<sup>34</sup> In consequence of such attitudes NATO enlargement would serve, not a more but a less stable Europe. And Russia, which voluntarily participated in changes in the '90s, could turn against the entire post-Cold settlement in Europe. The case of "Weimar's Germany complex" could be reborn there.<sup>35</sup>

Peter Shearman suggested that for a full understanding of Russia's position it would be useful to imagine a different end to the cold war – the United States lost, West Germany after unification with the East became a member of the Warsaw Pact, and Gorbachev – who had promised not to expand the alliance to the borders of the USA – changed his decision after a period of time and accepted the request of Mexico, Cuba, Italy and France as sovereign states to join the Pact, simultaneously arguing that did so for the sake of international security, and that this would also serve American interests.<sup>36</sup> Shearman also rejected one of the main arguments of the 'enlargers' concerning the necessity of strengthening democracy in Central Europe, arguing that the democratic development of this region was not dependent upon membership of a military alliance but on economic, social, and educational progress – which might be even more difficult after admission because of the cost of reconstructing the

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<sup>32</sup> Cross S, United States-Russian Relations, in: Cross S, Zevelev I, Global Security beyond the Millenium: American and Russian Perspectives, Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, Basingstoke and New York, 1999,p. 21-47.

<sup>33</sup> See particularly all articles written by Eisenhower S. , e.g.: Starting Cold War II?, Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1998; Russian Perspectives on the Expansion of NATO, in: Clemens C (ed.), NATO and the Quest for Post-Cold War Security, Macmillan Press, London 1997 , p. 137-153. Eisenhower S, The Perils of Victory, in: Carpenter T.G, Convy B., (eds.) NATO Enlargement: Illusion and Reality, Cato Institute, Washington D.C: 1998, p. 103-120; see also: Brown M.E., Minimalist NATO. A Wise Alliance Knows When to Retrench, Foreign Affairs, vol. 78 No 3, May/June 1999, NY.

<sup>34</sup> Kahl M, op.cit. ,p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Mandelbaum M., The Dawn of Peace in Europe, The Twentieth Century Fund Press, New York 1996, p. 61-62.

<sup>36</sup> Shearman P, Russia and NATO Enlargement: the Case Against, in: Bowker M, Cameron R, (eds.), Russia after Cold War, Longman 2000, p. 313-314.

military.<sup>37</sup> Similar arguments against NATO expansion were shared by representatives of different peace organisations like SIPRI, US War and Peace Foundation, League of Nations Union etc. which repeated that enlargement posed a direct threat to world peace, increased the cost of military spending in the Eastern states which needed the money for really necessary social and economic requirements, burdened the Western countries with heavy costs while the world was in a state of starvation and poverty, and built new divisions and a messy situation in the East.<sup>38</sup>

This debate calmed down after the fiftieth anniversary of NATO when three of the Visegrad states became members of the Alliance, although the possibility of a next wave of enlargement remains open. But in this case, even strong supporters of the first round are definitely less enthusiastic, and they carefully suggest that it can only be on the agenda in the distant future.<sup>39</sup> The virtually unanimous opinion in the West is that the Alliance has to accommodate new members, rebuild its efficiency, and find the best way of co-operation with Russia. The Baltic states pose the most difficult dilemma since they constitute a highly sensitive issue for Russia, and a not very attractive option for NATO. On the other hand, although Romania and Bulgaria do not belong to the “near abroad” area of Russia and their strategic importance lies in the Balkans, nevertheless the Balkan region is also seen as not less important for Russian foreign policy, as the Kosovo war showed. Slovenia and Slovakia seem less problematic, though it is not clear if the summit in Prague, in 2002, will bring them an invitation. But certainly a ‘second wave’ of enlargement has the support of the new NATO members. They demonstrated their approval at a conference of the Central European leaders in Bratislava in May 2001. Vaclav Havel addressed part of his remarks to the question of Russia, stressing that the Baltic states in particular had the full right to be admitted if they fulfilled the rules, and that the protests of Russia were the last argument against such a step. He drew a comparison with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. At the same time Havel stressed the necessity of talking to Russia openly even if the truth hurt, on the grounds that false friendship and servility were worse for Russia and its relations with the West. At the same conference, full support for further enlargement was expressed also by Zbigniew Brzezinski

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<sup>37</sup> *ib.*, p. 306.

<sup>38</sup> See comments of Tony Benn, Frank Blackaby, Ann Clwyd, Selma Brackman, Jim Addington and others, in: Allaun F, (ed.), *Say “No” to NATO Expansion: is the Cold War Coming Back? A Growing Threat to Peace*, London 1997 (Pamphlet of Labour Party)

<sup>39</sup> Binnendijk H, Kugler R.L, *Open NATO’s Door Carefully*, *The Washington Quarterly*, vol 22, No 2, Spring 1999, p. 125-138.

who believed that Russia would have to choose full co-operation with the Euro-Atlantic world or risk isolation.<sup>40</sup>

The most ambitious idea, which has appeared with new strength in the post-enlargement discussions, concerns Russian membership of NATO. The arguments are that Russia on the outside could create problems relating to the balance of power, cultural conflicts, and democratisation; on the other hand, Russia on the inside “could assist the process of democratisation, foster a stable balance of power and expand a zone of peace across Eurasia...”. Such an invitation to Moscow would make irrelevant accusations about the expansionist plans of NATO, and assist the inclusion of the Baltic states in NATO<sup>41</sup>

### 3. The Russian position towards NATO enlargement.

Russia’s position towards NATO after 1989 was interconnected with the whole process of transition from a socialist Soviet Union to a new Russia, from the Cold war order to a new one.<sup>42</sup> It was related to Russia’s main ideas, strategies and policy towards Eastern Europe which was in its vital interests zone for years. Consequently, the problem of Russia’s attitudes towards NATO enlargement was closely connected with a broader question – the necessity of rebuilding the whole conception of foreign policy after the collapse of socialism and in a period of transition to a democratic system<sup>43</sup>. Political leaders were struggling to

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<sup>40</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 May 2001, p. 3. In Western literature after enlargement the prevailing opinion concerns the necessity of pursuing an active policy of engagement more directly with Russia, and of finding a theoretical and practical solution to the relationship, particularly through activity by the EU: Williams M.C, Neumann I.B, op.cit., p.357-387; Dannreuther R., Escaping the Enlargement Trap in NATO-Russian Relations, *Survival* 41/4, Winter 1999-2000, p. 145-164

<sup>41</sup> Shearman P, op.cit. ,p. 314; see also, Fadok D.S, Juggling the Bear: Assessing NATO Enlargement in Light of Europe’s Past and Asia’s Future, *INSS Occasional Paper 24*, March 1999, Institute for National Security Studies, USAF Academy, Colorado; Lane A.T, NATO Enlargement: Progress and Prospects, Paper on the conference of CEEISA, Warsaw 2000.

<sup>42</sup> For the earliest period of Soviet Union/Russia –NATO relations, see: Adomeit H., The Atlantic Alliance in Soviet and Russian Perspectives, in: Malcolm N (ed.), *Russia and Europe. An End to Confrontation?* Pinter Publishers, London&NY 1994, p. 31-58; Dunay P, Kardos G., Williams A.J. (eds. ), *New Forms of Security: Views from Central, Eastern, Western Europe*, Dartmouth Publishing Company, Aldershot 1995.

<sup>43</sup> For more on Russian foreign policy, see Sakwa R, *Russian Politics and Society*, Routledge, London 1996, p. 276-320; also, Cooper L., *Russia and the World, New State-of-Play on the International Stage*, Macmillan , London&NY: 1999; Bowker M., *Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War*, Dartmouth, Aldershot 1997; Rahr A., Krause J, *Russia’s New Foreign Policy, Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik*, No 91, Europa Union Verlag, Bonn: 1995; Timmermann H, *Russlands Aussenpolitik: Die Europaische Dimension, Berichte des Bundesinstituts fur ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, Koln 17/1995; D.Proektor, *Konturen der russischen Sicherheitspolitik in den neunziger Jahren, Berichte des Bundesinstituts fur ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, Koln 5/1995; from Polish literature detailed works: Bielen S, *Geopolityczne uwarunkowania nowej tozsamosci Rosji*, in: Bielen S, Goralski W.M, (eds.), *Nowa tozsamosc*

create a policy and strategy which would reflect Russia's geopolitical position and national interests in the decade of the '90s. The most dramatic questions were how to adapt the state to the loss of superpower status, and how to identify Russian national interests and security in a new reality. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Soviet Union and Russia talked about a strategic partnership with the West which was seen as "natural allies for Russia", and about joining the "civilized world" - as Foreign Minister Kozyrev called it many times.<sup>44</sup> In December 1991 Boris Yeltsin first expressed Russia's interest in belonging to NATO. It could be a "French version" of membership, in the political not the military structure. Yet it was doubtful if Moscow could accept even such a limited idea of accession. The new conception and trend in Russia's foreign policy was formalised in a document signed by Yeltsin in April 1993, entitled: *Osnovnoyehiia kontseptzii vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoy Federatzii*. This focused on economic development and democratic transition as the main goals which foreign policy should serve.<sup>45</sup>

But from 1993, when the Central East European states directly declared their interest in membership of NATO, when, simultaneously, the crises in the internal economic and social situation deepened, and when Russia did not feel itself to be openly welcomed in Western structures, domestic opposition to the pro-western policies of Yeltsin and Kozyrev began to increase.<sup>46</sup> As a result, Russia redefined her security policy in contradistinction to that of the West. This redefinition meant a different approach towards the whole European security system. Russia definitely rejected NATO's role as the main security institution, as well as her membership of it. Instead Russia stressed the importance of the CSCE in which Russia had a formally equal position.<sup>47</sup> Russian leaders had, in effect, shifted from a so called "Atlanticist" perspective to a "Euroasianist" one.<sup>48</sup> Russian political experts, even those with very far from radical nationalist views, like Alexei Arbatov from the Centre of Geopolitical and Military Forecasting in Moscow, estimated that the national leaders had made

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Niemiec i Rosji w stosunkach miedzynarodowych, Scholar, Warszawa 1999, p. 73-96; Lastawski K, Kształtowanie nowej tozsamosci rosyjskiej polityki zagranicznej, in: Bielen S, Goralski W.M, op.cit., p. 97-117.

<sup>44</sup> See, Konovalov A, *International Institutions and European Security: the Russian Debate*, in: Carnovale M, *European Security and International Institutions After the Cold War*, Basingstone Macmillan Press 1995, p. 119-120.

<sup>45</sup> See also, Aron L, *The Foreign Policy Doctrine of Postcommunist Russia and Its Domestic Context*, in: Mandelbaum Michael, (ed.), *The New Russian Foreign Policy*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1998, p.25-26.

<sup>46</sup> For detailed analyses of influence of internal situation on foreign policy see: Malcolm N, Pravda A, Allison R, Light M., Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996; see also: Baranovsky V, *Assessing Russia's Interaction with Europe*, in: Baranovsky V. (ed.), *Russia and ...*, p. 543-554; McNeill T, *The Perils and Prospects of Russia's Democratisation*, The Atlantic Council, London 1995

<sup>47</sup> See the exceptional, (because not against enlargement), statement of Yeltsin in August 1993 in Poland in part 4 of this chapter.

<sup>48</sup> See the debate "Eurasians" vs."Atlanticists", Konovalov A., p. 121-124.

concessions to the West too easily, and expected more assertiveness and protection for Russian priorities.<sup>49</sup> It was evident that among these priorities was to stop NATO, characterised as the “biggest military grouping in the world that possesses an enormous offensive potential”<sup>50</sup>, in its eastward march. Similarly, Sergei Karaganov, a member of the Presidential Council, estimated that the inclusion of the Visegrad countries would not create a military threat to Russia, but that the political and psychological consequences of enlargement could be devastating. He accepted that though Russia had no right to stop its neighbours joining the alliance, it should insist on joining NATO at the same time.<sup>51</sup> In similar tone was written “*The Prospect of NATO Enlargement and Russia Interests*”, a report presented in November 1993 by Yevgeni Primakov, at that time Head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. The authors predicted that NATO expansion could lead to “bloc” politics, kill the efforts of the current reformist government, and strengthen militarist circles. It was suggested that the Russian position should be defined by three principles: NATO was not a threat to Russia; each state had a right to ensure its security in whatever way it liked; and NATO enlargement without Russia would be harmful.<sup>52</sup> It is possible to agree with the insightful comment of Margot Light, who thought that a “similar reaction might be expected from any country which was faced with a defence alliance which included all surrounding countries and from which it was excluded.”<sup>53</sup>

When PfP was offered to Central Eastern Europe, Moscow argued very quickly that it stemmed from an anti-Russian bias, and was only a tactical move to give the USA time to prepare for NATO expansion to the East. However after some bargaining and threats, Russia signed the framework document in June 1994.<sup>54</sup> Kozyrev stressed that in the view of Russia it was a step towards building a collective security system.<sup>55</sup> Agreement on Russia’s individual co-operation beyond PfP was formally accepted in May 1995.<sup>56</sup> Washington agreed to offer Russia a special status in its relationship to NATO. This did not mean acceptance of the idea (proposed in a letter from Yeltsin to the ‘2+4’ governments in the Autumn of 1993, and now repeated by Foreign Minister Kozyrev in the Spring of 1994) of conjoint NATO-

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<sup>49</sup> Arbatov A, Russia’s Foreign Policy Alternatives, *International Security*, No 2, 1993, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> From a study of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, November 1993 quoted in: Adomeit H, Russia as a ‘Great Power’ in World Affairs: Images and Reality, *International Affairs* 71, No 1, January 1995, p.49

<sup>51</sup> Kononov A, op.cit., p. 126-127.

<sup>52</sup> *Ib.*, p. 131; there also detailed resume of whole report.

<sup>53</sup> Light M., Foreign Policy Thinking, in: Malcolm N, Pravda A, Allison R, Light M., *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996, p. 79-80

<sup>54</sup> See also, Rahr A, Krause J, op.cit., p. 19-21

<sup>55</sup> Kozyrev A, Russian and NATO: A Partnership for a United and Peaceful Europe, *NATO Review*, August 1994, p. 3-6.

<sup>56</sup> For details see: Gardner H, op.cit., p. 10-22.

Russia security guarantees for this region, which was observed with relief in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>57</sup> This latter idea was an example of continuing Russian efforts to replace NATO expansion by proposals more acceptable for Moscow. President Yeltsin, who attended the Budapest CSCE summit (December 1994), warned that without compromise between NATO and Russia on this issue, partnership would come to an end and a new Cold war could start.<sup>58</sup> Kozyrev, too, stressed many times in 1995 that NATO enlargement would be unable to create greater stability and security, and could only spoil the good relationship between Russia and the West.<sup>59</sup>

At that time Russia still hoped it would be possible to stop enlargement. This view stemmed from a confidential report prepared for Yeltsin in the Spring of 1995 by a group of advisers led by Sergei Karaganov.<sup>60</sup> This document encouraged the Russian government to fight against the expansion of NATO. Its authors indicated that supporters of NATO enlargement were a minority in the West, and when the costs of this step became more obvious the number of opponents might even grow. So Russia's tactic should be to strengthen the voices "against" in academic and political circles, particularly in the United States, and to be more co-operative and calmer in its rhetoric, which would confirm to the West that enlargement was pointless. When in late 1996 (Clinton's speech in Detroit in October), the project of NATO enlargement returned to the agenda Russia declared its strong opposition.<sup>61</sup>

Russia's Defence Minister Rodionov in a speech at the meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers (December 1996) presented the arguments against. He argued that Russia had been misled by the Western states which had made a promise both to Mikhail Gorbachov personally, and in "the 2+4" treaty, that the alliance would stop at the borders of East Germany. In return Russia had agreed to withdraw its forces from Eastern Europe and to reduce its armaments. But NATO enlargement would upset this strategic post-Cold war

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<sup>57</sup> J. Shea has interpreted this letter in two probable ways: firstly, as an attempt to create zones of big power influence – a new Yalta, secondly as an urgent plea not to leave Russia out: Shea J, *Enlarging NATO Eastward?*, in: Carnovale M, (ed.) *European Security and International Institutions After the Cold War*, Basingstone, Macmillan Press 1995, p.90-91.

<sup>58</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 December 1994

<sup>59</sup> See e.g. NATO Office of Information and Press, 31 May 1995

<sup>60</sup> *Russia and NATO: Thesis of the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy*, May 1995

<sup>61</sup> The detailed history of Russian reaction to NATO enlargement can be found in many books. Among others see: Huebner-Monien S, *Russia and European Security: The Case against NATO's Eastward Expansion*, in: McKenzie Mary M., Loedel P, *The Promise and Reality of European Security Cooperation: States, Interests and Institutions*, Praeger, Westport, Conn., 1998, p. 37-59; Kahl M, op.cit., p. 22-43; Meseznikov G, *On Russian's Position in the NATO Enlargement Issue (1992-1997)*, in: Dutkiewicz P, Jackson R, (eds.) *NATO Looks East*, Praeger, Westport 1998, p. 99-108; Kay S., *NATO and...*, p.89-102; Kennedy-Pipe C, *Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, in: Webber M, (ed.), *Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation?*, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan Press, 2000, p. 50-63.

equilibrium, and NATO military forces would appear near the Russian borders.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, Russia's policy towards NATO's enlargement in 1996 and 1997 was outright opposition. Yet, at times, this opposition was rather muted. For example, the new foreign minister, Yevgeni Primakov, suggested (spring 1996) that Russia could accept the prospect of political enlargement, but excluded any eastward extension of military infrastructure to areas near Russia. However, in the autumn the tone sharpened. The Russian State Duma adopted a resolution (307 to 0 vote) warning that NATO enlargement would lead to crisis. Security Council Secretary, Aleksander Lebed declared that enlargement would mean confrontation. He criticised NATO for increasing its military potential as a result of enlargement, for its attempt to dictate rules of behaviour to the rest of Europe, and for a policy which divided Europe, along the so-called line of "civilisation", into "pure Europeans" and "semi-Asian Russians".<sup>63</sup> Similar statements came from Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. In the winter these voices became calmer. Russia declared its readiness to continue its dialogue with the West despite the prospect of enlargement and Primakov appreciated that NATO had no plans or intention to deploy nuclear weapons in the East. Russia now saw enlargement as inevitable and was mainly interested in keeping some influence over security policy. A Charter between Russia and NATO could offer such an opportunity. At the Helsinki Summit Yeltsin said he still viewed NATO expansion as a serious mistake but, nevertheless, Russia was not going to overreact in the case of the admission of some Eastern countries. But it was made clear by Primakov that this tolerance was limited and could not be extended to the Baltic states. In May 1997 a new national security doctrine showed that the maintenance of the nuclear deterrent was the first priority. However, this document also identified major dangers as emanating from internal instability, not external threats.<sup>64</sup> Commentators stressed that Russian readiness to sign a charter of cooperation with NATO was also dictated by pure economic and financial motives. As was suggested, "the enlargement of NATO to the East will be more than compensated by the enlargement of Gazprom to the West."<sup>65</sup>

The unequivocal view against NATO extension on the part of Russian leaders also stemmed from the fact that most of them had accepted by the mid 90s the theses of the realist

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<sup>62</sup> Rodionov to NATO: Don't Bait a Wounded Bear, *Moscow News*, 26-31 December 1996

<sup>63</sup> *Niezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 October 1996

<sup>64</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 May 1997; see analyses: Malak K, *Koncepcja bezpieczeństwa narodowego Federacji Rosyjskiej*, in: Bielen S, Goralski W.M, op.cit., p. 119-144

<sup>65</sup> Aron L., op.cit., p. 46; about strategy of NATO - making concession, also in military field for Russia: Dodd T, *NATO Enlargement*, Research Paper 51/ May 1997, House of Common Library. International Affairs and Defence Section, p. 17-25

school in international relations: a belief that national security stems from balance of power not co-operation, that national strength has to be built and protected individually rather than collectively, that relations were based on a zero-sum game. Such views were cultivated in the Cold war period ( incidentally it was not the only paradox of Marxism in practice), and survived among the military complex, as well as among communists in the Gennady Zyuganov party. Obviously this view responded to the ideas of nationalists, such as those in the Zhironovsky group. However it is necessary to stress that in the Gorbachev era, and for 2-3 years after that, an opposite tendency prevailed. This was a period of quite broad acceptance of the idealist school, in its contemporary form of international liberalism and institutionalism based on the idea of mutually profitable co-operation. In this latter framework the Soviet Union opened up to the West in the late 80s, and collaborated effectively in calming down many conflicts in the world. But in the mid-90s there was a common belief in Russia that events had proved the failure of such values – a close partnership with the West was not achieved, the war in Chechnya and conflicts on other peripheries were not solved, and NATO expansion was read as a typical realist move.<sup>66</sup> Thus the Russian “no” stemmed mainly from the belief that Russian national security relied mainly on well secured borders and buffer regions that Moscow could influence easily. With the former Warsaw Pact countries joining NATO Moscow might see itself becoming a naked and defenceless neighbour of a powerfully expanded Europe which had always been wary of Russia becoming a true European nation.<sup>67</sup> Russia’s Ambassador in the USA, Yuli Vorontsov, wrote about the psychological effect of enlargement that derived from the historic memory of Russians: “it was from the West that real threats continuously came to Russia, bringing to our people immeasurable losses and destruction.” Although Russia did not expect a NATO attack, it had to remember that NATO was a military alliance.<sup>68</sup> Simultaneously, as Leibstone observed: “Moscow hates to admit that its best means for reducing any negative impact that NATO enlargement can present to Russia, is through

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<sup>66</sup> See, for a very interesting analyses of this issue: Tsygankov A.P, From International Institutionalism to Revolutionary Expansionism: The Foreign Policy Discourse of Contemporary Russia, Mershon International Studies Review, vol. 41, 1997; also: Williams M.C, Neumann I.B, From Alliance to Security Community: NATO, Russia, and the Power of Identity, Millenium: Journal of International Studies, vol. 29, No 2 (2000), p. 374-384.

<sup>67</sup> For detailed analyses of the reasons for Russia’s negative attitudes towards NATO enlargement, see Wenger A, Perovic J, Russland und die Osterweiterung der NATO: Herausforderung für die russische Aussen -und Sicherheitspolitik, Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik und Konfliktforschung, No 43/1998.

<sup>68</sup> Vorontsov Y.M, One Thing All Russians Agree On, The Washington Post, 10 March 1998

cooperation with NATO itself and by entering into as many joint ventures with EU members as possible yet Moscow has leaned in the direction of such virtues.”<sup>69</sup>

But Russia could justifiably feel excluded from the decision-making processes on European security, and many observers of the Russian political scene stressed that the psychological aspects played a not less serious role in Russian protests than military or political ones. Russia had lost its colonial empire as rapidly as any other state, so this experience had to be highly traumatic.<sup>70</sup> Russians felt suddenly cut off from the West by the Baltic states and Ukraine, suffered a lack of reliable allies in the Near and Far Abroad, feared for Russian minorities in the Near Abroad, and was apprehensive about its territorial integrity, which was clearly challenged by separatist movements.<sup>71</sup> According to Jonathan Eyal, this difficulty of accommodating to the new role was also expressed in fact that “ (...) Moscow simply refused to negotiate with the countries of central Europe; it dealt directly with the West above the heads of the central Europeans, and it expected the West to cut a deal on these terms, a diplomatic technique which would not be unfamiliar to Palmerston, Metternich or Bismarck.”<sup>72</sup> This latter feature of Moscow’s policy was criticised by Russian democrats. Arbatov understood the “instinctive desire” of the states of Central Europe to join NATO “ in view of their historic grievances and uncertainty about future developments in the neighbouring post-Soviet space.” In his opinion this desire was strengthened by the decline of stability and democratic reforms in Russia in 1993-1995, and by the policy of dealing with the USA and other NATO states over the heads of Central Europe.<sup>73</sup> Dashitchev, viewing the enlargement of NATO as highly contrary to Russia’s interests, stressed that it was not only the American desire for “global leadership” that created such an unfavourable situation. Much responsibility rested on Russian domestic and foreign policy during the first 5 years of the ‘90s, when Russia still acted in an imperialist style, confirming the fears of its neighbours, and was unable to develop dialogue, mutual trust, and equal co-operation with Central Europe and the Baltic states. In conclusion, he saw only one solution for the political elite – to demonstrate real peaceful and democratic politics, not only in statements but first of all in everyday political practice.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Leibstone M., Reasons of NIET from Russia, *Military Technology*, June 1998, p.6

<sup>70</sup> See also: Braithwaite R, Russian Realities and Western Policy, *Survival* No 36/ 3, Autumn 1994, p. 11-27.

<sup>71</sup> See, Benevolensky V.B, Bogaturov A.D, and others, *Etap za globalnym. Liberalnyi natsionalizm vo vneshney politike Rossii*, Rossiyskii Nauchnyi Fond, Moscow 1994, p. 23-26

<sup>72</sup> Eyal J, NATO’s Enlargement: Anatomy of Decision, *International Affairs*, vol. 73 (1997), No 4, p.717.

<sup>73</sup> Arbatov A., NATO and Russia, *Security Dialogue*, vol. 26 (1995), No 2, p. 143

<sup>74</sup> Dashichev V.I, *Natsionalnaia bezopastnost’ Rossii i ekspansia NATO: nauchnyi doklad*, RAN, Moscow: 1996, p. 36

It is obvious that the question of NATO's enlargement eastward was debated widely not only in the West but most of all in Russian political circles.<sup>75</sup> Actually, it was perhaps the only problem which unified all groups, although motivations behind this univocal view were various. Communists and so called *derzhavniki* (from the word *derzhava* – great state) feared Western strategic superiority over Russia which was dangerous indeed in the context of their sincere belief in an inevitable confrontation in Europe. Radical nationalists had similar attitudes, however they also thought that NATO expansion could serve their interests by provoking such tension in the international environment as would enable them to rebuild a centralised and imperial state. This latter vision was exactly a reason for the deep disappointment of pro-Western, democratic liberals at the decision of the Alliance. Grigori Yavlinski, leader of Yabloko, stated in 1998 that the most important message of NATO expansion for Russians was the absence of any Western belief in the democratic development of their state.<sup>76</sup> Reformers feared that enlargement would be a political gift to the Russian neo-imperialists. They claimed to be unable to explain to Russians that the Alliance was purely defensive, particularly when asked why it continued in existence after the end of the Cold War. Arbatov, in the middle of the 90s, was still calling on the West to make the process of enlargement at least “as slow and gradual as possible, including the Central European states one by one at decent intervals, for the government and public to avoid shocks and have time to adapt to the new environment”, and to implement this extension alongside the enhancement of relations with Russia, “so that Moscow does not feel isolated or threatened.” He lamented the internal situation in Russia which led to such decisions by NATO and neighbouring countries.<sup>77</sup>

Democratic politicians were anxious about the future of Russia in the situation of new divisions in Europe. At the meeting of the WEU Assembly in 1997, Alexander Konovalov, director of the Institute for Strategic Assessments, had no doubt that central European countries had a legitimate right to be secure, and Russia had no veto right. But he expected

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<sup>75</sup> See also for analyses of Russia's political scene, and views on foreign policy, Sergounin A, *The Russia Dimension*, in: Mauritzen H, (ed.), Bordering Russia: Theory and Prospects for Europe's Baltic Rim, Aldershot, Ashgate 1998, p. 54-68; especially the question of NATO enlargement and possible debated alternatives, see: Kortunov A, *NATO Enlargement and Russia: In Search of an Adequate Response*, in: Haglund D. G, (ed.), Will NATO Go East? The Debate Over Enlarging the Atlantic Alliance, Queen's University, Kingston 1996, p. 72-92; see also detailed works: Pushkov A.K, *A View From Russia*, in: Simon J., (ed.), NATO Enlargement. Opinions and Options, Institute of National Strategic Studies, Washington 1997, p. 123-140; and: Plekhanov S, *NATO Enlargement as an Issue in Russian Politics*, in: David Ch.-Ph., Levesque J, (eds.), The Future of NATO: Enlargement, Russia and European Security, The Center for Security and Foreign Studies, Mc Gill- Queen's University Press, Montreal 1999, p. 168-185.

<sup>76</sup> Yavlinsky G, *Russia's Phoney Capitalism*, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, No 3, 1998, p. 77

<sup>77</sup> Arbatov A, *NATO ...*, p. 146.

the West to give its views on the whole structure of European security if Russia was not included in an enlarged NATO. What was to be the place for Russia, and for all those states which would not be members of NATO?<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Russian parliamentarians who supported the work of the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the UN, viewed NATO expansion as a step towards the isolation of Russia.<sup>79</sup> Alexander Nikitin, categorised the approaches to NATO enlargement among the political elites in four groups as follows: the “Humiliated Great Power” of the nationalists, the “Worse-case Planning” of the professional military, “Enlargement is Inevitable but Let’s Negotiate Conditions” of the Russian diplomats and experts, and “CIS Military Integration as an Alternative”, and pointed to the last category as the characteristic trend of the mid 90s.<sup>80</sup> Such desperate searching for other solutions than adaptation to the new situation on the eastern borders stemmed, as Plekhanov noticed, from an overwhelming feeling of total defeat – a defeat for Russian diplomacy in the long-term sense of a sharply reduced Russian influence in international affairs and a defeat for Yeltsin’s policy of engagement with the West and his policies vis-à-vis the near abroad and Eastern Europe.<sup>81</sup>

Rather more unusual were the opinions which stressed the positive side of NATO enlargement, although not all of them had a pro-NATO motivation. For example Andrei Zagorski, vice-director of the Moscow Institute for Foreign Relations, concluded that this step was in Russia’s interests because the Alliance would be politically, militarily, and financially weakened.<sup>82</sup> Really rare, even among academics, was an opinion like that of Tatyana Parkhalina, deputy director of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences, who pointed out that it was not Russians as a whole but politicians who maintained fear of NATO.<sup>83</sup> She refuted the arguments against enlargement, stressing that the West was not interested in the isolation of Russia, and only Russia alone could “send” itself to the margin of Europe. NATO, she believed, did not add to economic difficulties for Russia if it wanted to

<sup>78</sup> Enlarged Security: the Security Problems posed by the Enlargement of NATO and the European Institutions, Assembly of WEU, Paris 1997, p. 36-38.

<sup>79</sup> *Ib.*, p.46.

<sup>80</sup> Nikitin A, NATO Enlargement and Russian Policy in the 1990s, in: Calton D, Ingram P, The Search for Stability in Russia and the Former Soviet Bloc, Ashgate, Aldershot 1997, p. 151-152. See also the very interesting theses prepared (May 1995) by a representative group of Russian academics and politicians on the interests of West, Central-East Europe and Russia, Koval I, Semenov V, Russland und die NATO. Thesen des Rates für Außen –und Verteidigungspolitik, in: Pradetto A, (ed.), Ostmitteleuropa, Russland und die Osterweiterung der NATO: Perzeptionen und Strategien in Spannungsfeld nationaler und europäischer Sicherheit, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen 1997, p.163-177

<sup>81</sup> Plekhanow S, *op.cit.*, p. 170-172.

<sup>82</sup> A.Zagorski, Falsche Ängste vor der NATO. Moskau wettet gegen die Osterweiterung des westlichen Bündnisses. In Wahrheit liegt sie durchaus in russischen Interesse, in : Pradetto A, (ed.), *op.cit.*, 178-179.

<sup>83</sup> Parkhalina T., Of Myth Sad Illusions: Russian Perceptions of NATO Enlargement, NATO Review, vol. 45 (1997), afl. 3, p. 11-15

co-operate with the West. She also rejected as untrue the argument that politicians were unable to explain to Russians the reasons for NATO's expansion – in her opinion nobody had tried to do it. Consequently she tried to discuss these “NATO myths” such as its military, aggressive goals, particularly threatening if NATO moved closer to Russia's borders. She also dismissed the philosophy of “Slav brotherhood” ( she asked why Russians did not remember this during the Tito period, or in Prague 1968) and the geopolitics of yesterday. Russia needed economic development and a multidimensional dialogue with the West and all its neighbours. It should forget about “ zones of influence”.<sup>84</sup> She believed her views were shared by about 10 academics altogether, among them A.Piontkovsky, A.Demurenko, A.Zagorsky, Y. Davydov, though they were becoming more acceptable at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially among the younger generation. At the same time, however, national-conservatism was more and more widespread in Russian society and that meant anti-Western feelings with all their consequences.<sup>85</sup>

Tchantouridze tried to find an explanation for the evident problem of mutual understanding in the debate between West and East on the role of Russia, NATO, and its expansion. She stressed the domination of geopolitics in the views of Russian politicians and academics, who were confirmed in their ideas by some western politicians, like Zbigniew Brzezinski who wrote about the division of Russian territory.<sup>86</sup> Additionally events in Kosovo in 1999 strengthened the opinion about NATO as an organisation which “realizes the ideas of NATO-centrism in Europe and the world as a whole, its claims to act everywhere across the world, up to use of force, ignoring international law”.<sup>87</sup> However, the next two years brought a kind of balance in Russian-West relations. This stemmed also from political changes in Russia. The new president, Vladimir Putin, was welcomed as a promising figure, even if a little unpredictable. He positioned himself as a Europeanist; the new version of the National Security Concept, which he signed in January 2000, pointed to an objective commonality of interests with the leading states of the world. In the opinion of Baranovsky, this clearly meant that Russia wanted to be with them and among them, not against. But he

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<sup>84</sup> Parkhalina T.G, *Rossija i NATO. Problema vosprijatija*, in: *Aktualnyje problemy Ewropy*, Rossijskaja Akademia Nauk, Moskva 2000, p. 105-125

<sup>85</sup> Information from personal talks.

<sup>86</sup> See also, Tchantouridze L, *Russia and NATO: A New Play in the Old Theatre*, in: Haglund D,(ed.), *New NATO, New Century, Canada, the United States and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance*, Kingston Ontario Centre for International Relations, Queen's University 2000, p. 137-153; as well , Kortunov S, *Is the Cold War Over?*, *International Affairs* 44/5, 1998, p.144; Gousher A, *External Challenges to Russia's National Interests*, *International Affairs* 45/2, 1999, p. 164. See also, Ignatow A, *Geopolitische Theorien in Russland heute*, *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, Köln,17/1998.

<sup>87</sup> Kazantsev B, *NATO: Obvious Bias to the Use of Force*, *International Affairs*, vol. 45, no. 4, p. 42.

also added to his rather optimistic comment, that “from Russia’s European perspective, this all looks too good to be true”, and the pressure of conservative groups could lead Putin in another direction. Undoubtedly, the question of the unsolved conflict in Chechnya put this presidency in an ambiguous position.<sup>88</sup>

In 2001 Russia formulated its foreign policy in a pragmatic way, which permitted a defrosting of relations with the West, and with NATO. But according to the official statements of its foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, the security architecture should not be built only on an expanded NATO. He explained Russian concerns: “In the Founding Act, it is stated that Russia and the North Atlantic Alliance are partners, not adversaries, that they present no threat to each other and that they must jointly build a comprehensive system of security for Europe. This brings up the question to which, unfortunately, I have not yet received an answer from anyone. Why expand NATO? What should NATO, as an organization which came into existence at a certain historical period, expand for? Here another question arises for the nations which have joined, or declare their readiness to join, the Alliance. Why should they join this organization? On both sides I always hear but one answer: we are sovereign states and it is our right to make this or that choice as to membership in this or that international organization. I agree with this. Correct! Indeed, Russia has no right of veto in this situation, cannot hinder a sovereign decision by a sovereign and independent state. But each state and each organization bear political responsibility for particular actions of theirs as well. If we are partners, not adversaries, it means there is no threat to anybody. It does not emanate against Russia, nor does it emanate, of course, against NATO or potential NATO members from Russia or from anywhere else. Again the question arises: why do that which may complicate the efforts to build a future common European security architecture? Why take steps which may cause distrust and concerns? What need is there for such actions today? I want to say once more, each state has a sovereign right to make its choice. But the stand of Russia on the expansion of NATO remains unchanged - this is not the way towards the creation of a unified system of European security. The questions facing all should be solved collectively, taking into account the opinion of all states, whether members or not members of NATO.”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> See, Baranovsky V, Russia: a Part of Europe or apart from Europe?, *International Affairs* vol. 76, No 3 (2000), p. 457-458; see also: A. Melville, Putin’s Russia in Search of Its Place in the World, paper on conference of CEEISA, Warsaw 2000 ( it is version of a chapter to be published in a collected book, by Cambridge University Press, 2001.

<sup>89</sup> Igor Ivanov press conference, Interfax News Agency, February 22, 2001, [www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru)

Throughout the nineties Russia's neighbours observed her policy, with all its twists and turns, with understandable caution. Russia's position vis-a-vis their objectives played an important role. Even if Russia was not able to intervene directly, bad relations with her could have a negative influence on their political, military, and economic situation. Inevitably Poland, as one of Russia's neighbours, was affected by Russian policy, despite its independence and quite successful development in the 90s.

## Chapter II

### Security debate in Poland in the context of NATO and Russia

#### 1. Political background of Poland's debate on NATO and Russia in the 90s.

Russia has played a crucial role in Polish history for centuries. This involved, during the last 200 years, Russian domination and Polish struggles against it. During the period after the second World War Poland shared its problem with all the Central-East European countries – Russia (in the shape of the Soviet Union) was seen as an empire suppressing their freedom. So, the transition of the Soviet Union in a democratic direction, and the emergence of a new Russia was, on the one hand, welcomed eagerly, on the other hand cautiously, by the peoples of the whole region. The crucial question was connected with the policy which Russia was going to pursue in its neighbourhood. Russia distanced itself from Soviet policy in the Central East European states, and formally apologised for such events like the crushing of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the murdering thousands of Polish officers in Katyn in 1941. She declared her readiness to build a new relationship with the countries of the region based on equality and mutual gains. But in fact its former “allies” from the socialist camp had lost significance for Russia. The West became the centre of her interests and policy. It is noticeable that Russia did not create a special policy either towards the region as a whole, or to the various countries in it.<sup>90</sup> It rather reacted to particular situations; and one such, rather fundamental, “situation” stemmed from the eagerness of Central Eastern Europe to join NATO structures. In the mid 1990s the importance of this region increased for the main players on the international scene (with Russia in the first position) because of security policy questions. The CEE states wondered with anxiety whether they would become once more a playground for power politics or would at last be sovereign actors. The clash of security needs, expectations and ideas between Russia and her former allies inevitably led to a degree of alienation and distrust on both sides. Among the EEC states, a direct military threat to the region by Russia was seen as hardly feasible, but the lack of any kind of stabilisation in such a powerful and large state awakened a desire for new guarantees in the case of a possible breakdown in the future. Russia felt abandoned in its effort for change by its former “friends”, which clearly were satisfied with

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<sup>90</sup> About the lack of Russian strategy towards Central East Europe, see in Polish literature, Menkiszak M, *Polska w strategii międzynarodowej Federacji Rosyjskiej*, in: Halizak E, (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe Polski: geopolityczne i geoeconomiczne uwarunkowania*, Torun 1995, p. 15-32; see also Kobrinskaja I, *Rosja-Europa Srodkowa-NATO, Polityka Wschodnia*, No1-2/1995, p. 69-70

the disintegration of the USSR, and Russia's more limited influence in Europe. The fact that politicians on both sides used bad history as their main argument for the present and the future, and additionally interpreted events of the past one-sidedly, built even more barriers and mutual suspicion.<sup>91</sup>

Poland, thanks to the transformed political landscape in its region and to its own foreign policy, was able to achieve a friendly neighbourhood at the beginning of the 90s . Hence it could enjoy a situation incredibly rare in Polish history – the absence of major specific threats to its security. In the long term, however, it had to take into account that its Eastern borders might to be unstable. This led to a security policy based on the slogan: “return to Europe” which meant inclusion in Western structures, like the EU and NATO. The unexpectedly quick resolution of problems in relations with Germany, and German adoption of the role of “Polish advocate”, helped in this activity. But such goals mixed with Poland's size, potential and location in Europe inevitably contributed to growing tensions between Poland and Russia.<sup>92</sup> Despite this, successive governments in Poland have made the acquisition of NATO membership a central point of their security policy.<sup>93</sup> Poland's new security doctrine from 1992 stated: “ After a half century break, the Polish nation wants to return to general orientation towards western civilisation. Strengthening its independence and

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<sup>91</sup> See also for Soviet Union/Russia - Eastern Europe relations: Bowker M., *Russian Policy Toward Central and Eastern Europe*, in: Shearman P, (ed.), *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, Westview Press, Boulder 1995, p. 71-91; Braun A, *Russian Policy towards Central Europe and the Balkans*, in: Kanet R.E, Kozhemiakin A.V, (eds.), *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, Macmillan Press, London 1997, p. 49-77; Kramer M., *NATO, Russia and East European Security*, in: Ra'anun U, Martin K, (eds.), *Russia: A Return to Imperialism?*, Macmillan, London 1995 , p. 105-160; Lamentowicz W, *Russia and East-Central Europe: strategic options*, in: Baranovsky V. (ed.), *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda*, Oxford 1997, p. 355-367; Davydov Y., *Russian Security and East-Central Europe*, in: Baranovsky V. (ed.), *Russia and ...*, p. 368-384; Rahr A, Krause J, op.cit., p. 27-30; Larrabee F.S, *East Central Europe: Problems, Prospects and Policy Dilemmas*, in: Clemens C, (ed.), *NATO and the Quest for Post-Cold War Security*, Macmillan Press, London 1997, p. 87-108.

<sup>92</sup> For Polish-Russia relations in Polish literature, see: Bratkiewicz J, *Kierunek wschodni: perspektywa podejścia strategicznego*, in: Kuzniar R (ed.), *Między polityką a strategią. Polska w środowisku międzynarodowym*, Instytut Studiów Międzynarodowych Uniwersytet Warszawski, Warszawa 1994, p.118-140 Grudzinski P, *Raport Polska-Rosja: niezgoda i współpraca*, Centrum Stosunkow Międzynarodowych ISP, Warszawa 1997; Magdziak-Miszewska A, (ed.), *Polska i Rosja strategiczne sprzeczności i możliwości dialogu*, Centrum Stosunkow Międzynarodowych ISP, Warszawa 1998; Dobroczyński M (ed.), *Międzynarodowa przeszłość Niemiec, Polski, Rosji*, Centrum Badan Wschodnich Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 1997; Drawicz A, *I co dalej między nami?*, in: Stefanowicz J (ed.), *Polska w Europie na przełomie wieków*, ISP PAN, Warszawa 1997, p. 88-95; Gadomski J, *Rosja. Kierunki imperialnego zaangażowania*, in: Stefanowicz J, (ed.) *Polska w Europie na przełomie wieków*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa 1997, p.64-88..

<sup>93</sup> For more about Polish aims in foreign policy, see chapter II. See also, Latawski B, *NATO and East Central Europe: the Case of Poland*, in: Williams A.J. (ed.), *Reorganising Eastern Europe*, Dartmouth Publisher Comp., Dartmouth : 1993; Kostecki W, Poland, in: Mauritzen H, (ed.), *Bordering Russia: Theory and Prospects for Europe's Baltic Rim*, Aldershot, Ashgate 1998 , p. 125-225; Prystrom J, *Polen zwischen der NATO und Russland: Bedrohungswahrnehmung und Sicherheitsstrategien*, in: Pradetto A, (ed.), *Ostmitteleuropa, Russland und die Osterweiterung der NATO: Perzeptionen und Strategien in Spannungsfeld nationaler und europäischer Sicherheit*, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen 1997, p. 103-121

security, Poland wants to participate in building European unity and a new international order.

<sup>94</sup> The same document speculated that the process of transformation in the East caused numbers of potential threats ( social –economical tensions, ethnic conflicts, uncontrollable military potential) which could soon appear.<sup>95</sup>

In the period before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Polish approach to its eastern neighbours was called a “two-track” policy; it meant that Poland tried to keep a balance between relations with the republics of the USSR, which talked about their independence, and relations with the whole federation. This formula satisfied no one – from Moscow’s point of view it was interference in Soviet internal affairs, to the leaders of the emerging states Poland did not appear to support their ambitions for independence. In the opinion of Michta: “In either case, the two-track policy was hardly a recipe for improving Polish-Russian relations or preparing for future relations with Poland’s non-Russian neighbours in the east.”<sup>96</sup> Simultaneously Polish politicians clearly demonstrated that ideological factors as well political rules stemming from Yalta belonged to the past. After December 1991 Poland changed its “two-track” approach, and began to treat Russia as one of its eastern neighbours. By 1994 agreements on cooperation were signed with all of them.<sup>97</sup> Negotiations with Russia were linked at the beginning with the question of Soviet troops in Poland. In May 1992 the Russian and Polish presidents ( during the visit of the latter to Moscow) accepted the final texts of documents concerning the withdrawal of Russian troops, as well as the *Treaty on Friendly and Good Neighbourly Co-operation*. According to these agreements all combat forces and auxiliary units would leave Poland by the end of 1993.<sup>98</sup> The second visit of Boris Yeltsin to Warsaw in August 1993 was important for mutual relations. In the “*Joint Polish Russian Declaration*” which he signed, famous sentences appeared : “The Presidents discussed the issue of Poland’s intention to accede to NATO. President Lech Walesa explained Poland’s well-know position on the issue, which was received with understanding by President Boris Yeltsin. (...) In perspective, a decision of this kind by sovereign Poland aiming at pan-European integration is not contrary to the interest of other states, including also Russia”.<sup>99</sup> Officially the Russian Foreign Ministry tried to diminish

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<sup>94</sup> Polityka bezpieczeństwa i strategia obronna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, *Przegląd Rządowy*, 12/1992, p. 75

<sup>95</sup> ib. p.75-76.

<sup>96</sup> Michta A, Poland. A Linchpin of Regional Security, in: Michta A (ed.), *America’s New Allies. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO*, Univ. of Washington Press, 1999, p. 46

<sup>97</sup> About the problems in Poland’s Eastern policy, see also, Burant S.R, Poland’s Eastern Policy 1990-5 –The Limits of the Possible, *Problems of Post-Communist*, March/April 1996

<sup>98</sup> For details about these talks and their results see, Polska-Rosja czy nowe otwarcie. Dyskusja, in: *Polska w Europie*, vol. 29, Warszawa, July-September 1992, p.69-84

<sup>99</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 August 1993

Yeltsin's statements by explaining that: "... rushing to join NATO is an anachronism, but if some country wants to take this anachronistic path, that is ultimately its own business and Russia does not intend to prevent it from doing so."<sup>100</sup>

Yeltsin's statement was clearly later regretted by himself, and his advisors. Poland was seen in military circles as the key – the age-old route for armies marching eastwards and westwards, whose membership of NATO, together with the independence of Ukraine, could push Moscow to the sidelines of European importance. Arguments to the effect that a secure Poland was likely to be less anti-Russian and ready to co-operate than a Poland left in its old geopolitical dilemma between Germany and Russia were not heard in Moscow.<sup>101</sup> In 1994 most Russian journalists stressed that first of all the whole "mess" with enlargement stemmed from a Polish policy which was irrationally anti-Russian, and tried to confirm the West in its belief in a possible threat from the Russian side. In 1995, when Russia prepared its new security doctrine, newspapers declared that Russian nuclear weapons would be directed at Poland and the Czech Republic if these countries became members of NATO.<sup>102</sup> Obviously such comments echoed loudly in Poland.<sup>103</sup>

Despite the clear attempt of Russia to halt the enlargement process, the Polish elite across the political spectrum remained unified in its thinking about NATO membership as a vital national interest. So there was very little room for improving mutual relations. Russia was also visibly uninterested in dealing directly with Poland, and concentrated on its dialogue with the West. Its propositions like Russian and NATO – "cross-guarantees" for Poland were definitely rejected. Poland's understandable sensitivity determined also its rapid reaction to another idea, from February 1996 – building "a transport corridor" between Belarus and Kaliningrad district. The associations with the inter-war period were clear.<sup>104</sup> Each remark from the Russian side about "a traditional, special sphere of influence" aroused questioning in Warsaw – where were those traditional spheres located? This happened when Russia published its *Conception of Foreign Policy* in 1993. This document pointed out that the

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<sup>100</sup> Velekhov L, Security: Statement for Effect or a New Strategy, 'Military Alliances', Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 36/1993, p. 17

<sup>101</sup> Such a key role for Poland in NATO enlargement was indicated in the debate on this step, see e.g. Sherman W.G, op.cit, p. 92; Reiter E, op.cit; Blackwill R.D, Braithwaite R, op.cit, p. 118

<sup>102</sup> *Sieгодня*, no 236, 9 Dec. 1994, No 237, 10 Dec. 1994; *Niezavisimaja Gazeta*, 7 Oct. 1995, *Komsomolskaja Pravda*, 29 Sept. 1995.

<sup>103</sup> *Polityka*, No 42, 21 Oct. 1995

<sup>104</sup> Prime Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz stressed this problem in his talks with Victor Chernomyrdin in April 1996, when this latter used word: "corridor", Cimoszewicz suggested "transit" and on the same condition like for each country, so Chernomyrdin apologised that it was only a blunder. See, *Polityka*, nr 47, 23 Nov. 1996

Central East Europe region remained for Russia its historical zone of interest.<sup>105</sup> Also the section of the security doctrine from November 1993 which stressed that Russia had a right to intervene in its neighbourhood in the event of a situation dangerous to its interests, was read in Poland as implying the possibility of attack because of the common border with Kaliningrad.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the ideas of influential opposition politicians like Zhirinovskiy or Ziuganov were heard in Warsaw with anxiety. The first of these wanted to restore the Russian empire and proposed new borders in Europe. In his vision Poland should give back to Germany its northern cities though Lvov in Ukraine might be given to Poland as compensation – the old “deal” between Germany and Russia returned in this vision.<sup>107</sup> Ziuganov tried to seduce Poland by his idea of “Great Poland”, as a regional superpower responsible for international order in Central Europe, but he saw as a preliminary condition for Russia’s acceptance of this idea a new Polish position, independent from NATO, the USA, and Germany.<sup>108</sup>

But despite tensions, Poland and Russia were able to resolve other controversial matters, like co-operation in the area of Kaliningrad (1992), or the mutual indebtedness issue (1996). After the total breakdown of trade relations which lasted until 1993, the situation began to improve, and in 1995 Russia was Poland’s third partner in trade exchange.<sup>109</sup> First of all Polish leaders tried to reassure Russia that Poland’s membership of NATO was not against Russian interests. Poland’s long-term (1989-1995) ambassador in Moscow, Stanislaw Ciosek, tried to persuade his Russian partners that Russia was wasting time on its quarrel about NATO while it should concentrate on questions really crucial for its survival like the economy.<sup>110</sup> Kwasniewski during his visit to Moscow insisted that NATO membership for Poland did not follow from a desire for confrontation with Russia, still less from fear of the Eastern neighbourhood. It was a natural step in Poland’s further integration in the European community.<sup>111</sup> In spite of the friendly tone of the talks, commentators in Polish and Russian journals stressed that “everybody kept his own opinion”, and the question of NATO overshadowed mutual relations.<sup>112</sup> Prime Minister, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz commented

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<sup>105</sup> Koncepcija vneshnej politiki Rossijskoj Federacii, *Diplomaticheskij Vestnik*, January 1993, p. 13; *Polityka Wschodnia*, No 1/1994, p.139-162

<sup>106</sup> See, *Polska Zbrojna*, 4 November 1993, p.1-2; *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 November 1993, p. 1

<sup>107</sup> See, Serounin A, op.cit., p. 57

<sup>108</sup> See, *Trybuna*, 18 April 1996 (about article of G. Ziuganov, Russia and Poland in the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century, “Sovietskaja Rossija, 16 April 1996)

<sup>109</sup> *Polityka*, No 16, 20 April 1996, p. 8

<sup>110</sup> *Polityka*, No 31, 3 August 1996, p. 27-39

<sup>111</sup> Talks: Cool but Signs of Progress, *Moscow News*, 11-17 April 1996

<sup>112</sup> See, *Trybuna*, 6-8 April 1996, 11 April 1996, 12 April 1996, 15 April 1996; there also many comments from Russia’s press.

that Russia had to understand that NATO was not an aggressive organisation. And Polish needs to be a member of NATO stemmed not only from its security requirements but also from the belief that it could stabilise Poland and help in the further development of its economy.<sup>113</sup> In another speech he stressed that “such objections to NATO enlargement, it seems, are really based on the logic of the past epoch; they fail to recognise the changes which have taken place in Europe.”<sup>114</sup> In that period Poland tried partly to respond to the expectations of the West, which combined its support for enlargement with encouragement for the development of friendly Polish relations with Russia. But Polish leaders were aware of limits to their efforts because of the lack of enthusiasm from Moscow. Poland did not want to be “a bulwark” in East-West relations but ideas (which emerged sometimes) that it could play the role of bridge were not realistic. Such an offer to Russia would meet with either laughter or disgust in Moscow.<sup>115</sup>

Many hopes were pinned on the decisions of the Madrid summit in 1997, because it could be seen as the beginning of a new chapter in Polish-Russia relations. However, Poland was well aware that Russia had to accept enlargement but that it had not changed its negative opinion. As minister Primakov told minister Geremek:” “You have to understand we are not glad about the enlargement of NATO. But we know it will happen. Just don’t ask us to be happy about it.”<sup>116</sup> The previous Minister for Foreign Affairs, Darius Rosati during his presentation in March 1997, stressed that: ”Poland has made great efforts to cultivate good relations with Russia”. But he also thought that “it is time for the NATO side simply to ask what the Russians can do for the European security architecture and how it sees its role in the new system.” First of all he repeated that the security status of the Central East European area had to be clarified, that Russia would have to give up all attempts to regain control over that territory, “ we are against – he said – some Russian demands that there should be some legally binding commitment of Western countries or NATO countries not to admit countries which used to be part of the former Soviet Union (...) this implies that the West recognises the right of a sphere of influence”.<sup>117</sup> In a speech made before the NATO ambassadors meetings in Brussels (February 1997) Polish Prime Minister, Cimoszewicz, said that the outcome “should

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<sup>113</sup> Polens Minister Präsident Cimoszewicz zeigt Zuversicht, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 21 February 1997

<sup>114</sup> Cimoszewicz W, Building Poland’s Security: Membership of NATO a Key Objective, NATO Review 44, No 3, 1996

<sup>115</sup> See Garnett Sh. W, Poland: Bulwark or Bridge?, Foreign Policy, Spring 1996, p.66-67.

<sup>116</sup> New York Times, 17 April 1998, A4.

<sup>117</sup> Rosati D, The Polish Contribution to a New European Security Structure, RUSI Journal April 1997, p.15-18

in no way limit the freedom of other nations to shape their relations with NATO according to their needs and aspirations”.<sup>118</sup>

President Aleksander Kwasniewski manifested his readiness for dialogue by paying a “private visit” in Moscow in 1998. His unofficial meeting with Yeltsin let many believe that the issue of Poland’s NATO membership ought to be set aside, and other areas of bilateral relations explored. Russian newspapers commented that Russia had forgiven Poland its love for NATO.<sup>119</sup> But the support of Poland for the Baltic states mentioned above in the speeches of Rosati and Cimoszewicz, and repeated later by other Polish politicians, could not aid an improvement in Polish- Russian relations . Already in early 1998 Polish politicians were aware that there would be no “day one” in Polish-Russian relations after April 1999, and that the Polish dilemma was how at one and the same time to pursue normalized relations with Russia and work to draw Lithuania and Ukraine into Euro-Atlantic structures. There was also anxiety that the indifferent attitude of Russia towards another Polish aim – membership of the EU -could be replaced quickly by opposition when Russia began to be aware that actually it was not NATO, but the EU which could push it to the margins of Europe. Disappointment that nothing changed after March 1999 was accompanied by the will to break down this stalemate. But paradoxically when the hot discussion over NATO enlargement was finished, Russia lost any remaining interest in responding to Polish initiatives. Poland looking at the West, and Russia looking inside itself, existed side by side in a state of mutual indifference.<sup>120</sup>

Poland at the end of the nineties still put ensuring the country's external security in the first place of its foreign policy goals but also saw its national interest in terms of enlarging the security area in the whole of Europe. It supported the expansion of the Alliance's existing activities to include new tasks and new areas of operation, and believed that they should not be limited to the territory of member-states. NATO, furthermore, should be prepared to cooperate with all institutions whose goal was to ensure European security. Poland decidedly did not accept the Russian conception of collective European security being promoted in the OSCE forum but stressed that Poland's entry into NATO was not a response to a threat from Russia or any other state. “Instead, it flows from the conviction that the Europe of the future is

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<sup>118</sup> Visits by Polish Prime Minister to NATO and WEU, Atlantic News, 22 February 1997

<sup>119</sup> Polityka , no 28, 11 July 1998, p. 33

<sup>120</sup> See Poland-Russia relations in 1998. Talkshop held by the Foundation “Polska w Europie”, March 13, 1998, in: *Polska w Europie*, vol. XXVI, Warszawa June 1998, p. 91-121; *Zadania polskiej polityki zagranicznej na przelomie stulecia*, Talkshop June 20, 1998, in : *Polska w Europie*, vol. XXVII, Warszawa October 1998, p. 13; Klich B., Nowak J, *Polska polityka bezpieczenstwa*, Talkshop, March 9, 2000, in: *Polska w Europie*, vol. XXXII, Warszawa, June 2000, p. 35-79; Mroziewicz R, *Kilka tez o polityce wschodniej*, in :*Polska w Europie*, vol. XXXIII, Warszawa, September 2000, p.74-81; Raczynski Z, *Zimny pokoj na Bugu*, Polityka No 38, 18 September 1999, p. 20-22.

a Europe encompassing all the countries of the continent, including Russia. Poland therefore has never accepted the argument that NATO's enlargement will lead to Russia's isolation. It regards the strengthening of NATO's co-operation with Russia and Ukraine as well as other forms of building regional and European security as an important factor accompanying the enlargement process. Poland assumes that Russia, like other countries of the Euro-Atlantic area, is interested in creating in the centre of Europe a zone of stability, security and economic development. One of the tasks of Polish foreign policy is to support the membership aspirations of states which have not yet been invited to participate in the Alliance. Poland steadfastly believes that NATO's first enlargement should in no wise be the last and that the doors to the Alliance should remain open."<sup>121</sup>

Minister of National Defence, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, in February 1999 not only confirmed that Poland would speak for Ukrainian and Baltic states' interests in Europe but he also stressed that Russia's attitude towards inclusion of the former Soviet republics would test the credibility of its will for co-operation with NATO.<sup>122</sup> The first visit after a long break (in January) of foreign affairs minister Bronislaw Geremek in Moscow, though it was interpreted by the Polish side as a new opening,<sup>123</sup> did not remove problems. Comments from the Russian side about enlargement in March 1999 were only negative.<sup>124</sup> NATO's action in Kosovo and Polish full support for this step only worsened the situation. Simultaneously in the economic area the consequences of the crises in Russia began to be apparent. The Polish deficit in trade with Russia was higher than with any other trade partner, and Russia from third place as a Polish trade partner fell to eleventh during a few months.<sup>125</sup> In the autumn of 1999 political crises in mutual relations also appeared. Russian politicians criticized their Polish partners as permanently hostile towards Russia. One of the main antagonistic questions was connected with Polish hospitality towards Chechen organisations. A sharp polemic had taken place at the forum of the Commission of Human Rights in Geneva when Polish vice-minister of foreign affairs demanded total disapproval of the violation of human rights in Chechnya, and his Russian colleague interpreted such a statement as an interference in the internal matters of Russia.<sup>126</sup> The beginning of 2000 was one of the worse periods in contemporary relations, firstly as a result of the Polish decision to expel nine Russian diplomats on charges of

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<sup>121</sup> Priorities of Polish Foreign Policy, January 1999, [www.msz.pl](http://www.msz.pl)

<sup>122</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 February 1999, *Izvestia*, 20 February 1999.

<sup>123</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28 January 1999

<sup>124</sup> See collected opinions of leaders from all parties, Black J.L., *Russia Faces NATO Expansion. Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms*, Rewman&Littlefield Pub., Lanham 2000, p. 108

<sup>125</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 April 1999, 20-21 November 1999

<sup>126</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 March 2000; see also 8 October 1999

espionage (January) , and secondly, of a pro-Chechen demonstration at the Russian consulate in Poznan which finished by burning Russian flags. There followed a similar response a few days later in Moscow from Russian young people (February ) and the relationship became completely frozen over the next few months.

Russian comments about “the espionage affair” were unanimous – Poland wanted to show its loyalty towards NATO and did it in an irresponsible way which surprised even Brussels.<sup>127</sup> In the case of the Poznan event, the Russians were also not satisfied with the Polish reaction, and many commentators pointed out that such extremely aggressive actions were possible because of a new sense of security in NATO, and the growing “bravery” of those forces in Poland who wanted to provoke Russia. These analyses stressed that the events proved false all assurances that NATO was not a threat for Russia. Clearly the new members from Central East Europe demonstrated that they were going to be even more aggressive and express in this way their emotions and historical prejudices.<sup>128</sup> The immediate reaction of the Russian extremists who attacked the Polish Embassy in Moscow showed how easy it was to arouse emotions among people with anti-Russian or anti-Polish phobias. Minister Ivanow cancelled his visit to Warsaw and called in the ambassador for consultations. Only the phone call between the two presidents Vladimir Putin and Aleksander Kwaśniewski averted further escalation of the diplomatic conflict.

After this critical period , under the presidency of Vladimir Putin, both sides began to talk about re-establishing their relations. In spite of the tensions minister Geremek hoped that the prospects of reforms planned by Putin had to serve democracy and a new policy towards Central Europe. So the prospects of economic co-operation and particularly opening up Kaliningrad to the West were still supported.<sup>129</sup> Also Russian newspapers published evenhanded analyses which showed the arguments of both countries.<sup>130</sup> On the sixtieth anniversary of the Katyn crime Putin unexpectedly called Kwasniewski with the information that he was ready to help in revealing, at last, all the secrets of this tragedy. This friendly gesture from the Russian side was appreciated by the Polish president.<sup>131</sup> In June a delegation of the Russian Parliament stressed in the Polish Sejm that it was necessary to improve at last mutual relations.<sup>132</sup> But the process of unfreezing mutual relations did not start until

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<sup>127</sup> See, e.g. *Izviestia*, 22 Jan. 2000, *Niezavisimaja Gazeta* 22 Jan. 2000, *Niezavisimaja Gazeta*, 25 Jan. 2000; *Wremia* MN, 25 Jan. 2000; *Krasnaja Zvezda*, 26 Jan.2000.

<sup>128</sup> see e.g. *Niezavisimaja Gazeta*, 25 Feb. 2000; *Trud* 1 March 2000, *Niezavisimaja Gazeta* 4 March 2000.

<sup>129</sup> R.Vetter, Interview with min. Geremek, *Handelsblatt* 24 March 2000

<sup>130</sup> *Niezavisimaja Gazeta*, 18 May 2000

<sup>131</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 April 2000

<sup>132</sup> *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1 June 2000

Kwasniewski's July visit to Moscow. This was apparent not only during the official meetings but in the Russian press' comments which wrote about the end of impasse.<sup>133</sup> Kwasniewski emphasized that though undoubtedly the relationship was worse than both countries would have wished, human contacts were developing dynamically, and it was the best way to reconciliation. He also commented on the matters at issue: "I think that it is an oversimplification to explain problems in our relations by arguments that they stem from the Polish choice of a western orientation. (...) Realistic opinion about Russia's situation allow us to maintain hope of the further development of your country and the nation's road to wealth. A free market economy, democracy and freedom are the best foundations for such a way. Because of this we observe with optimism the new period in Russian history. You have friendly relations with many NATO members, why not with Poland? All the more so because we chose NATO not against Russia but for the sake of our faster development. All Europe has no interest that its structures and development zone stop on our eastern borders. Poland supports this political doctrine which is not against Russia (..) History often put us behind different sides of barricades and we all lost by it. We have now a unique chance to come from coexistence – so a drawn game - to partnership, so a win-win. The condition for this exists. In our contemporary, interconnected world, conflicts lead only to loss. Profits come only from co-operation. My thesis is in essence this: let us be judged on the profits stemming from our neighbourhood.!"<sup>134</sup>

In November 2000, Russian foreign affairs minister, Igor Ivanov came to Poland on an official visit. He explained such a long break in his visits to Poland by the obvious divergence of opinion on NATO enlargement, and the events which happened at beginning of 2000. He argued against the thesis that Russia disregarded Central-Eastern Europe in its policy; in his view there were some countries which turned their back on Russia and had chosen western structures. According to him: "We were unanimous in the view that stable Russian-Polish relations can and should contribute to the strengthening of European security, the more so under today's conditions, when a European architecture is in the process of formation. We are convinced that this architecture must be based on the principle of a united Greater Europe without dividing lines. I think this approach meets the interests of all European states." He repeated also that Russia still estimated NATO expansion as a mistake, and was certainly against the next wave of enlargement, but he supported president

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<sup>133</sup> Kommiersant Daily, 11 July 2000; Izvestia 11 July 2000 ; Trud, 12 July 2000; Parlamentskaja Gazeta, 12 July 2000

<sup>134</sup> Prokopczuk S, Interview with president A.Kwasniewski, Trud, 18 July 2000 .

Kwasniewski in his view that “a golden age of Russian-Polish co-operation is still ahead”. “If we want this golden age to really come – he commented - we must together work actively for the attainment of this aim. Russia is ready for such active and constructive work, and the results of the talks show Warsaw has the same attitude now. I think our relations have good prospects for the future.”<sup>135</sup>

A few months later he made a speech on Russian foreign policy in Moscow, in which he clearly emphasized pragmatism and a focus on economic contacts with Russia’s neighbours. He also stressed that the major priority for Russia was Europe, and the most promising partner there was the EU. In his opinion also “Dialogue is livening up with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Here we are gradually, if not without difficulties, surmounting the negative baggage of the past and taking the path of pragmatic and mutually beneficial cooperation.” In the context of security, he thought that “(...) perhaps never before in the history of Europe have there been so many opportunities for building a truly united democratic Europe without dividing lines. This historical chance, though, continues to be unrealised. We still do not have a clear idea what will be the security model on our continent in 10 or 15 years. On the answer to this question the future role of the main European structures, including the OSCE, the EU and NATO largely depends. As for NATO, life has borne out the correctness of our line for the gradual expansion of cooperation with the Alliance on the basis of strict observance of the principles of the Founding Act and international law. Our policy toward NATO is completely predictable and transparent. Nor do we hide our conviction that the NATO-centric scheme for European building as it is now does not give the answer to the real threats to security and stability on the continent.”<sup>136</sup>

In February Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid an official visit to Moscow. He was received by the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation Mikhail Kasyanov. During the talk, which passed in a constructive atmosphere, the sides exchanged opinions on the state of, and the prospects for, Russian-Polish relations. When considering the topical problems of bilateral trade and economic cooperation, interest was expressed on both sides in the development of economic partnerships, which so far, as was noted, did not correspond in full measure to the potential of the two countries. Talks were held also between both ministers of foreign affairs. They discussed a wide range of

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<sup>135</sup> I.Ivanov at a Press Conference in Warsaw, November 23, 2000, [www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru); ;See also Interview with Igor Ivanov, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 November 2000

<sup>136</sup> Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov at the First Russian International Studies Association Convention, 20 April, 2001, Russian Foreign Policy at Contemporary Stage, [www.in.mid.ru](http://www.in.mid.ru)

international problems, including the questions of the maintenance of strategic stability in the world, the further improvement of the work of the OSCE, European security, cooperation in the Baltic region, and settlement in Kosovo and the Middle East. The sides reviewed in detail the state of bilateral relations between Russia and Poland, and examined the objectives of cooperation in the trade and economic field, and in the spheres of cross-border and interregional contacts and cultural and scientific exchanges. A plan for consultations between the ministries of foreign affairs of the two countries for 2001 was approved. Agreement was reached on the establishment of special diplomas of the ministers of foreign affairs of Russia and Poland, to be granted annually to Russians and Poles who had made a significant contribution to the strengthening of mutual understanding between the two nations.<sup>137</sup>

In March 2001 Poland was visited by Sergiej Ivanov, secretary of the National Security Council. He wanted to talk mainly about the economic dimension of Polish-Russian relations, questions connected with gas pipes and the Kaliningrad region.<sup>138</sup> But despite livelier mutual contacts, there were certainly still areas of tensions over security questions. Polish politicians insisted that the next wave of NATO enlargement should embrace the Baltic states, and were prepared to lobby for this inside NATO. Poland also expressed its full support for the American project for an anti-missile system.<sup>139</sup> However, hope for maintaining a good relationship with Russia in spite of these plans, stemmed from the fact that president Putin did not protest against Lithuanian membership of NATO during his visit to that state.<sup>140</sup> However, Polish comments on Putin's policy remained full of uncertainty: who was Mr Putin? After one year of his presidency, the prevailing opinion was that he was more carried along by "waves" of events than creating a clear line in his policy. And this could mean sudden turns. But on the other hand stress was placed on his pragmatic approach, defined as an effort to engage in co-operation in all areas and in all issues Russia viewed as being profitable.<sup>141</sup>

Such a pragmatic dimension was evident in the visit of Mikhail Kasjanov in May 2000. This was announced as the first visit after several years of breakdown, which signalled a new climate between both states. In the opinion of prime minister Kasjanov, the Russian-Polish relationship had to be built on partnership, and beneficial economic agreements. He

<sup>137</sup> Gazeta Wyborcza, 6 February 2001, see also Press conference of minister I.Ivanov on visit of minister W.Bartoszewski, Informacyjny Biuletien Ministerstwa Innostrannykh Del', 7 Feb.2001, www.mid.ru

<sup>138</sup> Gazeta Wyborcza, 24-25 March 2001

<sup>139</sup> Gazeta Wyborcza, 19 April 2001, 18 May 2001

<sup>140</sup> Gazeta Wyborcza, 31 March-1 April 2001

<sup>141</sup> See e.g. Radzichowski L, Putin „Rodzina” i Matuszka Rossija, Gazeta Wyborcza, 31 March-1 April 2001, p. 8-10; *Polityka zagraniczna Rosji – 2001*, Talkshop on January 19, 2001, in: *Polska w Europie*, vol. XXXV, Warszawa March 2001, p. 5-33

was against keeping up old phobias, and not interested in continuing debate about ideological – political problems but about particular common interests, like selling gas, a new system of visas which could allow Russians to visit Poland after the EU enlargement, and about the Kaliningrad region and its role.<sup>142</sup> Also Russian newspapers wrote about such a pragmatic dimension in relations with Poland, and noted that the increase in trade exchange in 2001 was noticeable, 62%, though the very high deficit on the Polish side was not a good factor.<sup>143</sup> Kasjanov discussed in Poland mainly one economic problem, an agreement on a new gas pipe line which would allow Russia to send gas directly to the West, not via Ukraine. Both partners stressed that such a pragmatic visit of Prime Minister could also bring also progress in the political dimension, though still no date was indicated for president Putin's visit.

## 2. Polish parliamentary debate on NATO and Russia

Polish foreign policy had to be fundamentally reshaped after 1989. This process included the question of security which was quickly defined in a very broad - multidimensional – sense.

For example, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Poland's first Foreign Minister after 1989, discussing foreign policy in the Sejm, in 1991, stressed that: "Our independence and freedom are impossible without simultaneous economic, social, ecological stability.(...) generally, security will be in danger if economic differences are lasting (...). The process of transformation of Central Eastern Europe demands long-term support from the highly developed countries."

He believed that all Europe had to be treated as one security area, that security could not be selective: "There was a general <de-nationalization > of security, so all were thinking about it as a common matter", he commented. We should remember that, in this first period, Poland combined its political and military security with the development of the "Helsinki process", strengthening the CSCE, and most importantly, with the evolution of the role of NATO. In the economic dimension, there was closer co-operation with the European Community.<sup>144</sup> The idea of binding Polish security tightly with international institutions visibly dominated Polish thinking, whereas neutrality was commonly rejected as inadequate for Poland's geopolitical location. However, there were different views concerning preferences for particular institutions.

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<sup>142</sup> Interview with M.Kasjanov, Agency RIA Novosti, 23 May 2001

<sup>143</sup> J.Wasilchenko, Polka dla Kasjanowa, Rossijskaja Gazeta, 24 May 2001; A.Bekker, Rosija i Polsha strojat novyje mosta, Wiedomosti, 24 May 2001

<sup>144</sup> Sprawozdanie z pos. Sejmu (report from parliamentary meeting), 27 June 1991, p. 12-14

Common security, deriving from the CSCE system, which included the USSR, was, however, favoured by the former Club of the Democratic Left, the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), and the Polish Catholic-Social Union<sup>145</sup>, although at the same time they wanted to co-operate simultaneously with all international structures which could guarantee security in both the military and economic dimensions.<sup>146</sup> The Club proposed that Poland should help actively in building a European system which would include the USA and Canada.<sup>147</sup> According to the liberals real security could be guaranteed only by economic integration which would diminish the division of Europe in this area.<sup>148</sup> For national- catholic circles however, it was a risky option because it could disturb the cultural dimension of Polish security – its national identity<sup>149</sup>; the foreign minister argued vividly against this latter thesis, stressing that the EC was the best shield for national differences.<sup>150</sup>

Two years later Poland worked out a clear direction in its foreign policy, which the next minister of foreign affairs, Andrzej Olechowski characterised as follows: “In the contemporary world good relations with all neighbours are a precondition but not sufficient for stable security. (...) we want the rule of indivisible security to be working in practice, for all Europe, and more, for the whole Euro-Atlantic area. (...) we think that the simplest way to a Europe without divisions is enlargement of such structures like NATO and the EU. Such enlargement does not mean new divisions but on the contrary – breaking down the old ones. Because of it we actively try to gain membership of these organisations. Because of it we support the similar efforts of the Visegrad Group countries – our security is tightly connected with their security. Because of it we treat our membership in the Atlantic structures as very important but only a first step. Because of it we are for the best, closest relationship between NATO and Russia. Polish and European security will not be full and stable, if the final system does not include Russia and our other eastern neighbours.” In addition he declared support for the Helsinki system and the UN.<sup>151</sup>

The representatives of the main opposition party, Left Democratic Alliance (SLD), supported this line of policy as the only realistic one.<sup>152</sup> Because of it, this policy drafted at beginning of the 90s remained the same in spite of the left wing taking power in the middle of this decade. Minister Dariusz Rosati stressed that NATO was key structure for the European security architecture, effective not only in military actions but also in supporting democratic rules and

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<sup>145</sup> ib. p. 115,116,144

<sup>146</sup> ib. p. 144,152

<sup>147</sup> Sprawozdanie..., 8 May 1992, p. 162; see also, Sprawozdanie... 14 February 1992, p. 17-21.

<sup>148</sup> Sprawozdanie 8 May 1999, p. 171

<sup>149</sup> ib., p.167

<sup>150</sup> ib., p.193

<sup>151</sup> Sprawozdanie, 12 May 1994, p. 27

<sup>152</sup> ib., p.32

economic co-operation. Similarly he described the role of the EU to be one of guaranteeing of multidimensional (political and economic) Polish security. In regard to the OSCE he said: “The European security system should be built in a multidimensional way : as a result of enlarging effective western structures of security to the East, as well strengthening the OSCE and other multilateral and bilateral initiatives which could influence mutual trust. Consequently we do not see the idea of building a new superior pan-European security institution based on the CSCE as fortunate and promising.”<sup>153</sup>

These statements indicate that a characteristic feature in Polish political thinking was an emphasis on the prevailing role of institutions, particularly these which had showed their effectiveness. It is obvious also that despite constant pressure for NATO membership (justified not by a present military threat, because such was invisible, but by the need to have a stable base in a political and military alliance) an awareness of the importance of economic threats dominated above all. For that reason the EU was ( and still is) estimated as source of a real security, thank to elements such as: help in economic development, support in the event of military conflict, breaking down the civilisation barrier between West and East, as well as a community guarantee of Polish interests in the face of possible pressure from its two biggest neighbours.

Polish-Russian relations were in the first phase marked by reminders of the Soviet Union period, but these problems had already begun to decline in significance, e.g. the question of withdrawal of the Soviet army from Polish territory. Because of this, from 1992 such questions were less and less important in the debates. Minister Skubiszewski in his statement in parliament stressed then, that relations with the East had priority as it created a new political reality. He asserted that a successful end to negotiations for a common Treaty was opening a new period of co-operation, and the final departure of the Soviet army would allow this new stage to begin without any burdens.<sup>154</sup>

Bronisław Geremek from the Democratic Union ( later Union of Freedom) also thought that the presence of the Soviet army was not serving well the interests of either state: “The sooner it leaves Poland the better for good relations between an independent Poland and a Russia which we wish to be independent and democratic. A new relationship with Russia is in the vital interest of Poland because here is placed not only the burden of our political relations but also a return to our traditional trade markets depends on it, and we should not give them up.”<sup>155</sup> Longin Pastusiak from the social democrats was disappointed that the visits of leaders so important for these economic contacts were delayed and linked with preliminary conditions when talks on this level could break

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<sup>153</sup> Sprawozdanie, 9 May 1996, p. 84-85; see also: Sprawozdanie, 8 May 1997, p. 114-116

<sup>154</sup> Sprawozdanie, 8 May 1992, p.155

<sup>155</sup> *ib.*, p. 160

the ice.<sup>156</sup> The representative of PSL, Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, commented on this situation similarly, noticing that it was easier to solve the difficult border question with Germany than to sign an agreement with Russia, when, in his view, this relationship was crucial for Poland at present. He also considered the opinion of the Polish Foreign Affairs Ministry (MSZ) about the diminishing threats to the East as too optimistic. “Because of this”, he stated “we are very interested in a new common security system in Europe, and co-operation with NATO. Nobody knows what tomorrow can bring- the present situation in the East is so unclear and unstable”.<sup>157</sup>

A similar view to those of representatives of the above mentioned parties on the left of the political spectrum was expressed by Marek Jurek from the strongly national and catholic wing, who was critical of Polish policy towards the East. He thought that an improvement of relations with Russia should be an imperative of Polish foreign policy because of Poland’s location in the region but also in regard to some moral values. “Russia”, he stated: “is one of the states of our region, a state whose national interests deserve respect. Russia was the first country to be a victim of communism. Russia – the Russian intelligentsia, the Russian church, simply Russia – lost a hecatomb of blood in the war against communism. A country which first and on such a scale was a victim of communism, cannot be also the victim of its fall. Poland cannot support such a wrong view about this great country.”<sup>158</sup> Russia was also seen by other representatives of the former anti-communist opposition – liberals and activists of “Solidarity” - as a very precious partner.

Jan Krzysztof Bielecki optimistically regarded the new European reality, and Polish geopolitical situation, as the best for ages. In his opinion, the fact of the fall of the Soviet imperial state connected with building democracy and a market economy by the new states, opened for Poland two large areas of activity, on the West and the East. He stressed, that: “the view of Poland as a country which occupied a territory between two dangerous powers is an anachronism. Old Germany and the Soviet empire do not exist. (...) The policy of the two enemies is replaced by partnership and dialogue. “In his statement there appeared yet another element: a characteristic one for the Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD) – pressure over Poland’s own responsibility for this dialogue, for taking a chance, without any attempt to decline it because of possible mistakes on the other side.<sup>159</sup> Bogdan Borusewicz presenting „Solidarity’s” opinion thought that Polish economic interests were concentrated in the East, and in this context both Russia and Ukraine were important states with which it was necessary to keep a balance in relationships.<sup>160</sup> The same note appeared in

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<sup>156</sup> ib., p. 162

<sup>157</sup> ib., p.166

<sup>158</sup> ib., p. 168

<sup>159</sup> ib., p.172

<sup>160</sup> ib.,p.174

the speech of declared conservative , Janusz Korwin-Mikke, who mentioned that his party without any hesitation supported the independence of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania, “ remembering that together with the strengthening of their independence , Russia will become our natural partner”.<sup>161</sup> The representative of the Christian Democrats repeated all these opinions about the necessity of good relations with Russia though he also underlined that it would be good to have from Russia itself a clear declaration about its imperial past and its conception of the future. <sup>162</sup>

In his response to these opinions of different parties, minister Skubiszewski, confirmed that the Polish government was deeply interested in strengthening relations with Russia though everything did not depend on its activity alone, but also what was done by the Russian side, and business on both sides. One year later, in his next official statement to parliament, he could concentrate on this economic dimension where he noticed some progress.

, but he saw the need to clarify the question of mutual indebtedness and to make a long-term economic agreement which could guarantee trade exchanges. But relations with the East were also placed in a broader context of security. On the one hand Skubiszewski said that the new emerging order in the East created an amazing chance for co-operation because this region, by choosing democracy, became also “ a factor contributing to the independence, democracy and security of Poland”. On the other hand, he stressed that Polish diplomacy had to take into account a less advantageous scenario in which the anti-democratic forces in the east were victorious, and pushed the region towards confrontation and restoration of the imperial order. Hence, to be prepared for such a version meant for Poland, “ tight institutional links with Western structures with priority given to the Euro-Atlantic security system.” <sup>163</sup>

This question was developed in the debate by a representative of the Democratic Union, Andrzej Wielowieyski, who said that Poland’s and the Visegrad Group’s membership of NATO gave security guarantees not only for those states but for all Europe. He stressed that apart from the advantage resulting from the alliance at the moment of direct danger, no less important was the psychological effect – to stop all dreams of expansion in advance. But at the same time he stated: “ We should not arouse fears in the East. Thus, a necessary condition in this case would have to be a true, parallel opening of the West to co-operation with Russia, and its gradual inclusion, though without concessions, to the Council of Europe and other European institutions”.<sup>164</sup> Liberals agreed that the best way to support the democratic forces in Russia was co-operation Russia with the West. They also did not see any danger stemming from this fact for Poland’s European aspirations, “

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<sup>161</sup>ib., p.175

<sup>162</sup>ib., p.177

<sup>163</sup> Sprawozdanie, 29 April 1993, p. 12

<sup>164</sup>ib., p. 117

rather on the contrary, we see in it a still better chance for our national security”, said Jacek Kurczewski, “we generally see our security in our neighbours finding a place in integrated international structures. (...) our active eastern policy, about which we hear so many myths, has to mean first and foremost our economic activity (...).”<sup>165</sup> Polish parliamentarians repeated in unison, as they had one year earlier, that Russia was an important partner which could not be forgotten during Polish attempts to attain closer relations with the West. This latter was seen not as an alternative but as a guarantor if democratic transition in the East came to a halt.

It was already mentioned that Poland achieved a nearly complete consensus in the foreign affairs area after only a few years of transformation. This was particularly the case in the choice of priorities. This agreement stemmed from similarities in perspectives on the security question. Because of it, in the statements of the next foreign minister, Olechowski, quoted earlier, could be seen the same certainty on the NATO membership question, as well as straining after the best relations with the East. From the point of view of Polish diplomacy these two aims did not exclude each other but this opinion was not shared by the Russian side. And these signs were noted by Olechowski in 1994 during his parliamentary speech. He regretted that conservative Russian circles saw in NATO a danger to its national interests. <sup>166</sup>

At that time, the SLD which won the election, also stood in the position of supporter not only of the EU but also NATO enlargement. This view was expressed in the Sejm by Pastusiak who stressed simultaneously: “ Our diplomacy is not able to keep a political dialogue with Russia, first of all in the security area. While we should remember that the better are our relationships with our eastern neighbours the better is our position in the East. The role of “alarm bell” in regard to East (which Poland plays) does not impress decision centres in the West. <sup>167</sup> The representative of the PSL, the second party of the ruling coalition at that time, also estimated that it was necessary to change the too passive Polish policy towards Russia:” “How often”, he said, “had the painful past which concerned our nation , released emotions; but it should not prevent us from seeking for new forms of co-operation with our Russian partner, because there, independently of systems, we have interests and friendly people and the most promising market.” But he agreed with the minister’s concern that too many voices resembling the old epoch were heard from Russia. <sup>168</sup> A similar tone appeared in the speech of Geremek who represented the opposition at that time. He recalled how disastrous for Poland had been the Russian-German alliance, and emphasized the necessity of keeping good relations with both neighbours: “ we must have relations with Russia based on

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<sup>165</sup> *ib.*, p. 120

<sup>166</sup> Sprawozdanie, 12 May 1994, p.27

<sup>167</sup> *ib.*, p. 33

<sup>168</sup> *ib.*, p.35

understanding where we agree, where not, where we can agree in the future. Among these questions where we can now agree are the economy, culture, and human contacts. And these can be a starting point to political rapprochement. But it needs also that Polish neighbourhood was independent (...) at this moment only democratic Russia has a chance for the future.”<sup>169</sup> For the leftist Labour Party, understanding of Russia’s difficulties in building the new reality, and readiness for collaboration could not conceal the dangerous political tendencies represented by Russian nationalists – so for this parliamentary group, too, Polish membership of NATO was the obvious choice.<sup>170</sup>

Polish politicians stressed many times that potential Polish NATO membership should not be read as an unfriendly act towards Russia, but as a need to be inside leading international structures. They stressed that from the Polish point of view it would be most advantageous if Russia too was integrated into the Western system, including in the political-military structure – because this latter could not be effective without Russia. And such an opinion was heard from Christian Democratic circles as well as from social democrats. Among the latter, Tadeusz Iwiński of the SLD, argued that the better Russian-American relations were, the stronger Polish security would be.<sup>171</sup> Wielowieyski from UD tried to point to the question of different perceptions of threat in both countries as a key problem. “Hence we think”, he commented, “that Russia is not in danger because of NATO and the WEU expansion. But Russia sees them as dangerous structures, and from her own point of view is right, because enlargement of these security systems limits and complicates her foreign policy. (...) It is in the common interest of all Europe (...) but also Russia, that Russia integrates with Europe. This is a difficult process, which needs time but it is necessary and possible, however under one condition – that this difference in understanding threats disappears. This difference stems from a narrow, short-sighted and false Russian understanding of its political opportunities and an attempt to regain a strong global position through political and military power, not through internal reforms.”<sup>172</sup>

The issue of relations with Russia in the context of European security was in 1994 also a topic of important discussions of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Commission. In April minister Olechowski participated in such a meeting, explaining that Poland proposed that Russia should follow a “philosophy” of mutual relations – acceptance of the fact that both states cannot agree on global matters but want to develop regional and bilateral relations. He also had the impression that the visits of Josef Oleksy, chair of Sejm, and prime minister, Waldemar Pawlak to Moscow, as well as minister Kozyrev to Warsaw, indicated agreement based on such a solution. In his analysis of

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<sup>169</sup> *ib.*, p.38

<sup>170</sup> *ib.*, p.40

<sup>171</sup> *ib.*, p.44,48

<sup>172</sup> *ib.*, p.64-65

Russia's situation he stressed that possible events stemming from disorganisation, chaos and poverty, and indications of a return to imperial ideas remained a threat for Poland. But he also called for a sense of proportion rather than a mood of panic because Poland was not included in the Russian conception of "near abroad". On the other hand in his opinion Russia's foreign policy not only wanted to halt NATO expansion eastward but also to weaken all European integration institutions. And this stemmed from the fact, that: "Russia, like each big power, would prefer to see a divided Europe, a Europe of small states which in proportion to Russia would be weak countries. So it is not interested in the existence of big blocks like the EU and NATO. If Russia would be sure of a strong, highly integrated CIS, it could accept more willingly a bloc system, maybe even prefer it."<sup>173</sup>

Parliamentarians stressed that dialogue in the security area with Russia was too weak, and Russia's view of Poland as a friendly country was far from ideal. Geremek stressed the weak promotion of Poland in Russia's media, a passivity which tended to strengthen the mainly negative information presented by Russian journalists. The representative of SLD mentioned irresponsible and negative Polish comments on excellent Russian-American relations or the possibility of special treatment of Russia by NATO – in his opinion Poland has no influence on this situation but it created the impression of unfriendliness towards Russia.<sup>174</sup>

In May 1994 the Commission again debated the regional situation and potential threats; an introductory paper by social democrat Pastusiak was generally welcomed. He stressed that he did not see a threat from the East but he did see dangers there. Among these he included the economic and social instability of Russia which could lead to ethnic conflicts, disintegration and at the moment of explosion - bring harm also to Russia's neighbours. The threat "from the East" could emerge if hegemonic tendencies would win in Russia and it would like to enlarge its influence to Central Europe. He considered also threats stemming from Russia's reaction to Polish aspirations towards NATO. It would be a cause for alarm if negotiations on a special status for Russia would mean it being offered by NATO particular rights in relation to Central Europe, e.g. a veto over strategic decisions in the foreign policy of Visegrad states.<sup>175</sup> Discussants stressed that awareness of such potential threats should lead to support for all forces in Russia that were democratic and ready for co-operation with the West, and it meant also more balanced and careful opinions about Russia from the Polish side. For example, exaggeration of the danger stemming from the military in Kaliningrad was unnecessary because they had no aggressive plans. An interesting remark came

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<sup>173</sup> Biuletyn Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych, Kancelaria Sejmu, No 493/II kadencja, 28 April 1994, p. 8-9

<sup>174</sup> ib., p. 13-14

<sup>175</sup> Biuletyn Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych..., No 14/ II kadencja, 20 May 1994, p. 20-21

from Wojciech Lamentowicz (UP) who commented on the idea of being a bridge for the West to Russia. “ It is worth considering carefully whether the Polish offer of being a bridge is sensible and whether it did not do more harm in our relations with our eastern neighbours than bring advantages. One can have the impression that their pride, honour, and national interests are hurt (...).” He suggested that Poland keep the best relations possible with both Russia and Ukraine and not intervene in their bilateral conflicts. However, for Wielowieyski, Poland would inevitably be such a bridge in the economic field owing to its position, though he agreed that offering Russia any kind of political mediation would be comical.<sup>176</sup>

In 1995 the new foreign minister , Wladyslaw Bartoszewski , in his parliamentary expose, tried to concentrate only on economic, cultural and human contacts, stressing that a lot was achieved in those areas. “ We try to keep dialogue with Russia in an open, pragmatic climate, based on good will, although we do not escape from difficult questions, too” – he stated.<sup>177</sup>

But it is obvious why parliamentarians of all political options concentrated on the “difficult questions” which meant discussion of European security and the differences between the Polish and Russian positions. Iwinski from the ruling coalition said: “ We observe with anxiety the opinions of some Russian politicians that Polish membership of NATO could be against Russia’s security. We reject such views. We believe at the same time that Polish aspirations to be in the Euro-Atlantic structures will not become a subject of bargaining between superpowers.”<sup>178</sup> Opposition opinion harmonised with this view; Hanna Suchocka (UW) said: “ The fundamental question in relations with Russia concerns our different visions of the security architecture. We want to believe that we are able to persuade our neighbour that NATO is a defensive alliance and Poland in NATO means the enlargement of the stability zone to the region where instability already twice in this century has been a cause of tragedy. Whether we can be successful is difficult to say; but independently of our political differences there remains a large area of co-operation.”<sup>179</sup>

And this combination of definitive support for Polish integration with the West with a willingness to develop the best possible co-operation with Russia was reiterated in the statements of all parliamentarians. It was accompanied by the hope that Russia would remain democratic. Politicians expected from the government that it would be able to explain to its Russian partners that if Poland was afraid of Russia, it would be only such a Russia where extreme expansionists and nationalistic parties won elections and took power. However they also set out a clear limit to compromise – NATO enlargement. This lack of compromise, meant, according to Janusz

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<sup>176</sup> *ib.*, p. 26-27

<sup>177</sup> Sprawozdanie, 24 May 1995, p.15

<sup>178</sup> Sprawozdanie, 25 May 1995, p.112

<sup>179</sup> *ib.* , p. 118

Onyszkiewicz (UW), a policy towards Russia and NATO members which excluded any decision about Central Europe without its participation; and such an explanation for Russia which made it clear that even its strong “Niet” did not stop enlargement; on the contrary, it would continue behind Russia which was not profitable for itself.<sup>180</sup> However, it was also stressed that in the heat of discussion Poland should avoid irresponsible suggestions. This was expressed in the strongest way by Leszek Moczulski, from the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN), a party which was never an enthusiast of close Polish-Russian relations, when he said that arguments in the style: we have to be a NATO member because of the terrible danger from the East brought more disadvantage than advantage. “(...) it is an issue”, he said, “ which complicated Polish-Russian relations, an issue (...) which awoke fears in Moscow. We should understand these Russians who think that Poland’s motivation is purely anti-Russian. So why build such an atmosphere? Because we are afraid of invasion from the east? Obviously we can have serious troubles because of the East – stemming from disintegration. (...) But we have to say honestly: (...) it is unlikely that we could meet with a threat from the Russian state, particularly a military threat.”<sup>181</sup> He returned also to the thesis that good relations with Russia would be the best Polish contribution to NATO and an argument for enlargement as the Alliance was interested first of all in stabilisation in Europe, in peaceful relations, and would be against any conflict with the East.<sup>182</sup>

The importance of the Russian question in Polish policy in the mid 90s was evident. Minister Bartoszewski, in his comments on the debate, observed that both countries tried to do a lot to resolve problems from the past: the celebration in Katyn and Miednoje served such purposes. However he did not want history to determine the present, preferring to emphasise contacts among the new generations, such as exchanges of young people from schools and universities. He regretted that he could not have an influence on one-sided opinions or false information in Polish newspapers, sometimes even voices full of hatred, and equally minister Kozyrev was not able to change the analogous situation in the Russian media. But in his opinion though such “ primitive people” existed in every country, the reality was different from the one presented in in the media – there were no serious conflicts between the two states because neither had any unfriendly plans towards the other. Differences in the security area could not stop the development of mutually profitable relations in other fields. So he noticed only one serious problem – that both countries

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<sup>180</sup> *ib.*, p. 138

<sup>181</sup> *ib.*, p. 122, see also p. 124,126,128

<sup>182</sup> *ib.*, p. 128,135,139,144,147

were at the beginning of reshaping their foreign policy towards each other and for that reason inconsistency or even steps read as unfriendly could emerge.<sup>183</sup>

Undoubtedly the next period, when at last the decision about enlargement was taken, was bound to be full of problems with Russia. Hence the next foreign minister, representing the social democrat government, Dariusz Rosati, had to balance two aims – membership of NATO and “opening” to the east. He expressed this dilemma in his first parliamentary statement: “We have to constantly persuade everyone that NATO enlargement is not against any country but it is an element of a new European security architecture which also embraces Russia. We do not ask and we shall not ask Russia about its acceptance of our NATO membership, though, according to the rules of good neighbourhood, we want to inform Russia about our intentions . We cannot also accept the argument – which we stressed many times – that our NATO membership will cause the isolation of Russia. We reply to this first of all by stating that we see the strengthening of co-operation between NATO and Russia ( as well Ukraine and other states which will not become – at least soon – members of the Alliance), as important elements of enlargement.”<sup>184</sup>

This opinion was supported by all the parliamentarians of the left wing ( SLD, UP) who wanted dialogue and co-operation with Russia but excluded any right of this state to make decisions on Polish national security. All the more because Polish membership should serve the cause of stabilisation in eastern Europe, not anti-Russian plans.<sup>185</sup> A broader perspective on this question was offered by Iwinski (SLD), who pointed out that Russia was not involved in talks about Polish membership of NATO so Poland should not talk with it about this problem, but about European security as a whole. In his opinion, this new architecture should contain three elements. Firstly, an enlarged NATO, which would be responsible not only for "peacekeeping", but also "peacemaking". Secondly, special agreements with non-members, including Russia and Ukraine. And finally, a system of co-operation among such organisations as NATO, the WEU, the OSCE, the Council of Europe. Such an architecture would also serve well Russia’s security so it could be a basis for a Polish-Russian dialogue.<sup>186</sup>

Rosati in his next speech defended the outcome of president Kwasniewski's visit to Moscow, and his own talks with minister Primakov, which parliamentarians considered to have been ineffective. According to him it would be unrealistic to believe in a “turning –point” in a situation involving such fundamental differences over security questions. He regretted that so many prejudices still existed in both countries but hoped that even these differences could be presented in

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<sup>183</sup> *ib.*, p. 185

<sup>184</sup> Sprawozdanie, 9 May 1996, p. 84

<sup>185</sup> *ib.*, p. 92,98,103,114,121,127

<sup>186</sup> *ib.* , p.105

a democratic way. As an important sign of changes he envisaged a “two-track” policy on the part of Russia. On the one hand, an official “No” for enlargement, on the other hand a readiness to accept this fact, though after bargaining.<sup>187</sup>

In 1997 he explained in detail again the Polish position towards Russia in connection with NATO. He hoped that the project of a Russia- NATO Charter - as a proof of the best intentions of NATO and Poland - could calm Russian nerves. He lamented however that political elites in Moscow still kept their negative opinion about enlargement. “It is not true”, he said, “that NATO enlargement will divide Europe ; on the contrary it liquidated the relics of the Yalta agreements (...). It is also not true that enlargement will isolate Russia. Look at the many proposals for Russia concerning co-operation, including the NATO-Russia Charter.. And finally it is also not true that NATO enlargement means a threat to Russian security, because NATO as an Alliance of democratic states is not an aggressive block, and cannot be dangerous for peace or sovereignty.”<sup>188</sup> He believed that if Russia became democratic and respectful of the rights of other states “ it will become an important, and respectful partner, an important member of the European security system.”<sup>189</sup>

Oleksy ( though also from SLD) was not satisfied by so general a statement about other fields of co-operation with Russia. He expected the minister to indicate how Poland was going to support democratic transition in Russia, to stop nationalism which could lead to dangerous chauvinism.<sup>190</sup> Also the PSL thought that a passive eastern policy could only strengthen Russian opposition. And such views were quite common.<sup>191</sup> Piotr Ikonowicz from Polish Socialist Party (PPS ) was eager for closer co-operation with Russia and support for its reforms. In his opinion, though Russia had no aggressive intentions, the situation in the east, with economic crises and ethnic conflicts, could lead to an explosion from which NATO would be not able to protect everybody. He stressed that NATO which understood this problem tried to maintain close relations and to help Russia, and all Poles should act similarly.<sup>192</sup>

The Minister defended government policy arguing that he constantly tried to persuade the Russian partners of Poland's non-aggressive intentions. But the eastern policy had to be subordinate to the priorities of Polish foreign policy, namely integration with western structures. Because Russia

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<sup>187</sup> ib., p. 168

<sup>188</sup> ib.,p.115

<sup>189</sup> ib., p.118

<sup>190</sup> ib.,p.245

<sup>191</sup> ib.,p.250,259,263,264,270

<sup>192</sup> ib.,262

opposed such aims, it was clearly impossible to achieve very good results in economic and cultural exchanges; Russia was against talks and contacts without a solution of the main problem.<sup>193</sup>

In the next year, Polish membership of NATO was certain, hence the new minister – Bronislaw Geremek - emphasized that this fact could serve as the turning-point in mutual relations and could open an opportunity for talks about regional security. He believed that from now on, pragmatism should win in Russia's policy and an understanding should prevail that the tendency to disregard the interests of small and middle states in Russia's neighbourhood did not serve Russia itself well.<sup>194</sup> He received support from the leader of the winning coalition Electoral Action "Solidarity" (AWS), Marian Krzaklewski, who spoke about the opportunity to develop relations with Russia as well about the necessity for a real partnership.<sup>195</sup> Tadeusz Mazowiecki (UW) also mentioned this partnership but he stressed the increased necessity of redoubling efforts towards reconciliation with Russia, because the success of Poland's Western policy would be diminished and temporary without an analogous success on the Eastern front.<sup>196</sup>

It is worth noting that the opinions of the other political parties were similar. Janusz Dobrosz (PSL) called for replacing bad memories about the past with good economic co-operation. Jan Olszewski from Movement for Restoration of Poland (ROP) stated that despite all difficulties talks with Russian politicians should be a priority because Russia was Poland's big neighbour. And during these talks Polish politicians should show that a Poland independent and friendly towards Russia was more in the interest of Russia than Russia's efforts to subordinate Central Europe to it. Oleksy and Iwilski (SLD) talked also about the advantages for Russia deriving from a Poland rooted in European integration structures but close also to the East.<sup>197</sup>

In 1999 Poland, now a member of NATO, declared in the Sejm that it would like to be active in building a network of security agreements in the whole Central East Europe area, including Russia.<sup>198</sup> It hoped for a dialogue with Russia in all other fields of co-operation. This time, it was the social democrat opposition which criticised the lack of progress on the eastern policy. Leszek Miller, SLD leader, mentioned the unnecessary liquidation of transborder trade and absence of a long-term conception. But UW and ROP also stressed the necessity of preparing a list of the most important aims in the east and their effective realisation. For them, as with parliamentarians of

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<sup>193</sup> *ib.*, p.286-288

<sup>194</sup> Sprawozdanie, 5 March 1998, p. 72

<sup>195</sup> *ib.*, p. 77

<sup>196</sup> *ib.*, p. 83

<sup>197</sup> *ib.*, p. 86,88,97,102

<sup>198</sup> Sprawozdanie, 8 April 1999, p. 26-27

AWS ( Krzaklewski, Stefan Niesiolowski) there was a constant explanation that Poland was not anti-Russian in its security policy, and was building stable co-operation. <sup>199</sup>

Undoubtedly the hopes of most Polish politicians that the final act of admission to NATO would bring a calmer atmosphere and make constructive talks possible, failed in the climate of the Kosovo war, NATO intervention, and opposition to this by Russia. In his parliamentary expose in 2000, minister Geremek noted that, despite NATO membership, security remained the main problem for Polish policy, albeit he had in mind multidimensional security, including economic – particularly in the context of globalisation and integration. He announced Poland’s activity in strengthening all European institutions which were responsible for stabilisation, co-operation and development because being complementary to each other, not rivals could guarantee peace. Hence, apart from the obvious support for NATO and the EU, he stressed the importance of the OSCE, the Council of Europe and all regional structures of co-operation in Central East Europe. Against this background he talked about Polish-Russian relations, which in his opinion were not in a good condition. However, he saw the beginnings of a historic change. "We are only half way", he stated "we have been able to finish with the dependency/domination relationship which in different epochs concerned one or another of our states (...) To settle with history – and I say this in the 60th anniversary of the Katyn crime – is still an unfinished task. Poles are able to “ forgive and to ask about forgiveness”. We should think – in both countries – how wisely and imaginatively to build the future relationship between Russia and Poland. We have the good will to build a friendly neighbourhood. We declare this in the new political situation when Poland participates in structures of the Euro-Atlantic community which are not directed against Russia but where Russia is absent. Polish membership in western alliances, as well as Polish support for independence and the European orientation of the newly emerged post-soviet states, should not prevent the development of economic and cultural relations. “ He also repeated that the choice of a western option did not mean eastern policy was unimportant. But this latter demanded a new formula - without old phobias and illusions. He hoped that the stabilisation of the Russian situation after the presidential election could be conducive to reforms and put an end to resolving ethnic conflicts by force. In the name of the Polish government he expressed the expectation that it would permit a return to political dialogue and constructive mutual relations, which was in the best interests of both countries. <sup>200</sup>

We have to remember that the beginning of 2000 brought events which were inevitably going to have a negative impact upon Polish-Russian relations, and though the

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<sup>199</sup> ib., p. 40,67,49,55,57

<sup>200</sup> Informacja rządu o kierunkach polskiej polityki zagranicznej, pos. Sejmu, 9 May 2000, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

minister did not talk about these directly, awareness of those problems was apparent in his speech. At the beginning of 2000 Poland formulated its new Strategy which replaced the old document from 1992. This new version contained a thesis which, on the one hand could lead to tensions with Russia, always sensitive on the question of its “near abroad”, on the other hand proved once more Polish readiness for dialogue with Russia. Poland declared: “We shall support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of our neighbours - Lithuania and Slovakia -- and of other countries in the region. The Partnership for Peace program, individual co-operation programmes, international military units and other joint ventures serve, among other things, the realisation of these aspirations. Poland will make an effort to develop a strategic partnership with an independent and democratic Ukraine, which is one of the most important elements of stability and security in Europe. We shall support, to the best of our ability, the democratic authorities in Kiev in their strivings to consolidate Ukraine's independence and stability and forge stronger links with European integration structures. Our policy vis-à-vis Russia, a country striving for democracy and reforms, will be one of openness and a sustained search for points of contact and concrete areas of co-operation. As NATO's easternmost nation we have a vital interest in a positive evolution of Russia's relations with the Alliance.”<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, adopted at the meeting of the Council of Ministers, 4 January 2000, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

### Chapter III

#### The issue of NATO enlargement in the opinion of Russian and Polish society

In the nineties the enlargement of NATO to the East was among the most important and sensitive issues of policy for both Poland and Russia. This was apparent not only in political struggles on the international arena and on the podium of both parliaments but also in editorial columns of Polish and Russian newspapers and journals, and at numerous academic conferences. Participants in this wide debate considered the question of European security, particular NATO issues, and the consequences of different security choices for the relationship between Poland and Russia. The media of both countries supported their own national policies, and created a sometimes misleading picture of their neighbour. Unfortunately this societal level of Polish-Russian relations could not be helpful in building friendly relations. If the media brought news from the other country it was mainly information about crisis, difficulties, anti-Russian/ anti-Polish actions, demonstrations, statements of these politicians who presented unfriendly views towards the other country.

Russian attitudes towards Poland and vice versa were based on a mixture of clichés and stereotypes. The Poles were seen as traitors to the Slavic community, but also as megalomaniacs sure of their superiority; infected by Occidentalism and Catholicism. On the one hand Poland was associated with invasions of Russia in 17 century, on the other hand with two centuries of being under the power of Russia. The Russians were seen as oppressors but also as representatives of “Asians”, so, in the opinion of many Poles, a lower civilisation than the European. Such attitudes were a sort of compensation for Polish inferiority complexes towards Western Europe. So Russians in Polish public opinion polls held a low position among nations which were respected and liked. In 1997, 53% of Poles expressed their lack of friendly feelings (20% - friendly), which situated Russians behind most nations, and only Gypsies, Romanians and Ukrainians incurred worse opinions.<sup>202</sup>

However there were still people who were able to separate memories about the bad past in mutual relations from respect for the positive features of both nations -their ability to fight heroically in the cause of freedom and cultural achievements. This latter question returned many times in discussions among cultural elites in the 90s, who regretted that something important was lost in the context of political struggles and economic difficulties. The Russians, artists and academics, who treated Poland as a “window” to the West in the 70s

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<sup>202</sup> Report of the CBOS, Stosunek naszego społeczeństwa do innych nacji, Warszawa, October 1997, p. 2

and 80s, preferred now to present their achievements behind Polish borders; the Poles also looked to the West, and ignored the East.<sup>203</sup>

This state of affairs should be changed in the opinion of Polish but also Russian politicians, who, visited each other particularly in 2000-2001; also such opinions were heard from the media in both countries. They were connected with the understanding that without better knowledge about each other both nations would never be free from their negative stereotypes. From the initiative of Jerzy Giedroyc, a symbolic person for Polish policy in the East, a new journal *Novaya Polsha* began to be edited for the Russia market. Its editor – in – chief, Jerzy Pomianowski estimated that though no dialogue was so difficult as between Russians and Poles, it had to continue. He stated that the new journal had been sent in 2000 to some 3.200 public libraries as well as to hundreds of bookstores in Russia, and thousands of intellectuals read it.<sup>204</sup> In 2001 the most popular Polish newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, granted the title “Man of the Year” to the first Russian – Sergiej Kovaliov. Prime Minister, Jerzy Buzek during his laudation said that Russians and Poles shared suffering for years from communist system but Poland remembered not only about Stalinist Russia but also about the Russia of Hercen, Sacharov, Brodskij, and Kovaliov – who insisted on human rights and media freedom. He suggested that this title was not only for Kovaliov but for all free, democratic Russia, which was necessary for Europe: “European tradition consists of Rome and Byzantium, the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets. I believe that if it is the plan of God, we shall create a great, peaceful civilisation from the Atlantic to Siberia.”<sup>205</sup>

But ordinary Poles and Russians did not share this positive attitude yet; they were, at best, indifferent towards their neighbour. Public opinion polls show in the 90s. that Polish society was afraid of Russia, Russian society did not care much about foreign nations and policy. The question of NATO enlargement appeared in this context.

#### 1. Russian opinion about NATO, security and Poland.

While politicians and academics hotly discussed the question of NATO enlargement in the nineties, the Russian general public remained largely indifferent to the prospects of NATO enlargement eastward. However, it contributed to the growing scepticism towards the West, which feeling coincided with the end of hopes for a quick improvement of the

<sup>203</sup> See, Kowalczevska A, Peczak M, Wschod zachodzi, *Polityka*, 6 January 2001, p. 51-52

<sup>204</sup> Pomianowski J, Zanim Samson zniszczy swiat, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 May 2000, p. 17-19;

<sup>205</sup> Sladami Hercena, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 May 2001, p. 2

economic, and social situation, for political stability, and strengthening Russia's position in the world.

This limited interests in the NATO question was connected with the pressure of everyday life: a society preoccupied with domestic difficulties left world politics to the leaders. Consequently, Russians defined national security almost exclusively in terms of economic, social, political well-being, and most of them had very little interest in the outside world. Polls from 1996 which asked about NATO expansion indicated that the majority of respondents were either uninformed or did not know whether the expansion would be bad or good for their country. Such indifference was apparent from the supporters of all parties, even the most anti-NATO, like the nationalists of Zhirinovskiy (20% afraid of NATO) or the communists of Ziuganov (25%). However the group of estimating that it would be a "bad" thing was always bigger (around 30%), while their opponents ranged from 11 to 16%, depending on the poll. 64% of Russians asked whether Poland in NATO would be dangerous for Russia had no opinion, and the same percentage (18), thought that it would be a threat as that it would not be.<sup>206</sup> In particular political groups this opinion was different, for example the majority of supporters of Democratic Choice for Russia thought that Poland did not threaten Russia (36% against 17%), the same was true of Our Home – Russia (25% against 17%) while others had more divided opinions (Yabloko, 21% against 21%) or were certain that a Polish danger did exist (Communists – 25% against 15%, Congress of Russian Communities - 34 against 24%, Liberal-Democratic Party – 20 against 14). Consequently, supporters of presidential candidates like Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin, Gajdar were on balanced relaxed thinking about Poland, while others were full of concern.<sup>207</sup> At that time, the majority (77%) of Poles asked about the same problem were sure that Poland was in no danger, even as a member of NATO while 9% had the contrary opinion, and 14% had no opinion. Poles had also reached clear conclusions about the consequences of Polish membership for region – 66% were sure that it would help to increase peace and stabilisation in Europe, while only 8% of Russian had the same opinion, and 76% had no opinion at all.<sup>208</sup>

Because of this evident lack of knowledge or interests of Russians in the whole problem, Andrei Kortunov considered that political and military elites in Moscow might be accused of hypocrisy when they referred to the "Russian people" in justifying their

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<sup>206</sup> Poll of CBOS and VCIOM, January 1996, Report of the CBOS, Warszawa, February 1996, p. 2; see also USIA, Russians and Ukrainians Differ in their Views of NATO and the U.S., Opinion Analysis, January 1997

<sup>207</sup> Poll of CBOS and VCIOM ... , p. 4

<sup>208</sup> *ib.*, p.2, 5

own opposition to NATO enlargement, however he agreed that “for the top <ten thousand> of Russia’s decision makers and opinion shapers, the issue was a crucial litmus test foreshadowing the future of relations between Russia and the west.”<sup>209</sup> Following sociological data (connected not only with NATO but also with other dramatic events like the unification of Germany, war in Chechnya, Soviet disintegration) he also did not believe that enlargement of NATO would cause radical shifts in attitudes of the general public.<sup>210</sup> However he did not predict the Kosovo war which changed a little this neutral position of Russians towards NATO expansion.

The results of an opinion poll prepared by the Centre of International Sociological Research, in Moscow, in March/April 1997 were quite optimistic for the Poles. The majority of respondents (67%) thought that Polish association with NATO was Poland’s internal matter; only 25% had a different opinion. It stemmed possibly from another opinion, that Poland did not belong to the regions thought particularly important for Russia’s interests (53%, against those 29% thinking it was important). The majority of Russians (54%) also agreed that NATO membership meant more security for Poland. However 56% thought that Poland should rather keep her neutrality (but 40% had no opinion). The consequences of such a step were seen as follows: Poland will be “further” from Russia (25%), trade exchange will fall (27%), less energy supplies will be sent to Poland (31%), tensions between Poland and Russia will increase (17%). Respondents accepted enlargement but with several conditions: nuclear weapons should not be placed on Polish territory (43%), Poland should not let another state use its territory for an attack on Russia (21%), the Polish army should not be used for such an attack (24%). But Russian-Polish relations were estimated by the majority as friendly by 55%, as normal by 30%, and cold by 6%. 68% of Russians declared that they held friendly attitudes towards Poles, 20% neutral, only 2% unfriendly.<sup>211</sup>

The Public Opinion Foundation in Moscow presents a regular Russia-wide poll of urban and rural populations, similar to Polish public opinion centres. A typical group of respondents contains 1500 people in each poll. In 1997, still before the decision from Madrid, Russians were asked the question whether NATO was an aggressive or a defensive military block? The same question was repeated in March 2000, after enlargement and the Kosovo war. The distribution of answers was as follows: for

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<sup>209</sup> Kortunov A, NATO ..., p.71

<sup>210</sup> ib., p. 70

<sup>211</sup> Rosyjska opinia publiczna o wstapieniu Polski do NATO, Centrum Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych Instytutu Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 1997.

“aggressive block” 38% in February 1997, 56% in March 2000, while for “defensive block” - 24 % in 1997, 17% in 2000. As we see, over the period between two polls, the share of those who considered NATO to be an aggressive military organisation had grown noticeably. Supporters of Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy (63% in each group), men (64%), women (49%), and people with higher education (68%) most often supported this point of view.<sup>212</sup> The same process of hardening attitudes towards NATO was seen in another poll. In Spring 1997 the question was asked: *Do you think NATO expansion to the East threatens Russia or not?* One-half of respondents (51%) were concerned by NATO expansion, while one-third (34%) were not concerned by the problem. In June 1999 , in the obvious context of the Balkan conflict, 66% of respondents saw such a threat, while 14% did not consider NATO expansion to the East to be dangerous for Russia; 21% were undecided. Respondents were also asked to indicate what Russia should do in order to prevent the threat connected with NATO expansion. Four possible options were given.<sup>213</sup> See table 1 :

**Table 1** NATO expansion to the East (in %)

Russia should not allow NATO expansion to the East using all political and diplomatic means	25
Russia should increase its military power in order to be ready to repulse the threat of NATO using military means	22
Russia should create a defensive union with countries that did not join NATO	16
Russia should join NATO	5

Source: Report of the Public Opinion Foundation, 30 July 1999, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

The data in *table 1* draws attention to another interesting question – the readiness of Russians to support their own country's membership of NATO . In a February 1997 poll, 19% of Russians said that Russia should join NATO; only 5% “ survived” with such views by 1999. But in 2000, after Putin’s statements about the possibility of joining NATO, respondents were again asked: “ *In your opinion , should Russia join NATO or not?*” , and 30% favoured such a move, while 43% were opposed. Supporters of joining NATO were

<sup>212</sup> Russia and NATO, 17 March 2000, author of report Chernyakov A., [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

<sup>213</sup> NATO expansion to the East, 30 July 1999, author of report, Petrova A. , [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

predominant among supporters of Yavlinsky, as well as Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces. Opinions about Putin after his statement were not seriously influenced by this fact, as we can see in *table 2*.

**Table 2**

**Attitudes towards Putin after his statement on considering joining NATO**

	All respondents
Improved	9
stayed without changes	63
grown worse	14
hard to answer	14

Source: Public opinion poll, 13 March 2001, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

Respondents were also asked the question: *is it possible that Russia will join NATO someday?* Positive answers were given more often than negative: 39% and 32%, respectively.<sup>214</sup> However in 2000 Russians preferred an even stronger policy towards NATO than in 1997 as is seen in *table 3*.

**Table 3**

**What policy do you think Russia should pursue towards NATO? (in %)**

	All respondents
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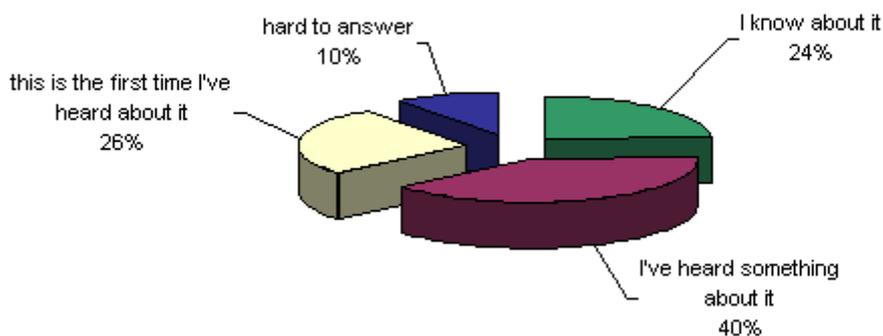
<sup>214</sup> Report of the Public Opinion Foundation, 13 March 2000, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

	17-18 Feb 1997	9-10 Mar 2000
Russia should prevent NATO's expansion into the East	29	34
Russia can allow NATO's expansion into the East in exchange for a profitable treaty of cooperation with NATO member countries	17	14
Russia shouldn't prevent NATO's expansion into the East	7	5
Russia should join NATO	19	19
Hard to answer	29	28

Source: Public opinion poll, 13 March 2000, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

But attitudes towards NATO and its enlargement should not be extracted from the broader range of Russian attitudes towards Europe, co-operation with the European countries, and feelings connected with the future of their own country and its national interest. This latter question is an interesting one because Russians have very little awareness of the “national interest” to which most politicians appealed. *See figure 1*

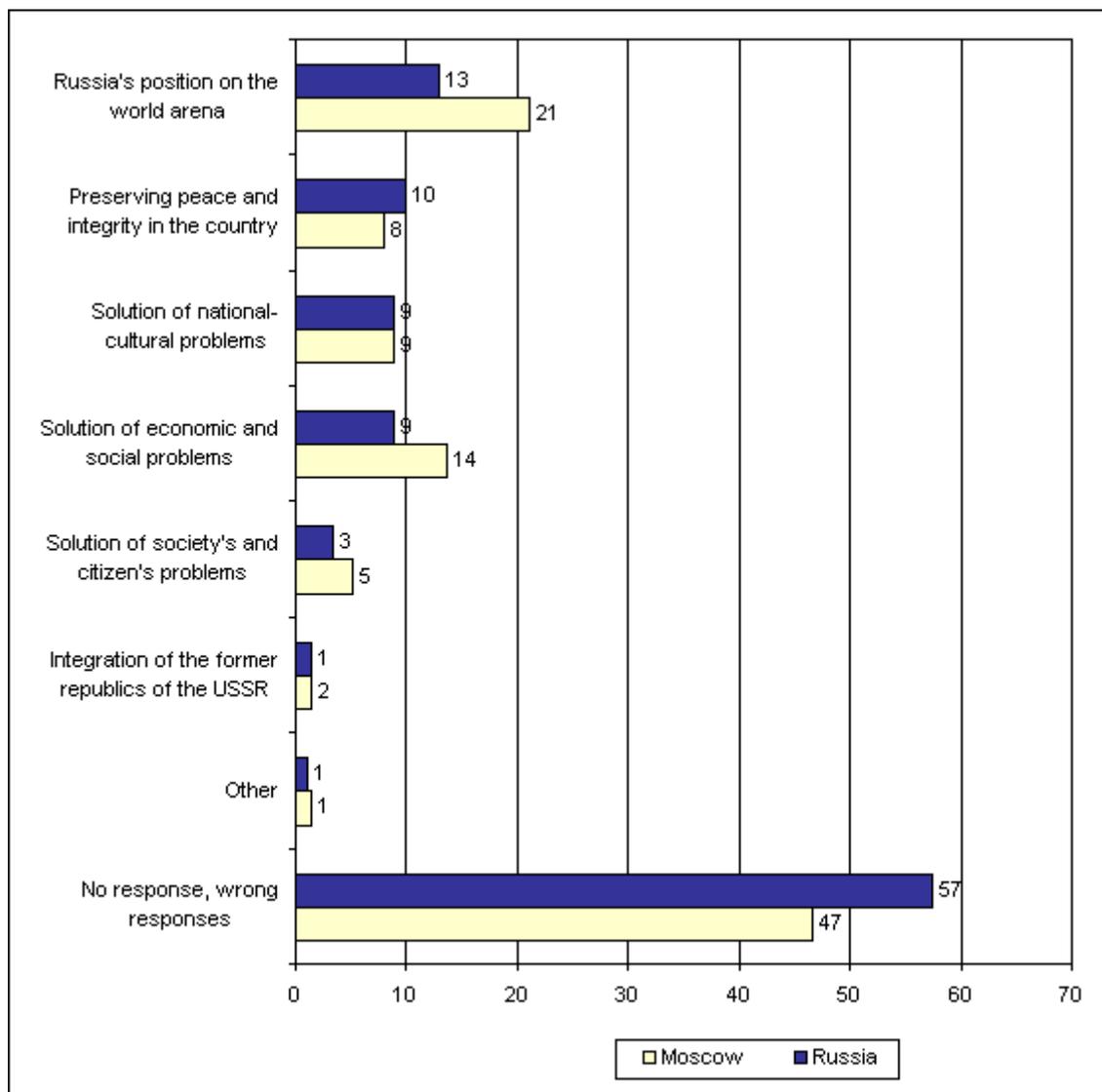
**Figure 1 Do you know, have you heard something, or is this first time you have heard the expression “Russia’s national interests?”**



Source: Public opinion poll, April 2001, Russia's national interests, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

In *figure 2* we can see how Russians defined their national interests. Despite small differences between Muscovites and the general population, most respondents who had an idea what national interest meant, stressed improvement of Russia's position in the world, and the importance of peace. The re-integration of the USSR was definitely not associated with this notion.

**Figure 2** What are the national interests of Russia today ?



Source: Public opinion poll, April 2001, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

However according to 500 representatives of legislative and executive bodies, science and media, private and state-run companies in Russia's 10 largest cities (in September 2000) Russia had quite large national interests. Only 15 % of those questioned believed that the scope of Russia's interests should be limited to the country's current borders. 81.4 % said that the scope of national interests was wider than Russia's territory.<sup>215</sup>

Regions and territories to which those polled attached importance ranged as follows:

- Caucasian Region - 97.2%
- Middle Asia and Kazakhstan - 89.3%

<sup>215</sup> Russia's national interests, ROMIR, September 2000, [www.romir.ru](http://www.romir.ru)

- Baltic states - 75.7 %
- Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova 99.6%
- Africa - 27.6 %
- North America - 56.8 %
- South America - 42.6 %
- Europe - 91.9 %
- Asia - 94.3 %

In this poll it is evident that Europe was among the three regions favoured with the highest interest. But as another poll indicated this did not mean Central-Eastern Europe. In this case Russians shared their attitude with their politicians who, as analysed in a previous chapter, did not work out a serious policy towards this region. *See table 4*

**Table 4**

**Regions of the world most important for Russia to strengthen relations ( in %)**

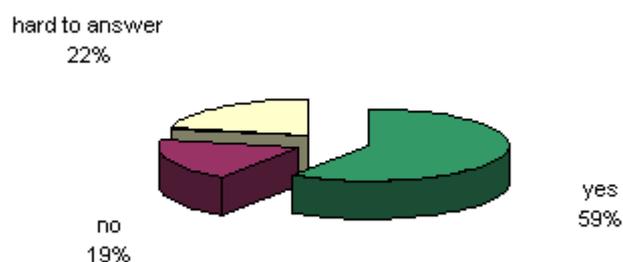
	May- 98	<b>June- 99</b>	September- 99
with all regions of the world	28	27	33
with the countries of western Europe	23	21	22
with the United States and Canada	18	13	15
with the countries of Asia	9	9	9
with the countries of Eastern Europe	5	5	5
with the countries of other regions (Middle East, Latin-American countries)	2	1	1

Source: Public opinion poll, 22 October 1999, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

As the data above shows western Europe was seen as the most attractive, specific partner in the world. In particular, people with a higher education, young people, residents of Moscow and St.-Petersburg, and supporters of Luzhkov, Putin, and Yavlinsky were most likely to be in favour of closer relations with the countries of

western Europe.<sup>216</sup> This region is associated of course with the EU. And this organisation was definitely interpreted as more friendly than NATO. The majority of respondents was even for Russia's membership of the EU. *See figure 3*

**Figure 3 Should Russia seek membership in the EU?**

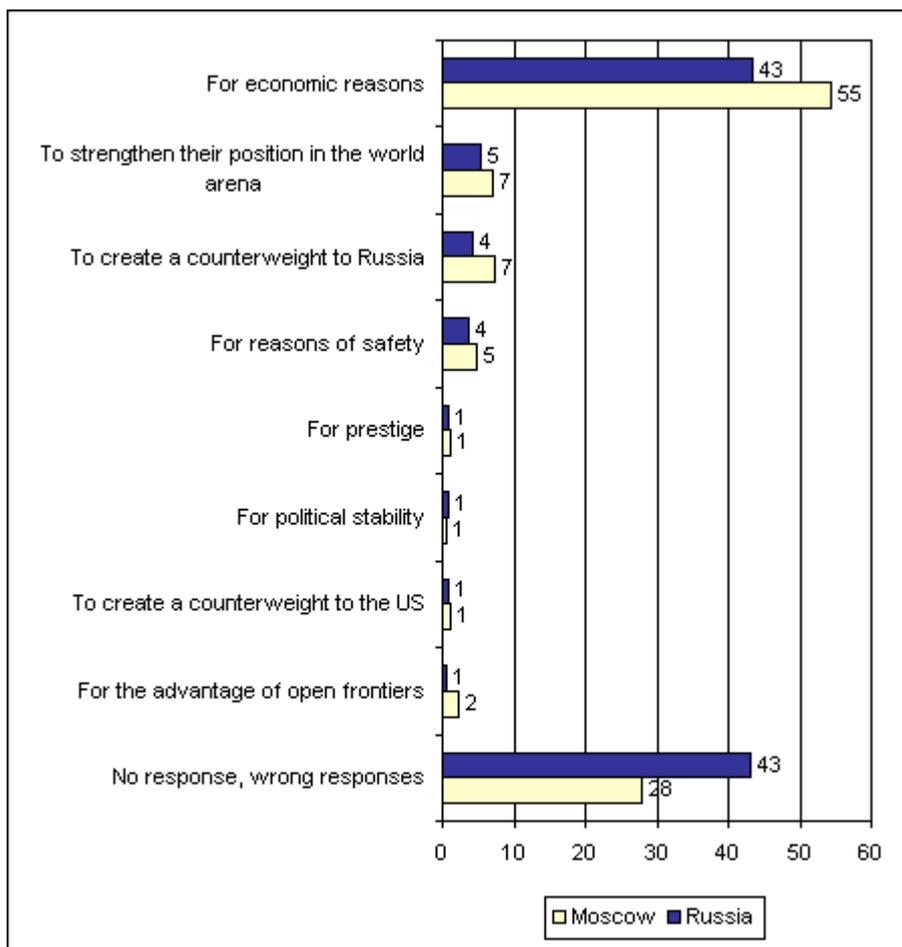


Source: Public opinion poll, 22 March 2001, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

Russians also had no doubts why many countries of Eastern Europe were striving to be taken into the EU. They pointed to the purely economic reasons, and only a small minority supposed that there could also be an anti-Russian motivation. *See table 5*

Table 5 Reasons why the Eastern Europeans are striving to be taken into the EU

<sup>216</sup> Who should be our allies in the rest of the world, Report of the Public Opinion Foundation, 22 October 1999, authored Petrova A., [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)



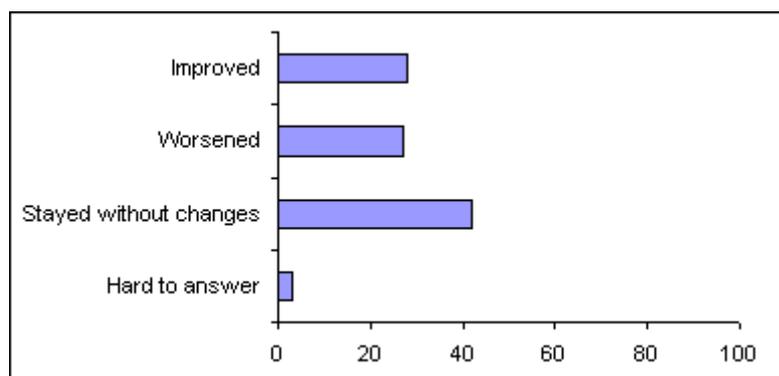
Source, ib.

Also according to data from 2001 most Russians felt better with Europeans (51%), as against only 11% with Americans, and 20% who were even handed between the two. Development of relations with the EU was definitely seen as more important (45%), as against 10% in favour of the US.<sup>217</sup> But this interest in closer co-operation with the west did not mean that Russians trusted the states of this region, and believed in their genuine good will in helping Russia. On the contrary in public opinion polls from November 1999 a majority of Russians showed a lack of belief that Western countries were friendly towards Russia. 41.1% of respondents said the West wanted Russia to be a "Third World" state, to become dependent on developed countries. 37.5% thought the goal of Western countries was to break down Russia, to destroy it as an independent state. 11.5% said Western countries were rendering political and economic support to Russia in order to prevent a global crisis. And only 3.7% of Russians thought that the West was doing everything possible to help Russia become

<sup>217</sup> Report of the Public Opinion Foundation, Russia and Europe, 22 March 2001, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

a civilized and developed state.<sup>218</sup> As a poll from April 2000 showed, nearly one-half of respondents (48%) thought that a majority of European countries treated Russia badly: only 17% of those surveyed thought that their attitude was good, while 22% believed it was indifferent. Respondents were also asked the question: *has the attitude of European countries towards Russia changed recently, and if so, how?* The most widespread view was that attitudes have worsened – this opinion was shared by 40%. One third of Russians (34%) believed they remained unchanged, and one in nine (11%) thought attitudes had worsened. Regarding the future of Russian-European relations, over one third of those surveyed (36%) anticipated an improvement in this field, with one fourth (26%) expecting no change in the immediate future, and 13% forecasting a change for the worse.<sup>219</sup> Also Russian experts (Public poll of 100 experts) had (in September 2000) the impression that Russia was dependent on the Western world, and its position was rather limited.<sup>220</sup> See figure 4 and 5

**Figure 4 Attitude towards Russia in the world**



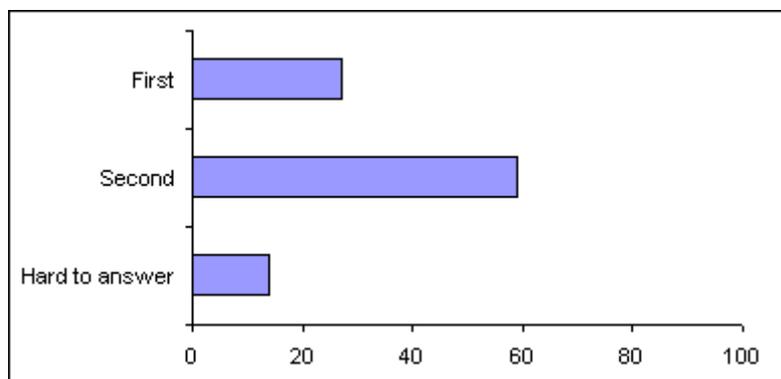
Source: Experts' poll, 20 Sept. 2001, [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

<sup>218</sup> Western Attitudes Towards Russia as perceived by Russians, Public opinion poll, ROMIR, 13-14 November, 1999, [www.romir.ru](http://www.romir.ru)

<sup>219</sup> Russians on relations between Russia and Europe, 28 April 2000, report of Petrova A. , [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

<sup>220</sup> Russia's place in the World, 20 September 2000, experts' poll. [www.fom.ru](http://www.fom.ru)

**Figure 5 Some believe that in making decisions ,Russia doesn't depend on the leading western nations, while others hold that Russia's decisions depend on the opinion of the west. Which of these two views is closest to your opinion?**



Source: ib.

The sociological data showed above, supported the view presented in academic works that Russians are not interested in world politics . However an open question remains - whether and who is able to “use” for its political purposes such a large group of people who declare their total lack of knowledge, or disinterest. Among people who had an opinion on international relations questions though still distant towards NATO, were not seen similarly negative attitudes towards co-operation with western Europe, and its other organisation, the EU. However, the large group of these people who shared disbelief about the west will not help in breaking barriers, particularly since the visible Kosovo intervention strengthened this feeling. On the other hand in 2001 year more optimistic views about relations between Russia and the West have become apparent.

## 2. Polish views about security, NATO and Russia

Polish security policy, which was analysed in chapter II, had, on contrary to Russia's one, the full support of the whole society. Almost all Poles followed events carefully, and with full acceptance of the efforts of their leaders to achieve NATO membership. A computation of surveys from the 90s indicates that the growth tendency in support of Polish entry to NATO prevailed. This tendency was characteristic for all segments of society, so neither education, nor social and occupational status influenced this problem. However it could be noticed that younger people, people from big cities, and with better education were more often supporters of NATO membership. Poland, in comparison to other Visegrad states, presented also a

particularly high, and quite stable level of such acceptance. While in 1992, 67% of respondents declared their support for Polish membership ( 10% were against), in 1997 it was 87% ( 3% against).<sup>221</sup>

The controversial question: which is better, to have good relations with Russia, and a limited chance of NATO membership or worse relations with Russia but to be a NATO member was answered with a majority for this latter option. Such a choice was indicated by 54% in 1995, and 61% in 1997, while the opposite, by 22% in 1995, and 18% in 1997.<sup>222</sup> Also the possibility of gaining economically from giving up NATO membership was rejected definitely by 72% in 1994, 63% in 1995.<sup>223</sup> However in 1997 only 19% of Polish society saw threats to independence, while 65% did not. This view strengthened during the 90s. because in 1991 44% was still afraid about the future for Poland, and only 33% believed that it was secure. Among these who expressed their concern in 1997, most – 61%- saw this threat as stemming from external factors, while 30% from internal. And definitely Russia (40%), or generally – neighbours from the East (11%) predominated . For example, Germany was estimated as a threat by 6%; the threat stemming from Polish membership of NATO was indicated only by 2% respondents.<sup>224</sup> However the whole group of respondents thought, in a remarkable majority, that Russia was going to regain its influence on former socialist countries in the near future. We can notice also that this view was interconnected with Russia's position towards NATO enlargement; as more it protested than more Poles doubt in its non-imperial policy; when after 1997 the situation was clarified – the Poles were calmer. *See table 7.*

**Table 7 Russia's policy towards the East European region (in %)**

Will Russia try to regain its influence on former socialist states, soon?	Answers in years						
	VI '93	VI '94	V '95	V'96	VI '97	VI 98	II 99
Yes	39	53	72	69	63	59	53

<sup>221</sup> See Report of the OBOP, Polacy o NATO i UE, 9-12 January 1997, Warszawa 1997, p. 4.

<sup>222</sup> *Ib.*, p. 5

<sup>223</sup> Report of the CBOS, Przyszłość Rosji i stosunków polsko-rosyjskich, No 7, 1995, p.109

<sup>224</sup> Report of the CBOS, Bezpieczeństwo Polski i stosunki z sąsiadami, Warszawa, August 1997, p.2-4

No	39	26	14	13	19	20	23
I don't know	22	21	14	18	17	21	24

Source: Report of the CBOS, *Bezpieczeństwo Polski i stosunki z sąsiadami*, Warszawa, August 1997, p.5; *W przeddzień przystąpienia do NATO*, Warszawa, February 1999, p. 12

A slight majority of Poles shared also the view that the situation of Poland depended on Russian policy, and it fluctuated directly with the Polish position in NATO, so respectively, in the years 1995, 1996, 1997, it was 54%, 58%, 50%, while the opposite opinion was represented by 33%, 30%, 38% respectively. All these concerns about Russia were more characteristic for people with a higher education and better orientation in policy, while political viewpoints did not matter at all.<sup>225</sup> The majority of respondents expressed the opinion that Poland should not take into account Russia's position towards enlargement (always more than 60%) though the group of people who had another view slightly increased between 1994 and 1996 (15%, 24% and 28% respectively) which could stem from a realistic estimation of the international situation. But the most Poles believed that the reasons for Russian opposition came from their wish to regain their domination over Poland (58% in 1995, 59% in 1996), not from fears about their own security (25% in 1995, 27% in 1996).<sup>226</sup> Such distrust towards Russia's intentions was dictated by broader opinions about the situation within this state. In 1995, 62% of Poles thought that Russia was on a route to a dictatorial system rather than a democratic one (13%); 25% had no opinion.<sup>227</sup>

The attitudes towards Russia, and its policy analysed above had to influence Polish views on security questions. In 1996, 72% believed that only NATO could guarantee Poland's security, and only 12% thought that neutrality could. In a potential referendum 80% was ready to vote –for, 7% -against. However the group of supporters of Polish membership did not have such a unanimous opinion about particular questions, for example 49% was ready to vote for NATO membership if it would mean an allied army garrison in Poland (23% would be rather against); only 12% wanted to vote for NATO if it would mean placing nuclear weapons on Polish territory (61% would rather vote against).<sup>228</sup>

<sup>225</sup> ib. p.6

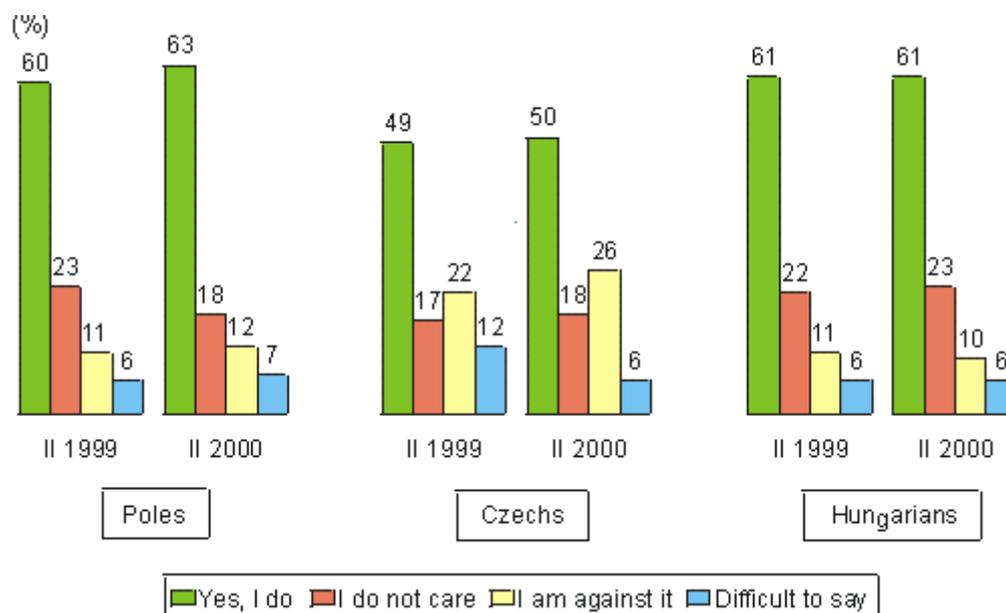
<sup>226</sup> Report of the CBOS, *Czy Rosja nam zagraża?*, Warszawa, April 1995, p.3-4; *Rosja a przyjęcie Polski do NATO*, Warszawa, July 1996, p. 7.

<sup>227</sup> Report of the CBOS, *Przyszłość Rosji i stosunków polsko-rosyjskich*, No 7/ 1995, p.104

<sup>228</sup> Report of the CBOS, *Polacy i Rosjanie przystąpieniu Polski do NATO*, Warszawa, February 1996, p.9-10

The level of emotions connected with NATO membership was clear in 1999, when most people confessed that the day of Poland's full membership was for them "personally" good news ( 37% - neutral, 6% -bad).<sup>229</sup> However the possibility of conflict in the Balkans then visible awoke more concerns. If in 1998 NATO membership was seen as a guaranty of peace and security by 68%, and by 16% as element which could increase the danger of being involved in military conflict, in 1999, such opinions were given by 55%, and 27% respectively. If in 1998, 56% thought that membership of NATO would guarantee Polish independence, and 30% thought that it would be a new form of subordinating Poland to a superpower, in 1999 it was 41% and 42% respectively.<sup>230</sup> In 2000 these negative emotions were again reduced, at least in Poland because it was still the most eager member among the Visegrad states. *See figure 6 and 7*

**Figure 6 Support of the NATO membership in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary**

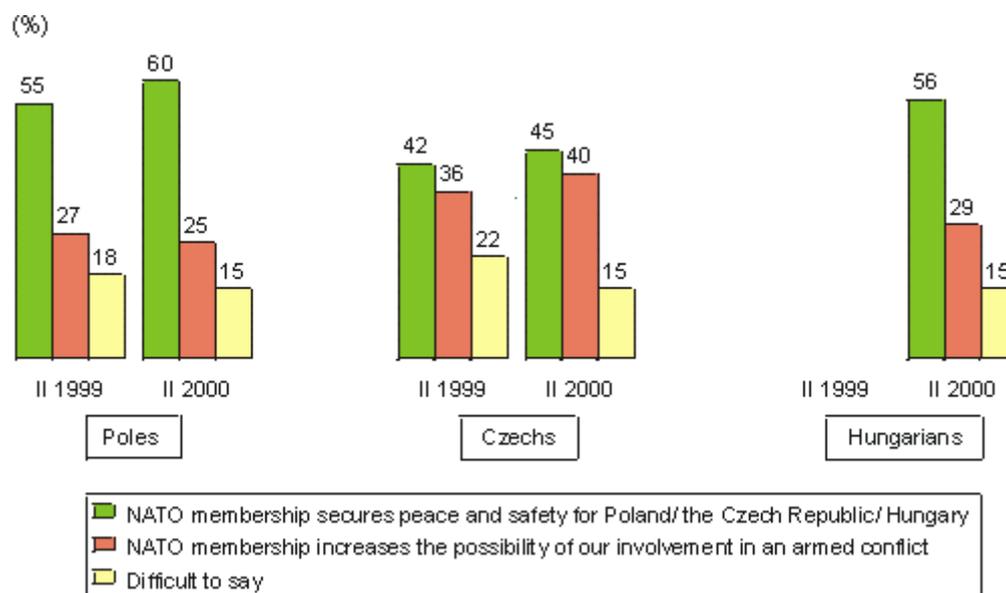
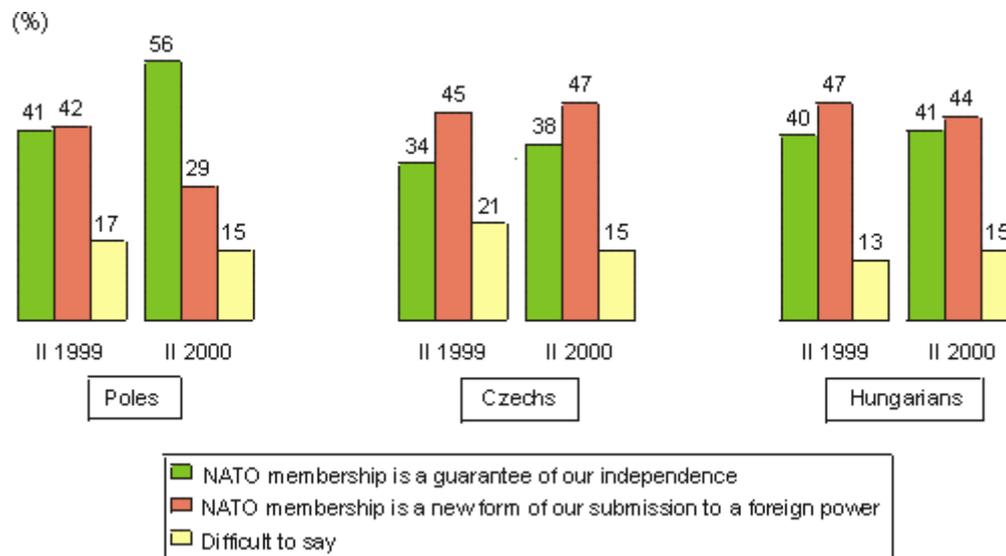


Source: The CBOS report, The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians on NATO, March 2000, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

<sup>229</sup> Report of the CBOS, W przeddzien przystapienia do NATO, Warszawa, February 1999, p. 2

<sup>230</sup> *ib.*, p.6-7.

**Figure 7 Importance of NATO membership for the security of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary**

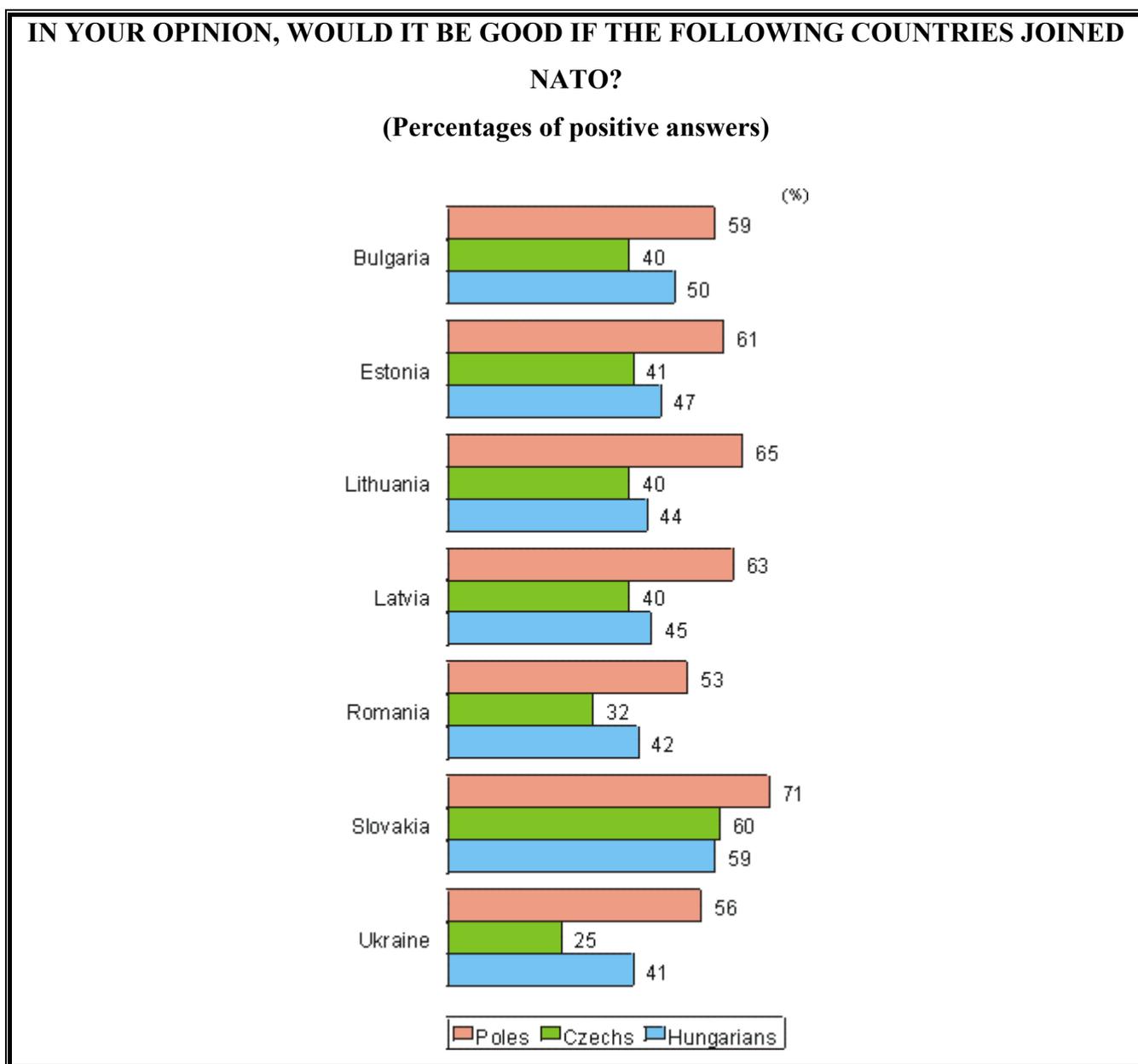


Source: ib.

The evolution of opinion in Poland and Hungary seems to be connected first and foremost to the perception of the goals of Russian policy. A definite majority of Poles (60%) and a large proportion of Hungarians (44%) believed that Russia would try to rebuild its sphere of influence in our part of Europe in the near future. Perhaps because of such views the Poles are the strongest supporters of further NATO extension to the East. Over half of respondents

support the admission of other Central and Eastern European countries that emerged after the collapse of the former socialist bloc. The possible admission of Slovakia and Lithuania enjoys the widest support among Poles.<sup>231</sup> See figure 8

**Figure 8**

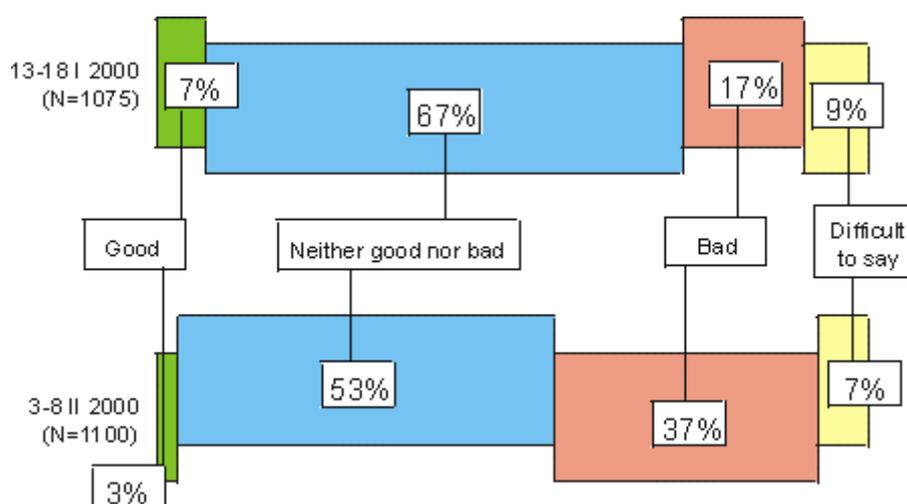


Source : ib.

<sup>231</sup> The CBOS report, The Poles, Czechs and Hungarians on NATO, March 2000, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

As was showed in chapter II the relations between Poland and Russia have cooled since Poland joined NATO, particularly at beginning of 2000, which was connected with accusations of espionage against Russian diplomats. The expulsion of Russian diplomats from Poland caused a visible deterioration of the evaluations of Polish-Russian relations by Poles. Almost two-fifths of respondents evaluated these relations as bad. *See figure 9.* In the opinion of the majority of respondents, the political changes in Russia were a cause for concern. Most Poles believed that the situation in Russia had evolved in a bad direction and tended towards dictatorship (57%) rather than democracy (11%). The Poles seemed to evaluate potential neo-imperial tendencies emerging in Russian domestic policy very critically and anxiously. The fears that Russia might indeed sooner or later try to regain its lost influence in Eastern part of Europe had increased again.<sup>232</sup> *See figure 10.*

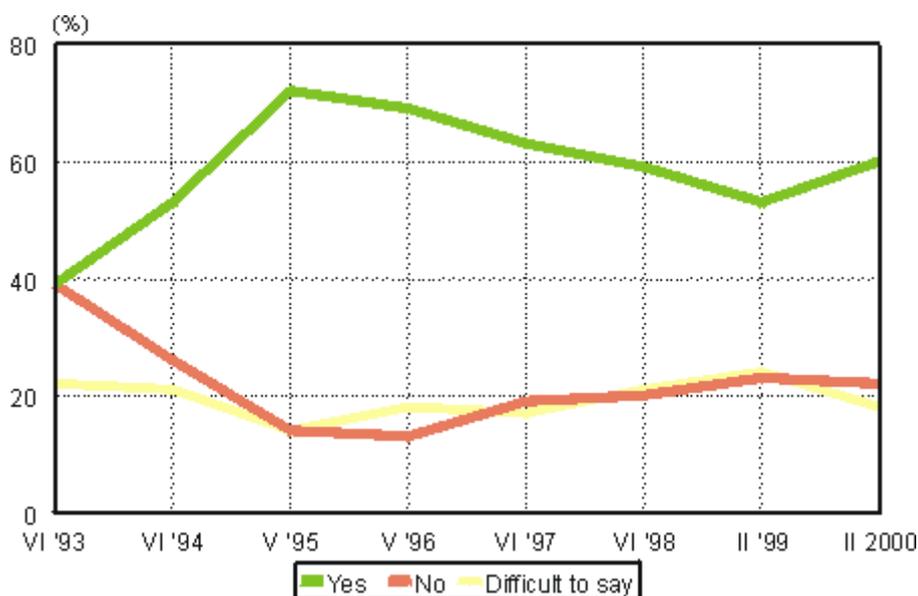
**Figure 9 The present relations between Poland and Russia**



Source: Report of the CBOS, Poles on the relations between Poland and Russia and the political situation in Russia", April 2000, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

<sup>232</sup> Report of the CBOS, Poles on the relations between Poland and Russia and the political situation in Russia, April 2000, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

**Figure 10 Will Russia try to regain influence in our part of Europe in the near future?**

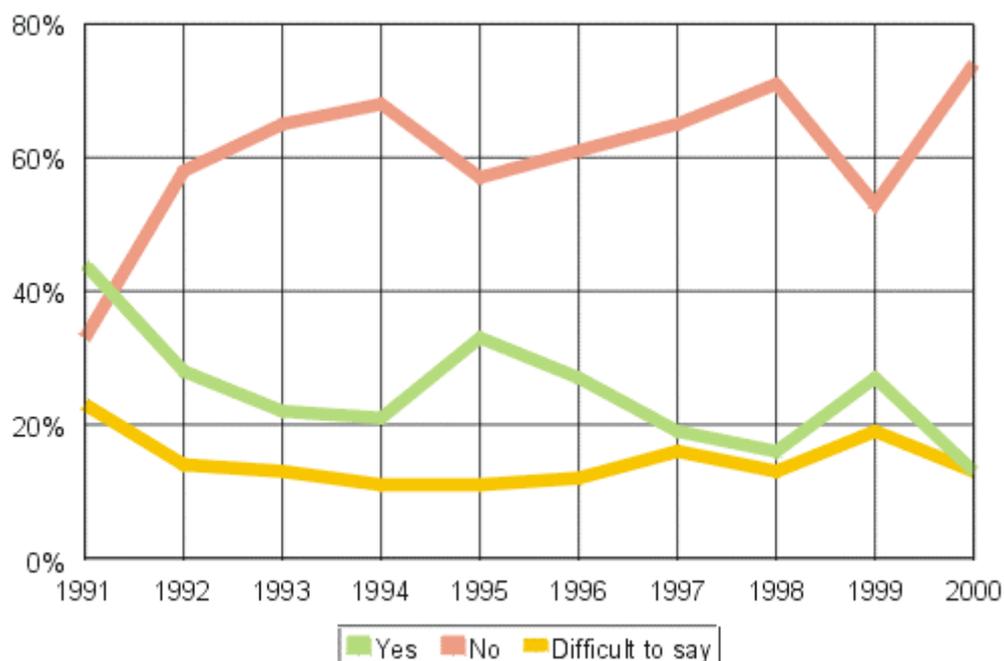


Source: ib.

However these concerns connected with possible Russian policy did not affect the Polish certainty that country was safe. In 2000, almost half of Poles (45%) believed that the position of Poland on the international scene was stable. At the same time, after a temporary decrease during the intervention in Kosovo, the percentage of those who believed that Poland was safe increased to the highest level ever recorded (74%). See figure 11. Again in the group of persons who perceived threats to Polish independence, Russia was most frequently mentioned as a potential source of threat. But this 6% of all respondents was small in comparison to the data from 1997 showed above. Despite the fears that Russia would try to regain its influence in the Eastern region, a definite majority of respondents (69%) believed that friendly and equal relations with Russia were possible. Less than one-third of respondents (29%) doubted that.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>233</sup> Report of the CBOS, The situation of Poland on the international scene in the public opinion, June 2000, www.cbos.pl

**Figure 11 Are there any threats to the independence of Poland at this moment or not?**



Source: Report of the CBOS ,The situation of Poland on the international scene in the public opinion, June 2000, [www.cbos.pl](http://www.cbos.pl)

After the end of 2000, and beginning of 2001, which were rich in positive contacts between Polish and Russian politicians we can expect even bigger improvement of Polish attitudes towards its biggest Eastern neighbour, as well as no worse opinion about Polish security.

## Conclusions

Of the numerous issues in European politics that dominated in the 90s, the enlargement of NATO to the east had to be among the most politically sensitive. Politicians, academics, journalists from many states were involved in the debate. Almost nothing else awoke such emotions and led to a clash of interests in post-cold war Europe. The three sides in this discussion – NATO members, candidates – particularly the Visegrad states - and Russia had to decide about or accept the new security reality. The disagreement of Russia meant first of all for Poland, its biggest neighbour which had a chance to be in NATO, an exceptional challenge. The usually divided political scene, in this case appeared almost unanimous; the politicians in their striving for NATO membership received full support from Polish society. In fact Russian leaders had the same support, although in this case for their negative opinion about NATO expansion, although Russians in contrast to Poles did not care much about this problem. Clearly the NATO issue was bound to overshadow Polish-Russian relations which, even without this issue, emerged from a very painful background.

Analyses in chapter II which concentrated on Polish foreign policy and political discussions in the 90s made it clear that the importance of friendly Polish-Russian relations was estimated highly by all political groups. Politicians tried to understand Russian arguments, however simultaneously they unanimously opposed any deviation from the Polish priority in the security area which was multidimensional integration with Western institutions. It is notable that such opinions came from party leaders, politicians who held the positions of prime minister and foreign affairs minister in different periods. Policy is, however, dictated not only by will and wishes but also by the real situation, and this was not favourable for building a good relationship with Russia. Another vision of security was placed on the top among different reasons for this state of affairs. But it does not seem that this question has to be an unmovable barrier.

In January 2000 both countries announced their new conceptions of defence policy and though they are different in some elements, they also have much in common – they stressed new security threats, like international crime, ecology, economic problems, ethnic conflicts etc. , which have to be solved together. Russia, obviously, thinks about the domination of the USA in the security system unenthusiastically, and wants to co-operate

with all institutions, similarly to Poland which in its strategy declares its policy of active for development of closest NATO links with all states of the region, including Russia.<sup>234</sup>

There is a hope that the new generation of European politicians, not burdened so much by prejudices from the past will able to collaborate. In such circumstances, in a situation of democratic development of both states, Polish-Russian relations have a chance to become an important element of a stable European security structure. The fact that both countries are differentiated by size and aspirations has not led to unfriendly feelings. The behaviour of extremists who are, at least in Poland, on the margin of political life, should not determine the state of the relationship. Polish-German relations are a positive model in this regard. In this case, a mutual understanding of common interests has enabled the past and enormous differences in international position and level of development alike to be surmounted. Relations built on this foundation are not broken when elements of disagreement , or demonstrations ,or hostile statements appear. European security demands the same model on the Eastern border of Poland.

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<sup>234</sup> Strategia bezpieczeństwa RP, accepted by the Ministry Council, 4 January 2000, [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl) ; Russian strategy see: Rocznik Strategiczny 1999/2000, Warszawa 2000 ; Pawlowski W, Doktryna na kompleksy, *Polityka* ,No 4, 22 January 2000

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