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**SHOULD RUSSIA JOIN NATO?
(*FINAL REPORT*)**

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Preface. The question of Russia's membership in NATO emerged as a real problem at the beginning of the 90^s under the influence of reforms that took place in the country. Later it was considered mainly as a one of the way to neutralise the NATO expansion to the East seen by Moscow as a threat to Russia's vital interests. That is why the problem was interpreted as a complimentary one but not as an original by itself. Indeed A.Arbatov, an influential member of State Duma (Russia's parliament), allots two pages only to elaborate on the problem in his extensive monograph dealing with Russia's security. The situation accounts for lack of fundamental monographs devoted to contemporary (and especially future) relationships between Russia and NATO. That is true for Russia as well as for the West.

Nevertheless the question «Should Russia Join NATO?» was discussed from time to time in Russian and Western periodicals during the process of NATO enlargement and on the eve of the 50-th anniversary of the alliance. The most useful among Russian periodicals were daily «Krasnaya zvezda» («The Red Star», a semi-official organ of the Ministry of Defence) and weekly «Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenje» («Independent Military Review»), «Voennaya mysl» («Military thinking»). There are some academic magazines that cover the problem: «The World Economy and International Relations» («Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya»), associated with the Institute under the same title; «USA*Canada: economics - politics - culture» (SShA i Canada: ekonomika - politika - kultura»), associated with the Institute of the USA and Canada Studies; «International Affairs» («Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn»), an official monthly of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a new quarterly «Contemporary Europe» («Sovremennaya Evropa»), sponsored by the Institute of Europe. Russian publications reflect mainly the official vision of the NATO-Russia interaction. Only few authors of liberal orientation from private mass media and academic community try to follow independent line on Russia's membership in NATO.

The most useful among Western periodicals were «NATO review», «Foreign Affairs», «Foreign Policy», «International Security» (Harvard University), «European Security», «Chaillot Papers», published by the Institute for Security Studies, WEU, «Military Balance» issued annually by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (London), SIPRI publications. The author used regularly all materials issued by NATO Office of Information and Press. The book «NATO 50 Years On. Enlargement and Renewal», compiled by Peter Genner and published by Atalink Ltd. was especially helpful for the Fellow because of the different views represented in the collective monograph.. The shortage of Western sources in Russia's libraries and Institutions due to financial crisis in the country the Fellow was compensated by intensive use of Internet and first of all its NATO site. Diversity of Western views on the issue to some extent has compensated the lack of pluralism in Russian political thinking.

The Fellow was provided with ample opportunity to interview some of the political and military figures engaged (or used to be engaged) with the problem of Russia-NATO relationship. The most useful among them were the interviews with Vladimir Lukin, a former

Chairman of the State Duma (Parliament) Committee on Foreign Affairs, now vice-speaker of the State Duma; Alexey Mitrofanov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Geopolitics, Andrey Kokoshin, former First Deputy Ministry of Defence, Anatoly Adamishin, former Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nikolai Afanasevsky, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, now Russia's ambassador to France; general Makhmut Gareev, President, Academy of the Military Studies, Vitaliy Zhurkin, Academician and Director, Institute of Europe; Evgueniy Silin, Director, Association for Euro-Atlantic Co-operation and other Russian and Foreign politicians and military experts, representing different views on the issue. The contacts the Fellow established with members of the Research Institute of International Relations and Security in Ebenhausen (Germany) were especially productive. The specialists, mentioned above, bear no responsibility for ideas outlined by the Fellow in his Final report.

On the other hand the Fellow has submitted for consideration of the academic community and public opinion the basic ideas and some findings of the project. That was done by participation in some seminars and conferences held in Moscow. In August 1998 the Fellow conducted a seminar with Canadian students on Russia-NATO relations (the seminar took place in the framework of the annual summer school for Canadian students organised by the Institute of the USA and Canada Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences). In February 1999 and 2000 the Fellow made some presentations and conducted some seminars on Atlantic idea (in retrospective and perspective) and Russia - NATO relationship. Lectures and seminars took place in the framework of Winter Academy, sponsored by the NATO Documentation Center in Moscow for students and post-graduate students from Russia's provincial Universities mainly. In March 1999 the Fellow presented his views on NATO-Russia relationship to the Conference sponsored by Euro-Atlantic Association of Russia.

At the same time some of the considerations and findings on the topics of the project were published in Russian and foreign periodicals. The article titled «Russia and NATO in search of perspectives» was published by the bimonthly bulletin «NATO: facts and comment» (8, November 1998). The enlarged version of the article under the same title was published by Moscow monthly scientific journal «USA*Canada: economics - politics - culture» (1, 1999). Both articles deal with new opportunities opened for NATO-Russia co-operation by Founding Act and some difficulties they confronted with in the process of its implementation. According to author's view many of these problems could be overcome by Russia's membership in the alliance. The same questions were raised by the Fellow in his chapter «NATO and Russia: at a turning point» prepared for the monograph «NATO 50 Years On. Enlargement and Renewal» (Atalink Ltd, London, 1999). The new contradictions emerged between NATO and Russia over Kosovo crisis were analysed by the Fellow in his chapter «Kosovo Problem in Russian Domestic Context» prepared for the collective monograph «Kosovo: International Aspects of the Crisis» (ed. by D.Trenin, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow Center, 1999). Russia's options after the NATO enlargement were analysed by the Fellow in his chapter «Russia - USA - NATO» prepared for the collective monograph «Russia and the USA after the Cold War» (ed. by V.Kremenjuk, Nauka, Moscow, 1999). Some theoretical aspects of Russia - NATO relationship was touched by the Fellow in two articles («Democracy, Democratisation and the Problems of War and Peace» and «The Atlantic World: Expanding

Responsibility») published by «USA*Canada» magazine (7, 1999 and 3, 2000 accordingly).

The Fellow would like to underline that the research was made possible through a NATO award.

Introduction. After the collapse of the Soviet empire, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the new Russia is trying to reform its society and state system on the basis of new values. Obviously, the change in the nature of the country's political regime must have affected its relations with the outer world, in the sphere of security included. It is also necessary to take into account, that changing Russia has to deal with not to a lesser extent changing outer world, with the changing security pattern in this world. It makes the situation more complicated, because every state, concerned, primarily, by its own changes, cannot always understand the shifts, which are in process outside the country. Many changes are still under way and quite far from their completion, but they are already expected to produce great effect.

Meanwhile, political thinking in the West, as well as in the East proved to be unprepared to cope with the rash stream of sudden changes of the last decade. Perception, analysis, understanding of what has happened after the end of a forty-year long confrontation, turned out to be a matter of a paramount difficulty for the former adversaries. Events in the Soviet Union (later - Russia), Central and Eastern Europe were developing so rapidly, that the speed of changes became one of the key factors, that formed and impeded the analysis of experts and decisions of politicians. The impact of changes has been magnified by the complexity of recent events and the uncertainty they have caused. The number of independent sources of decision making increased immensely. Twenty-three new states emerged on the territory of three former subjects of international relations – the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. And the process of new states emergence is still far from being over. Meanwhile, within the framework of a general trend towards globalisation, the processes of regional and even continental integration are developing. The vector of this integration is extremely diverse, and the outcome is vague.

The growing number of independent decision making sources, the increasing amount of possible interactions among them have generated a greater uncertainty, than in the past, which objectively intensifies the conflict potential. Unpredictability and complexity in combination with the rapid pace of changes have created an extremely difficult situation for those, who work out

or make decisions in the sphere of foreign policy and security. Under these conditions experts and politicians are doomed to mistakes and inability to see the consequences of the measures recommended (or taken) by them. The structures of international, regional, bilateral relations, which are notable for their inertness, do not keep pace with the course of these tectonic shifts. As a result, the new political thinking, new paradigms of foreign policy and security act within the framework of the former, often outdated structures. And this, inevitably, affects - and more often negatively - the assertion of this thinking and these paradigms. As a result, many reactions to these shifts, patterns of new systems and structures are taking shape in the course of events, and more often - in the spirit of traditional thinking. «Even ten years after the end of the military and ideological confrontation in Europe, - notes lord George Robertson, NATO Secretary General, - we still cling to the old stereotypes. They come to the forefront, as soon as the divergence of our interests or views becomes apparent. The most obvious example of this - is Kosovo»¹.

Relations between Russia and NATO could not help being affected by the pressure of methodological problems, that arose after the end of «the cold war». This is why the answer to the question whether «Russia should join NATO» was seen by each side either as an excessively optimistic one (when forgetting about the past, one saw only the future), or as an excessively pessimistic one (when forgetting about the future, one saw only the past). Obviously, a former enemy cannot become a partner in the twinkling of an eye. But it does not mean that it cannot become the one at all. And as far as this matter is concerned, NATO has a great deal of experience in it: «the former adversaries» have consecutively become members of the Alliance - Italy, Germany, Spain, and most recently - Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Certainly, Russia is a special case considering its territory, civilisation, transitional condition. It is necessary to take that into account, but it does not change the essence of the problem. Under such circumstances, probably the terms, on which Russia can join NATO, can present a point for discussion. In general, the problem comes to the following: for the both sides leaving Russia outside the alliance will be more counterproductive, than its membership in NATO. To achieve this goal, Russia will have to go a longer way, than many present candidates for the alliance. Moreover, on each stage its interaction with NATO has to raise to a much higher level, and only after becoming firmly established on each of them the parties can move farther. The reason for such a phased movement of Russia to the final objective are obvious: its

problems are too immense. Russia needs time to realise and to solve them on the basis of new values, and the West needs time and patience to adapt itself to non-standard situation. Whether Russia will become a NATO member, or she will be bound up to the Alliance with some special, strong, but more loose ties - is the matter of technology, rather than principle. Together with that, for a number of reasons Russia today finds itself in a more favourable situation to start the process of joining the Alliance. It is important not to miss the opportunity.

From hostility to partnership. The fifty years of NATO existence mean five decades of the interaction between Russia (then the Soviet Union) and NATO. They were closely associated with each other from the very outset. Indeed, the USSR was one of the main factors that called the North Atlantic Alliance into being. That was a negative factor, of course, and for decades the Soviet Union and the West were enemies. The main goal of the Alliance was to contain Communist expansion to the West. For years, the main Soviet purpose was to split and undermine the Alliance. One can doubt that it was NATO that, in the final analysis, crushed Communism (in its state form) in Europe. But there is no doubt that the existence of NATO played a significant role in the process – it closed an opportunity for a military solution to the confrontation between two different social and political systems thus military competition was converted into competition in the economic and social fields, a situation which in the last analysis turned out to be ruinous for ‘real socialism’ in Europe.

Meanwhile, three circumstances in particular contributed to the erosion of hostility between Russia and NATO. The first was the new political thinking of Mikhail Gorbachev who began to dismantle the Cold War barriers and involved Moscow in the process of disarmament. On November 8, 1990, the countries of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation signed a joint statement in Paris, which declared that from then on they did not see each other as an enemy. Nevertheless nobody in Moscow thought at that time about merging of two blocks. Second, Yeltsin’s radical (liberal) revolution and economic reforms of 1991 destroyed the power of the Communist *nomenclatura* (and the Soviet Union itself) and began to build in Russia a state and society based on a new (and pro-Western) system of values. At that time, the idea to join NATO was popular among Russian radical democrats. The third factor was the massive (moral and material) support by the West for the reconstruction of the former Communist states. Russian intellectual Andrey Sakharov contended that East and the West

were on the move toward convergence of their societies. All three of these factors led Moscow to de-ideologize its vision of the West. Nevertheless, neither the NATO states nor the Moscow political elite were prepared then to accept Russia's membership of the Alliance.

After so many years of division, it took a lot of time and patience to convert the negative interaction between the two sides into a positive one. The point of departure for a new relationship between a transforming Russia and a modernising NATO was the mutual understanding by their leaders that security is not a zero-sum game one can play at the expense of others: that in this changing world, there is no alternative to collaboration. In December 1991, Russia became a member of the North Atlantic Co-operation Council. In February 1992, for the first time in the history of NATO, its then Secretary General, Manfred Wörner, visited Moscow. In June 1994, Russia officially joined Partnership for Peace (PfP). In July 1997, Moscow entered the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In February 1998, the NATO Documentation Centre was inaugurated in Moscow. Russia's participation since early 1996 in the Implementation Force (IFOR) and then in the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) alongside NATO Allies are seen by many Western and Russian experts as a model for their military co-operation, especially in the peacekeeping field. Indeed, NATO and Russian troops have worked together effectively, sharing the risks and some success in a difficult mission.

Meanwhile, a number of problems, that arose in that period, seriously complicated the process of rapprochement between Russia and NATO. The first of them was the process of NATO expansion, in which the former Soviet allies in Eastern Europe were involved, but from which Russia was excluded.

Moscow's stand on the issue of NATO membership for the East Central European (ECE) countries was very controversial even on the official level, not to mention that of public opinion. As a whole Russian society being indifferent to world affairs, pays little attention to NATO and its enlargement, but the issue is often exploited by the political elite in the power struggle. The process of decision making goes on sometimes under the impact of factors which have nothing to do with the essential nature of the problem. For many Russian politicians, the problems of the NATO expansion was a good opportunity to demonstrate the devotion to the national interests of the state simply by fearlessly defaming its former allies. In the legal sense, of course, Russia could not object to the desire of independent states to join NATO or stop them doing so; and politically the price of doing so would be too high. Russia would spoil its relations

both with the ECE and with the West for years to come.

Some Russian politicians and expert contended that the enlargement of NATO to include the ECE countries and later, perhaps, the Ukraine and the Baltic states was aimed against Russia, and draw the conclusion that Russia's security would once again have to be taken care of by expensive unilateral efforts. Further more, the absence of Russia from the defence community would mean that the threat, supposedly originating in Russia, would be tackled not in cooperation with it but by isolating it. Its security and its future would be separated from those of Europe. NATO's enlargement without Russia could lead to a situation in which EU and Western European Union would also expand without Russia. It is fear of being cut off from Europe that is behind Moscow's stand on ECE membership of NATO.

The costs for Russia of ECE entry into NATO was seen as follows. First, the approach of the world's largest military bloc up to Russia's borders would necessitate a reconsideration of all Russia's defensive concepts, the structure of its armed forces, the installation of additional infrastructure, redeployment of troops, and changes to operative plans and training. Second, implementation of these measures would naturally place strain on the military budget at the expense of some urgent programs, generally weakening the countries security. Third, Russian military reform would be put in jeopardy and social tension in the armed forces would increase. Fourth, nationalists and anti-reformist forces would intensify their campaign against the West. Finally, the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (the CFE Treaty) would become irrelevant because the ECE countries' joining NATO would change the balance of power fixed by that Treaty.

The politicians and experts of European (liberal) orientation, looking for closer cooperation with Western security structures, saw no serious objections to the ECE's entry into NATO. They pointed out that Russia already had a common border with NATO in the northern part of Kola Peninsula: the Soviet Union had a common border with Turkey. Even if the ECE countries joined NATO there would be a belt of state (the Baltic states, Belarus, Moldova and the Ukraine) which constitute a buffer zone between Russia and the alliance. A new possible and limited common border with NATO in the Kaliningrad area would not change the situation radically. They maintain that the inclusion in NATO of some ECE countries which saw Russia as a danger could reduce their fears and relieve them of their inferiority complex and deep distrust towards their huge neighbour. They might feel more confident and be more willing

to cooperate with Russia on equal terms in different spheres, security included. Russia cannot be isolated from Europe; everything that is going on in Russia directly affects the situation on the continent. Few European problems can be solved if Russia is opposed and Europe will not aim to separate itself from Russia because it has direct interest in influencing its modernisation. At the same time liberals pointed out that the ECE countries' entry into NATO will make sense only if Russia and NATO share responsibility for the security of Europe. The proponents of the approach asserted that many problems qualified as a threat supposedly caused by NATO enlargement in reality were consequences of the disappearance of the Warsaw Treaty organisation and the Soviet Union. This is where the inevitability of a new military doctrine, redistribution of the troops, modification of the infrastructure of the national security comes from.

The official Russian stand concerning the issue of NATO expansion, varied from confrontation to limited cooperation and partnership. The final choice was stipulated not by a greater logicity of one or another position, but rather by the realisation of the severe reality that Russia was unable to prevent the expansion of NATO to the East. But if it is so, then one should try to obtain some political and military dividends even in a losing situation.

As a result, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed in Paris in May 1997. It provides the parties with new opportunities and far-reaching prospects for combined efforts in the field of Euro-Atlantic security. The Act codifies the special relations between NATO and Russia, elaborates the norms of their behaviour towards each other, outlines the sphere of their cooperation and sets up a mechanism – the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) – as a forum for regular consultations on all matters affecting their security. Indeed, the PJC has given Russia a voice, not a veto on Alliance activities. The main task as it has been seen by the parties was to put in motion all the rules and mechanism envisaged by the document. There are many things NATO and Russia can do together. They may not always agree but they do share important securities interests.

However, like every great achievement, the Act can give rise to some illusions or too high expectations. Both sides involved in its implementation must fully understand its opportunities, and its limits. The Act is not a judicial, but rather a political obligation of the signatories. It is a compromise, and like every compromise it can work on the basis of consensus, meaning that each sides has the right of veto in the framework of PJC activity. That means that each side

needs to respect the other's national interests in order to reach a consensus. The Act objectively reflects both sides' mutual interest in its functioning. The other side of the coin is a too sceptical assessment of the Act's opportunities. It is true that the Cold War is over but its consequences continue to influence the two sides' partnership. Too many Russians still see NATO as an anti-Russian organisation. Too many in the West still see Russia as an imperial power. In spite of common values shared by the parties, their national interests are far from being identical (as it was revealed by their different vision of Kosovo crisis). The content of the Founding Act itself cannot help reflecting this contradictory reality.

Indeed, the Act consists of two parts. The first deals with guarantees for Russia's security. In other words, objectively, Moscow still sees the Alliance as a foe. Part two defines the directions and mechanisms for cooperation on a wide range of issues, which means that Moscow, objectively again, sees NATO as a partner in the construction of European security. The other controversy is a mirror image of the first. On the one hand, Russia recognises the expansion of the Alliance. Hence, NATO's guarantees not to locate its nuclear weapons on the territories of the new members, etc. On the other hand, Russia maintains that it has not accepted expansion of the Alliance. What is more, Moscow has announced that if NATO continues its expansion to post-Soviet territory (by including the Baltic States or Ukraine, for example), the Kremlin will nullify the Pact. To some extent Russia's leaders were torn between vehement opposition to NATO enlargement and a general willingness to cooperate with the West

Having regard to the above, a general forecast can be made even at this stage. It amounts to this: the Founding Act will work and will become a basis for positive cooperation between Russia and NATO only insofar as it is politically (in strategic terms) advantageous to one or other party and insofar as friendly relations will be maintained between them. It will become a meaningless declaration if relations become unfriendly or politically unfavourable to one partner or the other. In fact, the political nature of the Founding Act makes viable only one commitment: NATO (Russia) is obliged to be on good terms with Russia (NATO) if Russia (NATO) is on good terms with NATO (Russia). But to make this mutual commitment work, Moscow needs to define its position – is NATO a potential adversary, trying to minimise Russia's ability to influence the world, or a strategic partner in building European (international) security? There are some doubts that Moscow has made a choice.

Meanwhile, reasonable politicians in Moscow believe that the improvement in NATO-

Russia relations could create new chances and opportunities for Moscow to solve the problems which are now holding up the spread of its influence in Europe and the world as a whole. The following are the most important of these opportunities:

- To prevent the division of Europe, which would be detrimental primarily to Russia because it would involve a gradual slide towards her isolation - a source of her political elite's fear;
- To stop the deterioration of Russia - West relations, from which Moscow continues to derive experience, values, technology as well as financial resources;
- To normalise relations with the ECE countries, relegated to the last place in Moscow's foreign priorities since their appeal for NATO membership. Their, and Russia's, past is marked by historical prejudices but also by the common fate of nations caught under the Communist steamroller. Moscow should not forget that in a few years it is they who will decide whether to let Russia into the EC and NATO;
- To delete from Russia's domestic and foreign policy agenda a problem (NATO enlargement) which is not worthy of so much attention and which is diverting the society from really vital tasks. Washing away the 'enemy' image would remove the possibility of seeing it as the source of all Russia's problems and difficulties;
- To obtain much greater opportunities to influence the formulation and implementation of NATO policy, above all in constructing a new security system in Europe;
- To begin military reform in more favourable conditions, making the necessary resources and time available for this purpose. Closer contact between the military structures in Russia and NATO can contribute to establishing civil control over the Russian army, bringing about its democratisation;

To put these opportunities into practice their Annual Work Programmes cover areas such as peacekeeping, arms control, efforts against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, exchanges on nuclear weapons safety and security, consultations on ways to combat international terrorism, defence conversion, scientific cooperation, defence-related environmental issues, civil emergency planning and disaster relief, and the retraining of retired military personnel. The Work Programmes outline priority issues for consultation and information exchanges, such as measures to promote cooperation, transparency and

confidence, disarmament strategy, defence policy and military doctrines of NATO and Russia, and infrastructure development programmes. As is evident from this enumeration, the two sides are not avoiding exchanging views on sensitive matters. Dozens of joint working groups were created under the aegis of the PJC to find a common approach to solving these issues. Russia has appointed its Senior Military Representative at NATO Headquarters and a NATO military mission is to be established on a reciprocity basis in Moscow as well.

In general, due to the Founding Act Russia can expect, that its influence on shaping and implementation of the NATO policy, first of all in the set up of a new security system in Europe, will become greater, than in the past. It is important since Russian politicians were the ones who often asserted, that the West was trying to debar Russia from the process of decision making in the sphere of European security, and that the further expansion of NATO could exclude Russia from this process at all. Moscow, certainly, will not and cannot possess the right of veto over the Alliance's decisions (with the exception of PJC's decisions) since she is not a member of the Alliance. But without being a member of the Alliance, she, however, is already present there. Its presence in Brussels (like the presence of NATO in Moscow), to say nothing about the activity of constant representatives, prevents NATO from making such decision, that Russia can not put up with - and vice versa. In this plan a great deal depended on the professional level of the official representatives, their flexibility, firmness and, most important, on their ability to come to terms with the military and political bureaucracy of the receiving side.

Together with that, who saw in the Founding Act a program of joint action, and not a declaration, expected a breakthrough in political, military and other relations of the partners, in advancement to a new system of European security, based upon the strategic interaction between Russia and NATO. However, it never happened.

Indeed, in spite of the impressive plans, real cooperation between the military structures of NATO and Russia hardly corresponds to the ample opportunities offered to them by their new partner status. Indeed, Russia-NATO military cooperation has been developing mainly at the very top level. «High-level exchange too often degenerated into what some cynic called «military-to-military tourism»². The interaction on the regional, middle, low command level as well as on the humanitarian one is very limited (with one exception – Bosnia). The Russian military mission to NATO's Headquarters in Brussels has no authority to resolve any serious matters. Its activity is reduced mostly to representative functions. Unfortunately, Russia

systematically avoids participating in exercises within the framework of PfP programmes, referring to the lack of funds. The Russian military were more interested in the alliance's commitment not to deploy nuclear weapons and not station foreign forces in Central Europe, than in exploring the potential for closer cooperation with NATO. In general within Russia, the Founding Act was increasingly regarded as a damage-limitation exercise, which inadequately compensated Russia for NATO enlargement.

As a whole, Russia's participation in the program "Partnership for Peace» has a purely nominal nature. Russian officers sent to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE), acknowledge privately: they are mostly occupied with gathering of information for Moscow, concerning everything that is connected with the relations between the Alliance and former Soviet republics. Though, their task, as a matter of fact, is the development of cooperation plans between Russia and the North Atlantic alliance: organisation of joint training, composition of joint preparatory programs for the staff, conceptual development of the plans of operations, in which the armed forces of Russia and countries of the West might have to act together. The maintenance of military contacts is a very special point. Moscow has even turned into a problem an ordinary issue on the permanent NATO representation in Russia. Up to now, the Joint Permanent Council, in which all 19 NATO countries and Russia are presented, is not practically busy with something serious. Moscow sees in the Council either a communication channel, which should be used only in the moments of crisis, or an office for preparing the programs of visits to the NATO headquarters of Russian ministers. Meanwhile, the JPC is exactly such a body, where all the existing problems of the Russian-NATO relations should be regularly discussed. In the opinion of a competent Moscow independent weekly magazine "Itogi", "a great potential is laid in the Russia-NATO cooperation. We have not used even a smallest part of all the opportunities, which are already given to us by the signed agreements"¹⁵. Moreover, it seems that both parties agreed to build new (parallel and bureaucratic) structures for military cooperation but not to use the existing structure of the Alliance. Such "special structures", looking like the ones that ensured a fruitful cooperation ("great friendship"), were in reality removing Russia out of the framework of NATO everyday activities. It seems that it would be better if Russia had its non-voting representatives in some of NATO's committees (the status of these representative could be defined as observers or associates). While interacting, Russia and NATO have faced a contradiction between longing to the mutual

transparency and remaining mutual suspiciousness. This contradiction is mostly striking on the level of bureaucratic military structures, that staunchly watch over their own corporative interests and do not want to let any "strangers" in. The experience of IFOR and SFOR has revealed that Russia could participate in some form or another in implementation of NATO's Combined Joint Task Forces. All that would lead to a *rapprochement* between the Russian army and NATO.

Relations tested by crisis. The second problem on the way to the rapprochement between Russia and NATO concerned the means of settlement of the Kosovo crisis. To put it broadly, it concerned the problem of the use of force in a peacekeeping process, the expansion of the Alliance's responsibility area within the framework of the peacekeeping operations. According to the Washington agreement of the 1949 (Article 6) the NATO's area of responsibility was limited to the territories of the member countries and the regions of the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea, bordering on them. However, in reality, for example in Bosnia, this area of responsibility has already exceeded the bounds of the outlined region. Russia, to a certain extent, supported (legitimised) the process of the expansion of NATO's responsibility area, having voted in the UN Security Council in 1995 for the use of military force (by NATO) against the Serbs in Bosnia, as well as by its participation in the Dayton agreement. However, Moscow's position based on the assumption, that it was an exceptional measure and there was a UN Security Council mandate to implement it. Moscow did not rule out the emergence of such a situation in the future, but it presumed, that the use of military force in the course of a peacekeeping operation on the territory of a sovereign state must be sanctioned by the UN Security Council or, at least, by OSCE (though there has not been a single precedent so far). Moscow's stand looks logic, but it is not in the line with the spirit of time.

Indeed, Western leaders believe, that such a restriction is not always justified. In their opinion, the delay in military interference in Bosnia has resulted in the extension of the military conflict, in the additional victims of ethnic cleansing. This is why the West considers, that the Alliance, in a number of cases, when there are rational grounds for it (who defines the extent of rationality remains unclear), can evaluate the degree of a threat to the world (humanitarian catastrophe) and define the nature of a response to it (a typical example is American bombings of Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan; Russia was also going to bomb Afghanistan without a UN Security

Council sanction).

As a result, each side tried to contend, that its approach to the crisis settlement was based on the certain principles, certain behaviour norms for a state on the international arena. Russia referred to the UN principles, and was formally right in this way. The NATO leaders referred to the certain values, moral consideration, to the necessity to observe human rights and the national minorities right, to the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe, the non-observance of the UN Security Council resolutions. And it seemed, that they were also right; that their actions corresponded even if not with the letter, than with the spirit of the generally accepted norms of international behaviour and the spirit of globalisation. Nevertheless, Moscow accused NATO in destroying the normative system of international relations, undermining the bases of traditional international law. In their turn, Western leaders (NATO) reproached Russia that it had got stuck in the 19th century, that it lived according to the normative base, which belonged to the past, while the whole civilised world had already stepped into the 21st century.

In that intricate situation only one thing is obvious – the existing normative base is far from perfection. And this is exactly what Russia and NATO have to think about together (instead of making mutual rebukes). They should have started a constructive dialogue (before the conflict in Kosovo intensified) within the framework of the PJC, which had been founded exactly for this in accordance with the Founding Act. Regrettably, such a dialogue has never begun. It resulted in the following: *the very course of the Kosovo conflict settlement had extremely destructive consequences for the further development of relations between Russia and NATO.*

To some extent, traditions of the region itself, in which the crisis broke out, the traditions, that root in the distant past, have contributed to it. Indeed, there is a notion of »balkanisation« in the history of international relations. It stands for the tendency towards the fragmentation of the Balkans, constant strives for ethnic and territorial reasons. As a result, the instability is an intrinsic feature of the region. There is still another important thing: its national and political leaders usually tried to involve the Great Powers into their own local disputes and conflicts hoping, that they would inevitably support one or another side in the conflict. Regrettably, these considerations have bases: the Great Powers got willingly caught into this Balkan trap, trying to increase their influence in the region. This trap usually ended in a tragic way both for the Balkan nations, and for the Great Powers. They often started to clash with each other, forgetting about

the nature of peacekeeping. But it is one thing, when local ethnic groups clash with each other, and it is quite another thing, when the Great Powers do the same. The Kosovo conflict between Belgrade and ethnic Albanians is simply a new act of the same old Balkan drama.

Indeed, from the very beginning of the conflict in Kosovo external peacemakers (Russia and NATO) have taken different sides. Moscow did not conceal, that it shared the position of Belgrade on the key issues of the Kosovo settlement on the conditions of the Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosheвич. The West, in its turn, accused Belgrade and Milosheвич in crimes against humanity, openly supported Kosovo leaders, including absolutely uncontrollable field commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Moscow regarded KLA (as well as its armed Chechens) as bandits or terrorists. Such «division of labour» in estimation of the motive forces of the conflict has played a harmful role in the attempts of Russia and the West to settle the crisis together and mainly by political means.

Really, both Serbian and Kosovo leaders, that tried to settle the conflict on their own conditions, counted mainly on the contradictions between Russia and the countries of the West (their opposition to each other) concerning the ways of achieving the final objective (with regard to the objective itself, there were no contradictions between the peacemakers). Moreover, both Belgrade and KLA leaders were sure, that, in case the conflict would take a military character, they could count for the physical support of their patrons. Meanwhile, Russian deputies, that travelled to Belgrade with the mission of Slavic solidarity, as well as many general in Moscow tried to create on the Serbs that very impression (this is why, when the bombings of Yugoslavia by NATO aviation began, many Serbs wondered where «the Russian brothers were»). One can presume, that such advances were also made by Washington.

The following fact has also played its part: all the parties involved into the conflict pursued their own interests, that were quite far from the objective officially proclaimed by them – the aspiration to settle down the conflict. By regulating the crisis on its own conditions, Russia hoped to restore the international prestige, tarnished by the pauperization of its population, financial downfall, and corruption in the top echelons of power. The Russian political elite believed, that with the help of the anti-NATO (anti-American, first of all) hysteria, it would restore the external threat image, distract the population from the failure of their anticrisis programs. Addressing the State Duma on March 7, 1999, V. Zhirinovskiy sincerely said, that «the nine years of devastation in the country could be overlapped by the victory in the

Balkans»⁴. Rightist extremists and conservative deputies of the Duma tried to convince the plain Russian folk, that in the moment NATO was bombing Yugoslavia and the next day it would bomb Moscow. Russian generals, having lost the first war in Chechnya, craved for the revenge and were notable for the most warlike statements. However, what was crucial for them was NATO defeat and the discreditation of the USA, rather than the victory of the «Slavic brothers». The NATO military action in Yugoslavia was used by the national patriots for carrying out the most massive anti-Western campaign in Russia since the cold war. It has become the first step to V. Putin's victory in the presidential elections 2000.

Washington, in its turn, being the only leader of the modern world, wanted, perhaps, to prove to the allies, partners, those in doubt, that they were unable to solve the main international problems themselves, without the USA participation. And, of course, it wanted to demonstrate its military and scientific-technical clout to the today's and potential adversaries. Western Europe, considering its continent as the stronghold of democracy, could not put up with the fact, that mass ethnic cleansings and violence against civil population were taking place in the civilized Europe. Together with that, west-European leaders hoped, that they would strengthen their influence in the Balkans, taking into account the catastrophic weakening of the Russian positions in the region. Finally, NATO, playing the main part in regulating the conflict, hoped to establish its leading role in the new architecture of the European security.

Slobodan Miloshevich had his own considerations. He hoped, that having used the military force against him (though he never expected it to be so wide-ranging), the West would distract his fellow-citizens from the mistakes and crimes of his regime solidify the entire Yugoslav society around the president (that is exactly what happened on the first stage). Perhaps, this is why he provoked NATO into bombings of his country in such a cynical way. Having believed in the anti-western rhetoric of the Russian State Duma deputies, president Miloshevich was mainly staking on the Russian-American contradictions, counting on Moscow's tougher reaction to the NATO military action – withdrawal from sanctions imposed by the UN against Yugoslavia, supply with the modern weaponry, fuel, complete dissension between Moscow and Washington, in the optimal way – the straight Russian involvement into the war on the side of Belgrade.

Meanwhile, the main disagreement between Moscow and NATO came to the following point: what is to be done in case Belgrade did not fulfil the UN Security Council resolution

1099, reject their mutual offers. The Russian diplomacy believed, that one should continue political attempts to convince Belgrade to meet all the provisions of the UN Security Council resolution, adopt the regulation plan, prepared by the Contact group. The West, in its turn, considered, that Miloshevich understood only the language of force (as the previous practice had shown), and that is why the military power should be used as the last means of persuasion. Moscow stated, that the military force could be used only according to the UN Security Council decision concerning that matter. At the same time Russia gave to understand, that it would block any suggestion of that kind in the UN Security Council. In this situation NATO believed, that turning to the UN Security Council in this case had no sense. Ascertaining that Belgrade was not fulfilling its previous decision was enough. In the interests of the humanitarian catastrophe prevention in Kosovo, referring to the public opinion of the world community (just like the Soviet Union had always done before), the Alliance decided to ignore Moscow's position and to overtake the responsibility for the use of military force against Yugoslavia. On March 24, 1999, the West started bombings of the Yugoslav territory that lasted 79 days.

The Kremlin considered the on-going NATO military action as a blow dealt not only on Yugoslavia, but on its prestige as well. If the West believed, that the use of military force had for an object to make Belgrade observe the norms of the international behaviour, then Moscow stated, that NATO violated the norms of the international behaviour itself, having used military force against another state without the UN Security Council sanction. The Russian leadership finally came to the conclusion, that under existing circumstances co-operation with NATO was losing its sense. Moscow suspended its participation in the Founding Act, the PJC's activity was frozen, Russian military representatives were recalled from the Alliance's Headquarters, NATO's official representatives were banished from the country, the activity of the NATO Documentation Center in Moscow was suspended. The problem concerning the foundation of the NATO Military Representative Office in Russia (which, in fact, had already been solved) was removed from the agenda; Russian army officers stopped answering the telephone calls from Mons in a demonstrative way. General Leonid Ivashov, Director of the International Co-operation Department of the Russian Defence Ministry, ruling out the possibility of a dialogue with the Alliance, called NATO 'criminal organisation'. The Russian State Duma deputies suggested, that NATO Secretary General Javier Solana should be put under trial (although, no one knew which one) for the crimes against humanity⁵. The West was more precise – the Hague

Tribunal on the crimes in Yugoslavia issued an order for arrest of S. Milosheвич for the same crimes against humanity. Contacts with NATO were cutting off in all spheres. Although, exactly under the circumstances of an international crisis, as the Russian-American confrontation over the missiles deployment on Cuba in 1962 proved, it is important to have as many channels open for the exchange of opinions of the hostile sides, as possible.

Meanwhile, it became increasingly obvious, that neither Moscow, nor NATO, acting separately, were unable to stop the development of the Kosovo tragedy. The bombings of Yugoslavia were dragging on and did not yield the expected results. Russia realised, that support for Milosheвич was not the best way to restore its prestige in the world. This is why, despite the exchange of rebukes, Moscow and the West (NATO) were forced to return to the negotiation table (within the framework of «G 8») and to work out the principles of the common approach to the Kosovo regulation (the so called Petersberg Principles). They were approved by the UN Security Council on June 10, 1999, and presented to Belgrade on behalf of the world community. The most important point in it was the very fact of the mutual – of Moscow and the West – statement. Under such circumstances, Yugoslavian president could not hope to play on their contradictions and had to give in.

The Kosovo crisis, its development and consequences lead objectively to some conclusions, which are not consoling, but together with that useful for thinking the matter over. The quickness, with which all the channels of interaction with NATO were destroyed, proved, that there were influential forces in Russia that opposed any contacts with the West. It is likely, that such forces exist in NATO either (general Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, was determined to stop the advancement of Russian paratroopers to Pristina by force; one can only conjecture, to what tragedy the implementation of that decision would have brought).

What are the consequences of the test by the Yugoslavian crisis for the Russian-NATO relations? The two year-long efforts of the both sides aimed at opening up and broadening the interaction channels have gone to rack and ruin. The interaction structures, that had been established by Russia and NATO within the two years of the Founding Act functioning, unfortunately, have not stood the testing of time. The Russian elite, first of all the military one, has most likely come to the conclusion, that NATO countries need the Founding Act more, than Russia itself does. And if it is so, then one can always exert pressure on the West, threatening to

denounce this document. In the result of the inability to find jointly the solution of the complicated international problems, the extension of the sphere of mutual rebukes, the process of interaction establishment between Russia and NATO has turned out to be thrust back for at least two or three years. As it is known, it is much more difficult to restore the destroyed, than to rebuild everything from bottom up. Dmitri Trenin, Deputy Director, Carnegie Moscow Center, comes to the conclusion, that «Russia-NATO relations have not fully recovered from the blow dealt by Kosovo»⁶.

One can only hail, that the restoration process has already begun. It is slightly facilitated by the fact, that the top level change of guard has taken place on both sides. The new NATO Secretary General George Robertson visited Moscow already in February, 2000, met with the new Russian president Vladimir Putin. This meeting gave a powerful incentive to the restoration of the relations. Mutual understanding returns, and one can only wish, that it will be longer and deeper than before. Joint statement on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary General of NATO, Lord Robertson, in Moscow on February 16, 2000 underlies that both sides are ready «to make their mutual cooperation a cornerstone of European security»⁷.

Meanwhile, for all its tragic nature and the danger of sliding into a new «cold war», the Yugoslavian crisis has proved once again, that no new architecture of the European security is possible, unless it is established either without Russia (against it) or without NATO (against it), unless it is not based upon their increasingly close cooperation, upon the new, more profound and prospective structures of interaction. The situation, in which Russia though not a member nevertheless present in the alliance, perhaps was inevitable and convenient for the initial, transitional stage, when both sides had to adapt to each other, pass over from rivalry to partnership. However, this pattern was considered by both sides not as a transitional, but as permanent one. It was lacking an element of development from the lowest to the top level; it was the perspective that was missing. There is still another important thing. In that situation NATO did not bear any responsibility for the behaviour of Russia, and the latter, in its turn, did not bear any responsibility for the behaviour of NATO. In any moment each side could demand divorce and easily get it. That was exactly what happened during the Kosovo crisis: Moscow decided, that in the existing situation politically it did not pay to adhere oneself to the framework of the Founding Act; The West, in its turn, decided, that its stake in the Yugoslavian crisis was politically so high, that Russia's objections could be ignored. The interdependence of the two

partners was yet so fragile, that it did not stand the overstrain, caused by the difference of interests and expediencies. Therefore, some new structural or institutional ties that could withstand the strain were in need. Certainly, time, precedents transforming into traditions, the increasingly broader joint peacekeeping activity could finally establish an informal, but stable Russian-NATO interaction able to stand such a test. Most likely, such an outcome would have been the best one. However, time does not always draw together, but it also brings surprises, new challenges, new tests, that under the conditions of an unstable system could either bring both sides together, or alienate them from each other as well. This is why, while analysing the lessons of the Kosovo crisis, Russia and NATO should think not only of how to restore the past, but rather of how to build their joint future.

The idea to join NATO. Indeed one of the problems that gives rise to uncertainty in Russia-NATO relations deals with the possibility of Russia's membership of NATO. There is a feeling in Moscow that NATO's door, opened at times for others, is closed to Russia forever. The argument that Russia is too huge is invalid – the United States (or even Germany at the moment) is more powerful than Russia. The same is true for Russia's instability – that is a problem of time. Meanwhile, the lack of opportunity to become, in principle, a member of the Alliance consolidates the position of those in Russia who see NATO enlargement as an anti-Russian step. What can be done? I believe that Zbigniew Brzezinski is right when he says that «the United States, as the leading power in NATO, should state explicitly that at some point in the future even Russia's membership in NATO might make sense»⁸.

That does not mean that Russia will immediately fall into NATO's arms. But such a statement would bring Russia much closer to the Alliance spiritually. On the other hand, Moscow's real membership of NATO would remove some irritant problems (e.g. further NATO enlargement to add the three Baltic States) from the agenda of NATO-Russia relations. There is no confidence that Moscow now meets all the criteria outlined by NATO. But perhaps it will meet them tomorrow. Nevertheless both sides could analyse the perspectives of Russia's membership in NATO from different angles: is it a necessity or a wishful thinking; advantages and disadvantages of joining for both sides; who is in favour and who is against of the step on both sides; what are criteria and conditions for Russia's membership in the alliance; what kind of difficulties both sides will have to overcome in the process and so on. That clarification could

be useful not for Moscow only, but for other perspective candidates of NATO membership as well, especially for those who are in a hurry to join the Alliance because of the Russian threat.

Meanwhile, the idea of Moscow's entry into NATO arose not a single time. As far back as on March 31, 1954, just a year after Stalin's death, at the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union officially declared about its willingness to join NATO. The statement of the Soviet government was published in all national newspapers. At that time Moscow decided to establish a new (military) structure called upon to strengthen its control over the countries of Eastern Europe, and was in need of a suitable ground for this. At the same time the Federal Republic of Germany was preparing to join the North Atlantic Alliance. Moscow was actively objecting against it, asserting, that this action was aimed to support and even strengthen the aggressive anti-Soviet potential of then Western Germany. Moscow's considerations were based on the idea, that its suggestion to become a member of the Alliance would be rejected. Then, in Moscow's opinion, the entire world would realise against whom NATO was aimed, and the Soviet Union would have every right to take retaliatory measures. That was exactly what happened: on May 9, 1955 the FRG became a NATO member, and on May 14, as if in response to it, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation was established.

After that the idea of Moscow's entry into NATO had been sunk into oblivion for more than 35 years and was recalled only after the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 90s. It was the so-called romantic period of the Russian foreign policy, when Moscow opened not only its doors, but also its soul to the West. In 1991–1993 there were quite a lot of talks about Russia's plan to join NATO, and at that time the intention of Russian liberals were sincere. In December 1991 Russia's deputy prime-minister Gennady Burbulis visited NATO's headquarters and was received by the Secretary General of the Alliance Manfred Wornat. Among the problems they discussed was the point concerning Russia's entry into NATO. This idea was supported then by vice-president Alexander Rutskoy, head of the government Egor Gaidar, Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev. In August 1993, during the visit to Poland and the Czech Republic, president Yeltsin gave OK for these countries to join NATO. However, already in September Russian diplomacy made a 180 degree turn. Nevertheless, in August 1994, Boris Yeltsin again said to the reporters, that Russia could join NATO in due course. Then, during 6-7 years, this question was not raised by the Russian political elite and the mass media. The main reason for that was NATO's expansion to the East – the process, from

which Russia was not only excluded, but, on the opinion of the majority of the Russian leaders, especially the military ones, was aimed against it. In 1996, as Evgeny Primakov came to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all the talks about Russia's possible membership in NATO were brought to an end. Nevertheless, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs had to put up with the fact, that the East European countries, the former Warsaw Treaty allies of the USSR, would join the alliance. But he firmly stood his ground, that in the process of expansion the bloc should by no means cross «the red line» – the former state boundary of the Soviet Union. Moscow ruled out the possibility of the admission of the former Soviet republics to the Alliance. But thus it also closed the way to NATO for itself.

The talks about Russia joining NATO resumed not long ago and rather unexpectedly, almost one year after the bilateral relations had been suspended. On March 5, 2000, three weeks before the presidential elections in Russia its acting president and the most eligible candidate for presidency Vladimir Putin said in the interview to BBC, that he did not rule out («why not?» – this is exactly how the famous answer to the question of a British journalist sounded) a possibility of Russia to join NATO, under the condition, that Moscow would have an equal status in the alliance⁹. Grounding his statement, which had made another 180 degrees turn of the Russian diplomacy (after the year of the anti-NATO hysteria), the head of Russian state elaborated: «Russia is a part of European culture, and I can not imagine my own country existing apart from Europe, apart from the so called, as we often say, «civilised world»... It is harmful for Russia to regard NATO as an enemy»¹⁰. In order to remove all the doubts concerning NATO expansion to the East, the presidential candidate softens the Russian position on the issue of NATO's expansion to the East. He, in particular, claimed: «When we speak out against the expansion of NATO to the East, we do not say, that there are some our special interests, that are being affected there. We think first of all about that place in the world, which our own country occupies today and will occupy tomorrow. And if someone tries to exclude us from the decision making process, this is what inspires apprehension and irritation... But it does not mean, that we are ready to shut the doors and turn to isolationism»¹¹.

There is no doubt, that such an opinion of the head of state reflects his realistic vision of the possible Russian-NATO interaction nature. Putin cannot help to understand that the immensity of task to reform Russia, demands, firstly, a placid external situation, an absence of any threats from the West, a confrontation with it. Secondly, its active participation –

consultative, financial, technological – is also needed in the process. Though there is another point of no less importance – to what extent will such intentions be laid in the base of the practical Russian course with respect to NATO? It is not excluded, that they represent tactical, rather than strategic considerations. Indeed, all that statements had been made shortly before the presidential elections in Russia and were, primarily, oriented for the Western audience. Vladimir Putin, understanding the alertness of NATO leaders regarding his past, was giving a number of friendly signals to the West. They were meant to dispel the distrust of the West, to secure its benevolence in the course of the presidential campaign and on the stage of the power consolidation of the new president. It was important for the presidential nominee, which was terra incognita for the Russian society, **to show to his electorate, that the West trusted him and supported him.** Other gestures were made in the same way: the promise to ratify the START-II (which has been done) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (which has also been fulfilled), to think over the possibility of modification of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (here everything turned out to be much more complicated).

As a whole, such tactics has born considerable dividends to the candidate for presidency. Anyway, on the background of the acute criticism of the Russian Chechen policy from the EU and the Council of Europe, the threats to impose economic sanctions, to exclude Russia from the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe, president Clinton announced publicly, that one can deal with Putin. And theoretically, Vladimir Putin is really ready to deal with the West, because he understands very well, that the West does not represent a threat for Russia in the military aspect, and, moreover, it can be quite useful in a number of cases (direct investment into the Russian economy). Later, as if in the addition to the said above, Vladimir Putin lays down conditions, on which he is ready to deal with the West (NATO): relations must be equal (though, this statement needs some specification – whether we are talking about the equality in rights or the equality with the USA, for example); the West should not interfere into the process of Chechen suppression, the relations between Moscow and other states of the post-Soviet territory; Russia will deal with human rights, rights of national minorities on its territory itself.

But even assuming, that the issue of Moscow's entry into NATO had for the new Russian president rather a tactical, than a strategic interest, one should admit, that this issue was not raised spontaneously. Because in fact, it reflects sentiment of a certain part of the Russian political elite. Even the military elite can not ignore this feeling. Indeed, as far as at the end of

1999 the Head of the Russian General Staff general A. Kvashnin, analysing in his article the interaction perspectives between Russia and NATO (all the contacts of which were suspended in that time), wrote: «We still stick to the opinion, that there is no alternative to the resumption of cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance and we count. upon its resumption, on the equal and constructive relations between Russia and NATO»¹². Right after V. Putin's interview to BBC a well-known Russian newspaper «Segodnya» conducted a mass opinion poll of its readers on the following topic: «Should Russia be determined to join NATO?» 67% of the readers (there were about 3.000 poll-participants overall) said «yes» and 33% disagreed with that¹³. Although one should not overestimate the importance of such polls: the Russian mass consciousness is quite indifferent to the foreign affairs issues. But, apparently, in this case, it instinctively feels, that the ruling elite simply manipulates public opinion in its own interests as far as the relations with NATO are concerned: first speaking in support of partner relations with NATO, then presenting this organisation as the devil incarnate. No wonder, that the sentiment of the society itself regarding the West (NATO) is prone to considerable fluctuations.

Nevertheless, as NATO is expanding and an even-growing number of candidates for joining the alliance are emerging, the Russian society cannot help asking itself a simple question: why is Russia not among those candidates? Why the leaders of Western states and governments, quite a few of which regard themselves as «personal friends» of Russian leaders, avoid discussing this problem? The answers here can be various, but the majority of Russian people is prone (certainly, not without the influence of the propaganda) to put the blame for the existing situation primarily on the West. Some believe, that the assertions of the NATO leadership, that the doors of the alliance are open for everyone, either are not true, or hypocrite. Both the equality of rights and the equality of opportunities are out of the question here. The Russian mass consciousness is convinced (having or not good reasons for that – is another question), that the West does not accept Russia out of the principle. And not so much because Russia has not yet ripen for the membership in NATO, but rather because it has its own identity and specifics. It does not look like Belgium or Luxembourg, it represents another, not European (or even anti-European) civilisation, another, not European political culture, another system of moral values. And even having accepted many European values, Moscow interprets them in its own way. This is exactly the reason why some Western politicians do not want to see Russia as a NATO member, though they prefer not to speak it up publicly.

Such a perception of the Western motives by the Russian society (whether it is justified or not; who is more responsible for such a perception – is another question) can have tragic implications both for Russia and Europe (the USA). First of all, the attitude towards Russia, that has made a great contribution to the cultural development of Europe, as to the country of the second sort, is insulting for its mass consciousness. Second, such an attitude can result in the rise of the anti-Western sentiment, which are strong enough as they are now, in the country. Third, all of this can bring to a further alienation between Russia and the West (NATO). Fourth, such an alienation can, in its turn, result in the isolation or self-isolation of Russia. Fifth, under the circumstances of isolation the Russian society will quickly give up its democratic values, and the supporters of Zhirinovskiy and communists, which are losing their positions now, can get their second wind. Sixth, the feeling of inferiority can push the society towards any measures, including extreme ones, that will help to overcome this feeling. Seventh, all of this can result in the degeneration of the political regime into an authoritative one (the indications of such degeneration are seen already today), the great power ambitions of which can cast Europe away to the times of the Cold War. Certainly, all of this might never happen. But one should bear in mind, that Russia is great, vast and unstable. That is why without the help from the West, without the permanent close interaction with it, it will be hard for Russian leaders to consolidate democracy in the state and society. One has to take it into account, especially when the question is whether Russia will or will not be a NATO member. It proves, that it is not only a security matter, but it is the matter of the political future of Russia and Europe.

Russia in NATO: «pro and ...» Meanwhile, a specific and pragmatic dimension of the problem is as important as a moral and political one. Indeed, why should Russia prefer to join NATO rather than remain in current position? What are the objective factors that speak to day in favour of joining the alliance?

The history of the 15-20 year old search for a new and more effective system of European security leads to at least one certain conclusion: this system can hardly be build without either Russia (all the more, against it) or NATO (against it). Even if it is build, it will not be able to function properly without these two elements. All efforts made to find some other solution based on one element only (NATO expansion without Russia's participation) as well as efforts made to establish some other competing security organisation (the urge of

Moscow to oppose NATO with OSCE that is still only a forum despite the change of its name) have failed. They have only caused (and will cause in future) new lines of tensions in Europe. Evidently, no system of European security can be build without these two elements; the more so, such a system is quite possible on the basis of some form of Russian and NATO integration. No one would deny the difficulty of such a step. "If there is to be true and lasting security in Europe, Russia and NATO simply must work together, and build a solid relationship"- J.Robertson, Secretary General of NATO, said recently in his speech to Antalya Security conference¹⁴.

Other matters need to be considered as well. Understandably, Russia will decide to join NATO only if membership in the alliance means more advantages than remaining outside of it. The West, in turn, will consent to Russian membership in NATO only if it gives the alliance some new benefits that it lacks today.

This may mean a certain change in the paradigm of national security for Russia. Traditionally, security of the Russian state (especially after the communist coup in 1917) has been ensured by national efforts exclusively. Even in the times of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, the Soviet Union carried the largest financial burden ensuring its own security as well as the security of the countries in its sphere of influence. Membership in CSCE (then OSCE) did not solve national security problems in the framework of the collective organisation either for Russia or other countries (it is very unlikely that at least one of its members was willing to hand its security issues over to OSCE). However, maintaining one's security only by national efforts is highly expensive, in some cases – even not reliable. This is why joining NATO would enable Russia (for the first time since 1917) to ensure its security through a collective defence system. In other words, Russia would make the transition from maintaining its security (in military terms) mainly by national efforts to security guarantees within the framework of international (Euro-Atlantic) cooperation. This would give Russia the same level of security at less cost and with a reduced army. NATO would have a more predictable and friendly partner on its Eastern border.

Possibly, not everyone in Russia would agree to that, especially the military elite that proclaims other system of values. The military leaders are not as concerned with the cost of security and even the technical equipment of the army as they are with the possibility to be independent and free of external control. Not surprisingly, international co-operation as a

factor of ensuring national security of Russia is hardly mentioned in the recently published "Military doctrine of the Russian Federation" (this cooperation has a highly limited form within the frameworks of CIS; and even here Russia carries the main burden while others receive benefits)¹⁵. However, the cost approach begins to play a higher importance for the society as well as the political establishment. This is especially true under conditions of reforming the whole economic life of the country.

Russian politicians and military people complain that their cooperation with NATO in the frameworks of the Founding Act and JPC is usually limited to an exchange of views and discussions of different often important issues. But all this talk has nothing to do with the decision making process within the alliance; Russia is debarred from it. Meanwhile, decisions made by NATO influence not only the internal problems of the alliance (which are really not within Moscow's concern). More often, these decisions deal with broader issues of European security, and even in this case Moscow can only voice its opinion. Of course, even voicing one's vision and participating in a discussion provides some opportunity to influence the other side. However, such an opportunity does not guarantee that the opinion will be taken into consideration in the decision making process. This is very clear since Russia is not a member of the alliance. So, the only possibility for Russia to have this guarantee is to become member of the organisation. Only in this case will Russia enjoy equal rights in the decision making process as well as have an understanding that its opinion will be taken into consideration.

Finally, Russia can realise the new opportunities opened after the signing of the Founding Act: the country had no time to realise them because of the confrontation with its Western partners on the Kosovo issue. In reality, many problems in the relations between Russia and NATO that seem unsolvable today may be solved easily once Russia becomes member of the alliance in this or that form.

First among such problems is the further expansion of NATO. The alliance leaders have practically made the commitment to provide membership to the Baltic states – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia – during the next wave of NATO expansion. It will be very difficult for NATO to abandon this commitment without damaging its credibility. At the same time, Russia has almost officially "drawn" a red line indicating the limit of further possible NATO expansion to the East. This line coincides with the borders of the ex-Soviet Union which

means that NATO should not give membership to the former Soviet republics, now independent states. This notification is aimed, first of all, towards the Baltic states; to a lesser degree – towards Ukraine (it restrains itself). Quite obviously, Russia can dictate its terms neither to NATO nor the Baltic states that have firmly expressed their intentions to join the alliance. Unfortunately, positions of all countries today are highly inflexible and pronounced (made public). Often these positions contradict each other, but neither one nor the other side can retreat for credibility reasons. In this case, the tough position of each country in upholding certain principles will unavoidably lead to new confrontations, possibly causing a new "cold war». Russian membership in NATO is the only solution that meets the problem completely in the interests of everyone.

Of course, such a step requires time. If it were evident today that Russia will definitely join NATO (without fixing a time and form of membership), it would already be possible to find temporary solutions through co-operation of all parties concerned. This could be done by involving the EU in conflict resolution. It is well known that the Baltic states are as interested in joining the European Union as they are in joining NATO (if not to a higher degree). So, the matter is to accelerate the process of Baltic states joining the EU and postpone to some degree their membership in NATO. Keeping this goal in mind, Russia could make a number of efforts to improve the relationship with the three Baltic states. Moscow could encourage the adaptation process of Russian-speaking population to new conditions in these countries. In their turn, not without the influence of NATO and the EU, the Baltic states (first of all, Latvia and Estonia) could give up their intentions to force out the Russian-speaking population from their territory. Both Russia and the Baltic states will view this part of the population as the foothold of closer economic as well as other forms of cooperation. The EU could determine the schedule of granting membership to the three Baltic countries. Their security in this case could be guaranteed in the frameworks of EU Common foreign and security policy (NATO and Russia could also provide similar guarantees). So, on condition that Russia's final goal is to enter the alliance, the Baltic states (changing NATO for EU temporarily) would refrain from joining NATO for a while (if they do not change their mind - until Russia joins NATO). Progress in one area is accompanied by advancement in another. Russia is aware that its way to Europe lies through the Baltic's states, East Central Europe, EU and NATO. That is why Moscow has to understand that its interest is not to

press these countries and organisations but to search for solution acceptable for all parties. It seems that Moscow begins to realise that its long run goal is not to prevent the Baltic states from entering NATO but to become part of Europe itself.

The situation with Ukraine is less and more difficult at the same time. Indeed, if Kiev decides to join NATO, no one (except NATO itself) can stop the process. However, the Ukraine will make the choice only in the situation of dramatic deterioration of its relations with Russia. o unprecedented intensification of its relations with Russia. Evidently, both parties are aware of the limits they cannot cross in the process of mutual confrontation (that takes place mainly between the political elite of two states). Besides, it is important to understand that by using the NATO argument Ukraine, as well as other post-Soviet states, has effective way to influence Russia. "The threat to join NATO"- says a weekly 'Itogi' – "is an ideal means to besiege Moscow when it, for example, demands the payments for gas shipments"⁶. One can assume that Russia's membership in NATO would significantly limit the possibility of former Soviet republics to play NATO card against Moscow.

Currently, the Western direction is the most stable and secure element within Russia's defence system. Moscow does not expect any military threats form this side (even though the lack of such threat seems to worry an ally of Russia – Belarus's President Lukashenko). Joining NATO would enable Russia to escape a set of military responsive measures in the Western part of the country that seemed necessary after the collapse of the Soviet Union (such as building of defence constructions, dislocating the troops, establishing an early warning system and so on). Special measures to ensure security of the Kaliningrad enclave would also become unnecessary since the enclave would lie in a friendly rather than a hostile surrounding.

The West could possibly benefit from having Russia in the alliance, too. The advantages lie, first of all, in the fact that the only military (nuclear) power in the world still able (and it seems, for a long time will be able) to destroy the West in an unacceptable manner (be it a direct or a responsive measure, it does not matter here) would now be a friendly ally; and its huge might could be aimed at serving common interests. Russia's presence in NATO allows to build a logically substantiated and a fairly stable security system that includes all the main power components of the Euro-Atlantic area. As a result the West, first of all, loses a potential source of threat and, secondly, gains additional power that provides ways to save on security matters. Having Moscow as an ally, the West would free

itself of suspicions concerning Russia's participation in the building of mass destruction weapons and means of their delivery by the so called rogue states. Should Russia be an equal member of Europe and the alliance the Europeanisation of NATO and West European security gets a new impetus. Even now Moscow could participate in the deployment of rapid reaction forces established by West Europeans in the framework of EU Common foreign and security policy. Both parties could not only share the experience of peacekeeping (which Russia has due to often conflicts in the CIS) but also work out normative basis of international peacekeeping, behaviour of external intermediaries, their strategy and tactics. Together, Russia and NATO could define the conditions of using military force on different stages of conflict prevention and resolution. This would not only be useful but also necessary in order to avoid the notoriously famous experience of struggle between the outside intermediaries themselves as it happened during the conflict in Kosovo. There is undeniably a fair amount of common ground between two sides on such issues as the struggle against international terrorism and organised crime, including the drugs and arms trade, and curbing further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These issues figure prominently in the recently published text of the Russian military doctrine¹⁷.

Russia in NATO: «...contra». However, possible membership of Russia in NATO entails not only the benefits mentioned above but also a number of unavoidable problems that could have influence on the decision making process Moscow's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation included. It could not have been any other way, keeping in mind decades of "cold" war and the recent tensions between the two sides on the issue of NATO expansion and the conflict in Kosovo. These problems may be common for both Russia and NATO but they also may be regarded individually as having importance to Moscow or Brussels.

The following may be counted as problems common for both Russia and NATO:

- psychological compatibility. Even with an expediency of the alliance in mind, it will be hard for both sides to make a 100 percent turn after decades of being enemies, after viewing each other mainly as targets through the slit of a sight and the relationship – as a zero sum game. The matter is not only with the countries' leaders but also the general public mood that can be easily used by the «hawks» (such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Senator Helms and

others). The West will probably go through an easier adaptation process since it already has such experience (Germany, Spain, former socialistic states). With its tendency to view the world in black and white colours only, Russia will have more difficulties overcoming the physiological barriers.

- transparency, first of all in the issues of military (nuclear) and mobilisation planning, intelligence information, especially received through agents or electronic means of interception. Of course, the confidence measures practised in Europe since the times of the first detente in the 70's have somewhat weakened the obsession of military people for secrecy. However, the spy obsession still common for both sides. This question is extremely delicate; usually it is not discussed openly and honestly which may lead to additional tensions and suspicions in the process of Russia and NATO cooperation. It is enough to say that the presence of NATO officers in the headquarters of the General Staff poses great problems for Russian officers. It is also correct to say that many Western generals will find it difficult to adjust themselves to participation of Russian military men in the meeting of NATO nuclear planning committee.

The probable Russia's membership in NATO is more likely to cause a series of difficult questions for its politicians and militaries. However, they are quite predictable. So, there is time to think about ways of avoiding them or lessening their probable negative impact on the relations between Russia and NATO under new circumstances. Despite their difficulties, these problems are solvable. But because these are Russia's problems, the responsibility for their solving is mainly on its side. The following are the problems caused by the country's probable membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

- First of all, it is important to understand that the Russian political elite is not ready for such a radical step. It is so used to exploiting the image of an external enemy (that was usually presented as NATO) for its domestic needs that losing such a possibility will cause a confusion in the ranks of political and military establishment. Joining NATO will mean that everything said about it before (and equally, about Russia itself) is exactly the other way round. That is why Moscow makes a lot of reservations even if cooperation with NATO is very limited. The main idea here is to make the public believe that Moscow cooperates with NATO only because the alliance constantly makes fundamental concessions. However, the details of such 'concessions', for example during the eastward NATO expansion, the Dayton Agreements or the military actions in Yugoslavia, are usually not revealed to the public. In the

end the Russian political elite will have to decide on what NATO means and can mean for Russia? Is it an ally? A partner? Or an enemy who skilfully covers its true intentions? There are reasons to believe that the Russian establishment does not have answers to these questions even for itself..

- Russia will have to determine the form of joining NATO: will it become member of the political or the military organisation as well? Those who think that under current conditions Russia simply does not have any choice and thus is faced to join NATO believe that membership in the political organisation is the lesser of the two evils. Those who think that joining NATO would benefit Russia rather than harm it are certain that the country should join the military organisations as well. Thinking rationally, Moscow will (under any circumstances) go for the first option and only then, having gained certain experience, decide on the second one.

- Russia will have to make a decision on its nuclear arsenal. No doubt, it will remain under national jurisdiction just as it is in the case of all NATO members who possess it. But Russia will have to answer the question whether this kind of arms will constitute a nuclear shield for the collective defence of NATO or rather be used for collective security of the post Soviet space only? Will the NATO Nuclear planning committee determine its probable use in some way (what way)? To what extent does the nuclear cooperation between Russia and NATO fit the nuclear policy of the latter? Is the cooperation of all four nuclear possessing members possible in the framework of the alliance?

- The unpredictable response of the CIS countries to Russian membership in NATO may also raise a very important questions for Moscow. Involved in ethnical and territorial conflicts, all these countries, especially in Central Asia, have problems interpreting democracy. These states could deliberately draw Russia into the processes of conflict resolution in the area. In the case of Moscow's membership in NATO, Russia would have to deal with those issues not as a neighbouring state but rather as a member of the alliance. However, other NATO allies would not be too happy about that: through Russia they could also become involved (military) in conflicts. In this situation, it is unclear how the system of collective defence will function: will Moscow remain its participant or not? Finally, a paradoxical situation can occur in the triangle NATO-Russia-Belarus. Will Minsk be automatically seen as member of the alliance keeping in mind that the two neighbouring

countries form something like a union state? It is very probable that the reaction of some post Soviet states who regard NATO with suspicion may be similar to the reaction of Russia as the ex-WTO allies were joining NATO and as the Baltic states are being considered for membership.

- Used to gaining benefits from the contradictions between Russia and the West in the recent years, China will be not too excited about Russian membership in NATO. Peking usually frightened Moscow with closer relationship with the West, and the West – with probable coming together with Moscow. In this manner, China hoped to gain certain benefits on both directions. China will lose this possibility as soon as Moscow joins NATO. However, it can do nothing to oppose their united efforts. Besides, after Russia joins NATO, the enlarged alliance comes closely to the Chinese borders. For Peking, this would bring a change in the whole geopolitical configuration in a region where its influence has not been questioned before. The reaction of PRC on the rapprochement between Russia and NATO and the participation of Moscow in the alliance's structures will probably be similar to that of Russia during the NATO eastward expansion. On the other hand, the reaction of Japan may be more favourable since a compromise between Russia and the West may be viewed as a precursor of a compromise between Moscow and Tokyo on the issue of the Kuril Islands.

- Joining NATO may have positive effects on both the process of democratisation of military forces and the society as a whole as well as on emerging of the civil structures in Russia. However, under conditions of not finally asserted democratic values, it is important to understand that those who have not yet accepted these values or even deny them may accuse NATO and the Russian political leaders of imposing the alien values upon the society and the country. This mainly applies to the Russian generals who have lately build up their influence on the country's political leaders. As a result, an ideological confrontation and even a significant split in the Russian society on that issue may be expected.

In turn, the possible membership of Russia in NATO may cause certain difficulties and problems for the West and the members of the alliance. There are those in the West who believe that these problems may be insoluble for the alliance. To which extent are these assumptions well grounded? And what are the most obvious problems nowadays?

- The main concern of the West comes from the contention that Russian presence in the alliance may simply destroy it. Chaos and lack of stability in the country, corruption among

political elite, including military one as well, the penetration of criminal elements into business – all these distinguishing feature of contemporary Russia could spread to other members of the alliance. As a result, instead of positively influencing Russia, NATO will be negatively influenced by the new member. That is more than probable if Russia turns more clearly towards an authoritarian rule. Of course, by the time Moscow enters the alliance it will have to meet the majority of the problems; otherwise it will not be accepted by NATO. However, Russia is a transforming country; its internal as well as external structures are not yet stable. These structures are in a state of flux; they are renewed in some areas while go back to the old model (today Russia counts 89 subjects of Federation, tomorrow there may be seven left; Today Moscow has good relations with Byelarus, tomorrow they may be changed for the worst; Russia's nearest environment is too hostile to be predictable) So, Russia may be a powerful generator of instability inside the alliance. That is why NATO members will always be afraid of having to deal with inner peacekeeping rather than with outer one.

- The post Soviet space by itself is an enormous conflict area; and Russia has to a certain degree taken the responsibility for settling the ethnical and political conflicts in the region. There is a concern that having joined NATO, Russia would try handing this burden over to other alliance members. However, they are not interested to overburden themselves with different problems in Georgia and Abhasia, Tadjikistan, Azerbaijan, Nagorny Kharabach and Armenia. Chechnya alone poses enough difficulties to the West. Quite possibly, NATO will not be willing to handle territorial problems that exist between Russia and Japan, Russia and Finland, or the problems of illegal migration form China to Siberia and the Far East.

- All that mentioned above brings up the following question: to what extent is Article 5 of the Washington Treaty applicable to Russia? For example, to what degree is it applicable in the case of the Chechen invasion into Dagestan in the fall of 1999? Some Western experts believe that if Russia joins the alliance, there will be a need for certain qualifications that would exclude automatic application of Article 5 to Russia and require additional consultations. However, this would change NATO status from an organisation of collective defence to an organisation of collective security. To what extent do other members agree with that? Another question – in that case, is there any sense for Russia to join NATO? If NATO does not want to take over responsibility for Russia, what sense does it make for Russia to take the responsibility for other alliance members in terms of their security?

- Finally, there is a problem with China and, apparently, Japan for both the West and Russia. Coming out to the borders of China and Japan will require some kind of co-operation between NATO and these two countries. It will probably be easier in the case of Japan since Russian membership in the alliance practically gives way to establishing a structure of security on the vast territory from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Bound with the US by the Mutual Security Treaty, Japan could become part of this new structure. Peoples' Republic of China is unlikely to join NATO, so some kind of security interaction between them will be needed to convince China of peaceful intentions of the alliance. At the same time, the issue of Taiwan and the perspectives and forms of its reunification with continental China will unavoidably come up during the process of such co-operation.

Correlation of Forces. Evidently, the question of whether Russia should join NATO depends not only on the ability of both parties to find convincing answers to these and other questions but to a certain degree on power arrangements inside the Russian (and Western) political elite. What are the main groups of influence concerning this issue in modern Russia and what is the dynamics of these groups in the near future?

The first group is combined of those who are fundamentally against Russia joining NATO ("anti-western group"). These are first of all supporters of the communists and the old regime; people who do not accept the new system of values. Their life was bound with the struggle for socialism; they find it hard to admit that their energy, time and life were wasted in attempts to build an illusionary society of total equality. Politicians of the ultra right wing who try to restore the image of an external enemy (like the party of Vladimir_Zhirinovsky) also belong to this group. All the society's resources are needed to fight this enemy rather than used to score a victory of "mythical" democracy. The military elite may also be seen as an element of this group. Russian generals fear that engagement in NATO would lead to the democratisation of Russia's military forces, to the establishment of civil control over their army and over military budget that is seen as their private ownership. Many partisans of the Eurasian idea who dream about restoration of powerful Great Russia also belong to this group

The second group is constituted of those who are fundamentally in favour of Russia joining NATO («national liberals»). First of all, these are radical democrats of the early Eltsin period who are now enjoying a second wind within the framework of the Union of right-wing forces. This party unites a lot of dynamic businesslike young people who, on the whole, share

Western values. Some part of the liberal party "Yabloko" (though not the entire) as well as a great part of experts and representatives of the academic community interested in larger co-operation with Western colleagues may also be included into the group. Their views are shared by diplomats of the new generation. They oppose the attempts made to restore the ideological orientation of the Russia's foreign policy. They are also supported by Russian businesspeople who are independent from administrative structures and who would like to have free relationship with the Western counterpart. They are frightened by the tendency towards authoritarian rule and the probable isolation of Russia from the rest of the world that, as proved by the 70 years long history of communist regime, had tragic consequences for the country.

The third group ("Russian isolationists") supports those who believe that due to the negative Soviet imperial experience Russia has to retreat into itself and concentrate its efforts on solving domestic problems and conducting social as well as economic reforms. The country has to minimise its international activities that only divert the attention, time and energy of the society to problems not important for its current needs. The possible Russia's membership in NATO is one of such problems. This part of the population is highly indifferent to the outside world in general. At the same time, due to a minimal level of its political activity, this group, larger in number than any other, could be properly identified as the "silent majority". These are the people disappointed by the reforms that have not benefited them in any visible way. However, their indifference is not as harmless as it seems at first. Since this majority remains silent, other parties and the administration tries to speak out on behalf of these people. That is why this group may be in favour of joining NATO today and against it tomorrow.

Finally, the fourth group ("new nomenclature") is comprised of the ruling elite – the administration and its environment, the bureaucracy and oligarchic circles bound with the ruling power and "nourished" by it, and a great number of "independent specialists" who serve this whole hierarchy. This group has no definite ideological or political orientation. Its sympathies and aversions are determined by the momentary needs of the people in power. Today they may vigorously oppose the ratification of START-2 agreement (and see NATO as an aggressor), while tomorrow they may as vigorously as before vote in favour of the Treaty (and claim that Moscow does not exclude its membership in NATO). Obviously, on

the stage of power consolidation, the "new nomenclature" needs Western support and thus asserts honestly that it does not want any conflicts with NATO.. A lot is being said about democracy, rights, freedoms, the "dictatorship of law" as well as other Western values. But according their view it is a power structures that can build a civil society in the country. At the same time, this is undeniably the group that, compared to all others, has the real power to decide whether Russia should or should not join NATO.

NATO's contribution. How can the West help Russia become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty organisation? First of all, it has to decide itself whether the alliance needs Russia or not. No doubt, the West is not unanimous answering the question. However, it has always stated that the alliance is open for all those who share the values of democracy. But this is a general answer only. A more concrete answer is needed; one that deals with Russia and gives the country not only hopes but also certain incentives pushing it in that direction. Under any circumstances, those incentives will be not out of place. They could include the following measures aimed to close a gap between Russia and NATO.

The first step under the present situation is to restore norms, ties, procedures and mechanisms, envisaged by the Founding Act and broken or suspended due to dramatic events over Kosovo. Meanwhile, it has to be realised that relations with NATO are unlikely to be a priority for the Russian political elite for the foreseeable future. As for the military leadership, it is determined to build national security against the alliance as much as with it. Moreover, NATO has to understand that Russia as a former superpower is very sensitive to all prestigious aspects of interaction. Giving that NATO could spare Russia's injured vanity and take the lead in full normalisation of relation with it. Moscow must be made to feel that the expansion of NATO is neither an intentional nor an unintentional means for the exclusion of Russia from Europe. It must be made evidently and credibly clear that the expansion of NATO and the European Union are open-ended processes with neither fixed geopolitical nor time limits and that eventually a more formal association wit both is on Russia's political horizon. Once (and if) Russia's democracy has been consolidated, once Russia itself makes the subjective choice in favour of membership, and once it fully satisfies the several objective criteria for membership, the case for withholding access will be seen less justifiable.

The second step is to restore the regularity of meetings within the frameworks of JPC; make them more businesslike and enlarge their agenda. However, a critical overview of the Founding Act should serve as a starting point. Considering past experience, this revision would have the aim to determine which provisions do work and which do not and must be thus shut off. The experience of the past two years shows that Russia is not very interested in the routine Partnership for Peace Program. The country is more interested in joint exercise imitating large-scale peacekeeping operations, their organisational and political support. Moscow would like to participate in the European peacekeeping forces (that are build on the possibility to use NATO infrastructure). Perhaps a need to add some new provisions to the Act will emerge in the process of such a revision. In any case a joint review could be developed into a work plan. It might include a comparative analysis of strategic and national security concepts and military doctrines adopted by NATO and the Russian Federation since their relationship deteriorated. Less conceptual, but highly practical issues could include improving nuclear safety, environmental protection, civil emergency preparedness, as well as retraining projects for retired officers. Past co-operation in the fields mentioned above was much appreciated in Russia. Other agencies besides the Ministry of Defence were keen to work together with their Western counterparts.

The third step assumes to increase gradually Russia's presence in NATO existing political and military structures. Igor Sergeev, Russia's Ministry of Defence, states that Moscow is ready to raise the status and role of PRC in implementation of Kosovo peacekeeping operation. The PRC itself could be seen not as a forum only but to some extent as a decision-making body. Moreover one can guess that instead of building new special structure for bilateral co-operation it would be more useful if Russia had at this stage its non-voting representatives (their status could be defined as observers or associates) in some NATO's committees – Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society, Science Committee, Civil Emergence Planning Committee, Economic Committee, Committee on Information and Cultural relations, Political Committee, and later – Military Committee, Defence Planning Committee, Nuclear Planning group. The experience of IFOR, SFOR and – let us hope – KFOR has revealed that Russia could participate in some or another form in implementation of NATO's Combined Joint Task Forces concept. All that would lead to greater trust between the Russian army and NATO military organisation.

The fourth step should be aimed at changing NATO's image in the eyes of the Russian public. The present image was formed under the impact of confrontations, including the ones of the latest period. This is a very hard task and the outcome will depend wholly on the effectiveness and professional level of NATO representatives in Russia. To meet the problem in Russia they can hardly count on standard propaganda mass media releases and video materials. A much more effective approach could include personal contact with the top level of Ministry of Foreign Relations and Ministry of Defence as well as with members of Parliament, the representatives of the academic community, business people, students and professors of universities and colleges, even with high school students in the capital as well as in the provinces. Different lectures, conferences, seminars and discussions sponsored jointly by NATO representatives and public and political organisations may prove to be highly effective. The success of such measures will depend upon the openness, sincerity, civil honesty and good will of people who will represent the North Atlantic Treaty organisation in that country; their understanding of and respect towards its great culture. The long-lived activity of the EU official representative office in Moscow may be taken as a model of such educational process.

The fifth step deals with improvement of Russia's environment. Political and military leaders of NATO could encourage the East Central European countries and the Baltic states to take a more constructive approach to the relations with Russia. Three years ago Moscow, listening to the arguments of its liberals, actually approved the ECE countries' membership in NATO. Russia's liberals were hoping that under the umbrella of the alliance the ECE states would overcome their traditional prejudice towards Russia and would be willing to cooperate more closely than before. However, this did not happen. What is more, certain forces in these countries, feeling more confident after having joined the alliance, took harsher than before anti-Russian positions. This was immediately sensed in Russia and is still one of the arguments against further NATO eastward expansion.

The sixth step could mean broader contacts between NATO and Russian middle level military people. They could be invited to participate in military and staff training of the alliance (enlarging the scale of present confidence building measures), discussions of fundamental (theoretical) aspects of military strategy and military policy, the character of the third millennium wars, etc. Russian civil specialists who work on the issues of military strategy

could also be invited to such events. Among them are members of the Russian Parliament Alexej Arbatov, Andrej Kokoshin, Sergej Yushenkov; representatives of academic circles Vitalij Zhurkin, Sergej Rogov and others. Keeping in mind the growing importance of representative institutions in forming the Russian approach to the outside world, it would be useful for NATO to establish contacts with the State Duma and its committees involved in the issues of national security.

The seventh step could involve the discussion (during the JPC regular session) on criteria that Russia would have to meet to join NATO. This should not look as an invitation to immediate membership but rather as a discussion and specification of the possibility President Putin talked about. At the same time, Moscow should understand that the realisation of this possibility depends not only on its own desire and conditions put forward by NATO. It depends on whether Russia meets the criteria established by the alliance for its new members. At Washington Summit meeting (April 1999) NATO Heads of State and Government launched a Membership Action Plan, a programme of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparation for possible future membership. Possibly, this may require years; but this process has to be started sooner or later. Moscow should at least have a clear understanding of what it has to go through before it becomes full member of the alliance.

The eighth step presupposes the co-operation of Russia and NATO in realising some significant project, vitally important for both of them. The creation of a single Antiballistic Missile Defence system that would protect USA, Europe, Russia and maybe Japan from a missile threat could be an example of such a project. Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently expressed support of creating such a system. The representatives of NATO states have shown scepticism towards this suggestion due to a number of reasons (secrecy, the unwillingness to share the know-how, doubts in the technical and financial capabilities of Moscow). However, Russia is the only country to have experience in establishing such systems - the ABM system round Moscow, Antimissile complexes C-300 and C-400. Joint venture on implementation of the project could serve as a good prologue for Russia's membership in NATO. All the more, it would diminish the possibility of partnership's opponents to gain from contradictions between Russia, Europe and the USA. Indeed, later Kremlin proposal to build non-strategic ABM covering Europe only was seen as an attempt to dry a wedge between the United States and Western Europe.

And last but not least – the language problem. Unfortunately, the modern Russian army (with all its merits) nowadays differs from the former Tsar's army (with all its drawbacks) in one thing: the knowledge of foreign languages is not the strong side of the first one. This problem, technical from the first sight, objectively restrains co-operation and hampers mutual understanding, between Russia's and NATO military men. A conversation through an interpreter is always a formal one. It would be very useful to discuss this problem at one of the GPC sessions. Each party could take the responsibility to encourage the study of English and Russian languages in the Russian army and NATO headquarters, respectively. Both sides could exchange their methods of teaching foreign languages, organise advanced training programs and so on. It can be expected that the first (after Lenin) leader of the Russian state who has perfect knowledge of a foreign language will become a role model for the Russian officers' corps.

CONCLUSION

1. Under current circumstances, influenced by both internal and external factors, the choice of the interaction model between Russia and NATO is limited for Moscow to four alternatives:

- refrain from any active actions; postpone the decision making process until Russia overcomes its crisis and restore its influence on the international arena;
- on one's own, conduct the old course aimed to prevent further NATO eastward expansion; first of all, make it impossible for post-Soviet countries to join the alliance; at the same time develop limited co-operation with the alliance;
- try to establish a new coalition equal or greater in power than NATO (first of all, with China on the anti-Western basis); threatening to renew confrontation between the East and the West, make the alliance take a defensive stance;
- restore the process of rapprochement with NATO; follow the course of slow engagement into political and military structures of the alliance with the final aim to become its full member.

2. The last alternative seems to be the most preferable. First of all, due to the fact that all other choices have been already tried in this or that form or are unrealistic (Russian-Chinese alliance against the West, for example). Secondly, that is the only alternative that solves all problems in the Russian-NATO (West) relations in the field of security, construction of a single Europe. These and other problems are either impossible to solve by other means or the costs (political mainly) to meet them differently are unacceptable for both sides.

3. Besides the benefits mentioned above, the final outcome of Russia joining NATO would be the establishment of an integrated, structurally formed security system of free and democratic states on the vast territories from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It could contain dozens of states that never fight against each other, thus establishing an extensive peace zone and exerting restraining influence on the surrounding areas. This system could to a certain extent become a model of comprehensive international security system.

4. Russian membership in the alliance would enable both sides to influence each other far beyond the security issues alone. This step would change the configuration of power in modern international relations and qualitatively enlarge the sphere of their globalisation. Its significance would overcome that of the Western decision after World War II to include West Germany into its alliances. Russia's membership in NATO actually means the emergence of coalition capable to withstand every possible hostile configuration of forces (concentration of power) on the International arena. If the American strategy of engagement in world processes and enlargement of democratic zone has any sense, then it should first of all be applied to Russia. The Western presence (political, economic, moral) in Russia in this or that form; the voluntary mutual co-operation in the field of security would be a key to assertion of democratic values in that country.

5. At the same time, it is evident that Russian membership in NATO is hardly possible today as well as in the near future. Further more, such a step would be contra productive; it could spoil a good idea. Psychologically, neither the West (NATO) nor Russia – first of all, their military establishment – are ready for such a decision. The main difficulty lies in Russia itself – what is going on inside the country, the state of its political system, the level of

advancement towards a civil society. Russia has its own difficult problems that are especially felt in the relationship between personality, society and state. In reality, the transformation of Russian political regime is far from being completed. It can develop in both ways: democracy as well as "controlled" democracy, very close to an authoritarian form of government. The reforming of power structures actively conducted by the new administration is a sign of moving towards the last alternative. The zone of conflict is becoming larger. Today, it covers the relations not only between the ruling power, personality and ethnical minorities but also between the center and periphery, between the labour and capital (government). The criminals have penetrated the business as well as power structures, especially in the provinces. Actually Russia has not involved in the process of globalisation; it does not share the new values that this process has brought. There are tensions in the relations with post-Soviet countries, especially Ukraine and the Baltic states. Russia can join NATO only if it rids itself of this inheritance. According to the most optimal figures, this could take ten to fifteen years – under conditions of positive development of the society and the state that will not be broken (pushed back) by some emergency circumstances.

6. However, the intention of joining NATO should be definitely enough enounced by Russia itself. Not in the form of a questionable retort but as a long-term political goal. A wide political discussion in Russian mass media of all "pros" and "contras" arguments of joining NATO would be very useful. The Western leaders usually limit themselves to assertions that the alliance is open for membership to any democratic state. However, they could define their positions on possible Russian membership in the alliance more clearly.

7. One can assume that the current moment could be a turning point in the decision making process on whether Russia should join NATO. Two issues have a critical impact on the process. First one – the new country leaders show steady interest to a productive co-operation with the West. This interest is caused by both tactical and strategic considerations. The current Russian political leaders do not belong to the circles that have caused kind feelings both inside the country and outside of it. That is why the benevolence of the West establishes their legitimacy just as the victory on the elections does. At the same time, these people understand that their ambitious plans to restructure Russia completely cannot be

realised without the intellectual and material support of the West. It is also evident, that Russia will have more difficulties joining the European Union than NATO. That is why, just as the ECE countries, Moscow chooses NATO as the first step of coming back into Europe. The second issue: the new Russian leadership currently leans upon a stable consensus in the society, the executive and legislative power. The resource of trust towards the power structures is far from reaching its limits; it continue to serve as the basis of stabilisation process in the country. The ratification of START-II has shown that authorities can easily pass all the necessary decisions through the legislature.

NOTES

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¹⁴ NATO Secretary General Speech to Antalya Security Conference «NATO in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities. USIA Washington File. 10 March 2000

¹⁵ *Voennaya doctrina Rossiyskoy Federatzii* (The Military Doctrine of Russian Federation). *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 15, 2000

¹⁶ See A.Goltz, *Op. Cit. p.*, . 27

¹⁷ Voennaya Doctrina Rossiyskoy Federatzii. Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie, 15, 2000

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