

THE NEGOTIATIONS ON GERMAN REUNIFICATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON
RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2017

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>		
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 9-06-2017		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2016 – JUNE 2017	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Negotiations On German Reunification And Their Impact On Relations Between Russia And The West			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) CPT Ivan N. Bonev, Bulgarian Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Confrontation between nations and ideologies is not something new or surprising. One of the most noticeable and significant oppositions and separations in the world was between the Soviet Union and the West during the Cold War. When the war ended, the relations between Russia and the West passed through different stages, eventually reaching the level of strategic partnership. However, since 2007 the tension between the parties has increased and has reached a level comparable to the peak of the Cold War. One of the impediments has been the enlargement of NATO. This paper examines the possible connection between the commitments for no NATO enlargement made during negotiations on the German reunification and the current diplomatic and military friction between the U.S./NATO and Russia. It further discusses the understanding of commitment made by the West to the Soviet Union during the negotiations in 1989-1990. In addition, it discusses the Russian reaction to each tranche of NATO enlargement since 1990 and the efforts that the West has made to address the Russian security concerns. Finally, the paper investigates the Russian perception of threat, how it affects its attitude toward the West, and what role the commitments from 1989-1990 play in it.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS German unification, NATO enlargement, Soviet Union, Russia, United States, Security threat, Commitments, Ballistic missile defense, Baltic states					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
			(U)	103	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE NEGOTIATIONS ON GERMAN REUNIFICATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST, by CPT Ivan N. Bonev, 103 pages.

Confrontation between nations and ideologies is not something new or surprising. One of the most noticeable and significant oppositions and separations in the world was between the Soviet Union and the West during the Cold War. When the war ended, the relations between Russia and the West passed through different stages, eventually reaching the level of strategic partnership. However, since 2007 the tension between the parties has increased and has reached a level comparable to the peak of the Cold War. One of the impediments has been the enlargement of NATO.

This paper examines the possible connection between the commitments for no NATO enlargement made during negotiations on the German reunification and the current diplomatic and military friction between the U.S./NATO and Russia. It further discusses the understanding of commitment made by the West to the Soviet Union during the negotiations in 1989-1990. In addition, it discusses the Russian reaction to each tranche of NATO enlargement since 1990 and the efforts that the West has made to address the Russian security concerns. Finally, the paper investigates the Russian perception of threat, how it affects its attitude toward the West, and what role the commitments from 1989-1990 play in it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere appreciation and gratitude go to my loving wife Kristina and my lovely daughter Nikol. Without their support, patience, and encouragement this project would not have been realized.

I am also deeply grateful to my thesis committee of Mr. Mark Wilcox, Mr. James Cricks, and Dr. David Anderson. Their invaluable advice, guidance, and constructive feedback guided me through this uneasy process. I highly appreciate their dedication and their valuable time spent in reading the numerous drafts and their struggle with the imperfections of my English.

I would like to thank my family as well: my parents for the moral education and support that they have been providing me with throughout my entire life. Special thanks must go for my sister Bozhidara and her boyfriend Daniel, for all the proofreading and revisions they have done for me this year.

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ACRONYMS

BMD	Ballistic missile defense
CFE Treaty	Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
GDR	German Democratic Republic
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PJC	Permanent Joint Council

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide a broad overview of the research project, the problem statement, the significance of the study and the limitations that will apply to the research process.

Background of the problem

The year is 2017, but it feels like 1978 at the height of the Cold War. The U.S./North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia once again look at each other closely but sideways. The world is once again witnessing a demonstration of force, saber rattling, and invective from both sides. Neither side has much hope for reconciliation. Russian aggressiveness since 2008 is becoming more and more tangible. As justification for their actions, the current Russian government has cited NATO enlargement and broken promises given by United States, West Germany, or NATO officials during German reunification negotiations (Rose 2008; Klußmann, Schepp, and Wiegrefe 2009; President of Russia 2014b).

Since 1990, the U.S./NATO-Russia relationships have passed through various stages. Russia and the West have made numerous efforts to guarantee and improve security in Europe. There was an initial tendency for improvement of dialogue related to military cooperation, conventional arms control, and reduction of weapons of mass destruction. For a significant period of time, the Russian Federation was not considered an adversary and was even defined as a strategic partner by the West (NATO 1997; NATO 2016a). However, since 2007 diplomatic relations have been deteriorating to a

scale comparable to the peak of the Cold War era. If the author had to highlight one major cause for the recent confrontation, he would probably nominate the enlargement of NATO to the east.

NATO enlargement has been a controversial topic since the mid-1990s. The lack of consensus on this concern has affected the execution of agreements of strategic importance and the loss of strategic dialogue between U.S./NATO and the Russian Federation. NATO's offer of membership to former parts of the Soviet Union elicited Russian wrath, which has evolved into a military challenge. Russian officials justified their actions in part by describing them as natural resistance to alleged broken commitments not to enlarge NATO.

Scope

This research will be focused on discovering whether there is a relationship between the commitments and agreements made in 1989-1990 during the German reunification negotiations and the current diplomatic and military friction between the U.S./NATO and the Russian Federation. The analysis will be constructed in the following order: first, the author will analyze the sequence and purpose of meetings and agreements made between United States, West Germany and the Soviet Union with regards to German reunification; second, he will discuss how the official and unofficial commitments made during the meeting sessions were understood by both parties. The author will then analyze the Russian reaction to the process of NATO enlargement following German reunification and the possible correlation to the commitments made in 1989-1990. Finally, he will examine and discuss the steps taken by NATO to address

Russia`s concerns followed by analysis of the current Russian perception of threat, which Moscow attributes to NATO`s movement eastwards. Following these steps, the author will provide a summarized analysis and will draw inferences about whether the diplomatic maneuvers conducted during German reunification negotiations shape the current tension in the military-political relations between Russia and U.S./NATO.

The author intends to answer the research question by conducting qualitative research. The information required for the research will be collected from various public sources and records such as memoirs, books, journal articles, case studies, newspaper articles, speeches, and government documents. The research project does not involve engagement with human subjects. Detailed information on the methodology is provided in chapter 3.

Significance of the study

The topic is significant to the military profession and other scholars because it is related to international diplomatic relations that directly impact the security environment in Europe where the tension between the U.S./NATO and Russia have reached the dimensions of the Cold War era. The opposition in the political arena between both parties could evolve into global armed conflict. A better understanding of the causes leading to this confrontation could prevent the use of force, redraw political approaches, and therefore save lives.

Prominent scholars, such as John Mearsheimer, Marry Sarotte, Joshua Shiffrinon, and Mark Kramer, have written detailed studies on this topic. However, their focus was limited to particular time spans or events (Kramer 2009; Sarotte 2010; Mearshimer 2016;

Shifrinson 2016). For instance, Shifrinson states that the goal of his study “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion” was to assess whether there are commitments made to the Soviet Union in 1990 or not. He also suggests that the scholars should begin research on whether the commitments and their fulfillment are affecting current Russian foreign policy (Maass and Shifrinson 2016/2017). Shifrinson’s suggestion implies a gap in scholarship, and, to this day, the author of the current work has not found studies, which examine the development of the events in detail, linking the negotiations over German unification in the period 1989-1990 to the current friction between the U.S./NATO and Russia (Maass and Shifrinson 2016/2017).

This research will attempt to fill this gap by conducting a thoroughgoing analysis focused on the commitments made during German reunification in 1990 and the NATO enlargement process over the years as a cause of the current state of U.S./NATO relations with Russia. The author will attempt to analyze and describe the course of U.S./NATO–Russia relations since 1990 and the potential impact of NATO enlargement on them. The author will consider the elements of the study not as separate historical events but rather as interrelated occurrences having a logical evolution throughout the years. The author will discuss each step of NATO enlargement since 1990 and the respective Russian response.

The main beneficiaries from this study could be military analysts, scholars, and politicians when conducting strategic estimates related to the development of U.S./NATO-Russia relations. The research project also will significantly improve the author’s situational awareness and will contribute to his more accurate and realistic

anticipation of the consequences deriving from the diplomatic approach of his country towards Russia.

Limitations

During the thesis development process, the author will be constrained by some limitations. The research project will not include interviews or any kind of interaction with human subjects. The Masters of Military Arts and Science program does not include funding for travel. This will constrain the author from conducting archival research or personal interviews. Another limitation will be the time available. The research project has to be completed and submitted no later than 19 May 2017. Many primary sources of information related to the German reunification negotiations were recently declassified and are still stored in national and presidential libraries. The author will not have direct access to them and will rely on the objectiveness of their translation and citation by other scholars and participants in the negotiations process. When analyzing purported commitments made during the talks on German reunification, equal attention must be given to all parties in the process to achieve a more objective research. The parties to the negotiations can be divided into two sides—the West (U.S. and West Germany) and the Soviet Union. For the purpose of the study, the viewpoints of France and the United Kingdom will not be considered because they did not participate in the negotiations preceding the formal “2+4” format¹ meetings.

¹ “2+4” format included West Germany, East Germany, the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. It was designed as a framework for discussions on the external aspects and the conditions of the establishment of German reunification. See <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/1990/9002e.htm>

The final output that the author intends to provide, based on this research, is an up-to-date, objective analysis of a potential cause for the increased confrontation between the U.S./NATO and Russia.

Research Question

Did commitments made by the United States or West Germany during negotiations over German reunification in 1989-1990 shape the current friction between the United States/NATO and Russia?

While answering the primary research question, multiple secondary research questions require attention, specifically:

1. What commitments were made between U.S./West Germany and the Soviet Union?
2. How were these commitments understood by both sides?
3. What have been the Russian reactions to tranches of NATO enlargement?
4. What steps has NATO taken to address Russia`s concerns over NATO enlargement?
5. What has been the Russian perception of threat caused by NATO enlargement?

Definitions

The following terms will be used throughout the study:

Baltic states: For the purpose of this paper the term Baltic states will include Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. It will be also referred to as the Baltics.

German unification/reunification: Following the end of World War II Germany was divided into two separate countries–West and East Germany. In 1990 representatives

from both German states and the four occupying powers—the Soviet Union, United States, France, and Great Britain—conducted a series of negotiations, which resulted in the unification of West and East Germany into a common state currently recognized as the Federal Republic of Germany.

NATO enlargement: NATO policy for acceptance of new members into the alliance. According to the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington, DC, 4 April 1949), Article 10, “The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America” (NATO 1949).

Partnership for Peace: “A programme [sic] of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation” (NATO 2017a).

The West: The term will include United States and West Germany for the period until 1990. For the period from 1991 to the present, the term will include the United States, Germany, and NATO.

A review of the relevant academic and official literature follows in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The sequence of the literature review will follow the logical succession of the sub-questions supporting the proposed research question. The extant literature provides a detailed understanding of the background to the German reunification process, as well as the goals and the viewpoints of the participants in the process, and the major trends in the scholarship.

The discussion on the commitments made in 1990 between the U.S./West Germany and Soviet officials is a complicated and controversial political topic, which divides scholars. In his article, “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion” Joshua Shifrinson writes “During the negotiations on German reunification in 1990, did the United States promise the Soviet Union that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would not expand into Eastern Europe? The answer depends on who is being asked” (Shifrinson 2016, 7). There is no easy answer to this question. The interpretation of the supporting evidence can easily be argued by both sides because of their vagueness and diplomatic meaning.

The idea of German reunification was raised after the fall of the Berlin Wall. It was not only German will but also a significant geo-strategical move for the Western countries. The future participation of a unified Germany in NATO and NATO`s future development occupied a central position in the discussions between the U.S./West Germany and Soviet leadership.

Mary Elise Sarotte, in her article “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990” discusses four bilateral meetings that took place in February 1990 and that preceded and shaped the subsequent “2+4” talks on German reunification. She concluded that the Western leaders provided Gorbachev with verbal assurances that NATO would not expand eastwards; however they were valid only within united Germany—i.e. the territory of the German Democratic Republic (Sarotte 2010).

In her book *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, Sarotte reiterated that assurances were given to the Soviet leadership with regards to German reunification but in the meaning of East Germany only. She added, in her conclusion, “At the time of these bilaterals, there is no evidence that the thinking about NATO’s future went beyond East Germany, although such ideas would emerge within the year” (Sarotte 2011, 115). She further developed the latter point in 2014, in the article “A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow About NATO Expansion,” in which she wrote, “Contrary to the view of many on the U.S. side, then, the question of NATO expansion arose early and entailed discussions of expansion not only to East Germany but also to eastern Europe. But contrary to Russian allegations, Gorbachev never got the West to promise that it would freeze NATO’s borders” (Sarotte 2014, 96). In other words, there were discussions on NATO enlargement beyond German borders, but they did not result in any assurances to the Soviet Union.

Sarotte more explicitly developed this line of thinking in a reply to Mark Kramer’s article “No Such Promise.” Sarotte disputed Kramer’s statement that no promises such as “NATO would not expand into eastern Europe” were given to

Gorbachev in 1990. Rather, during the negotiations on German reunification “visiting Moscow in February 1990, they [Western leaders] repeatedly affirmed [to Gorbachev] that NATO would not move eastward at all” (Kramer and Sarotte 2014).

The evolution in Sarotte`s position from 2010 might be based on a new information she was able to uncover. Initially, she wrote that the assurances against the enlargement of NATO to the east given to the Soviet leaders were valid only for the territory of East Germany. By 2014, she would categorically state that Gorbachev was assured that NATO would not expand eastwards at all.

Condoleezza Rice and Philip Zelikow, both of whom participated in the formulation and execution of the policies of the George H. W. Bush administration, describe in detail in their book *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* the sequence of the negotiations and meetings between Western and Soviet officials with regards to German reunification. The authors believe that assurances against NATO`s movement eastward were given to the Soviet leadership. They write

Coming back to the problem of a united Germany`s membership in NATO, Baker asked Gorbachev directly whether he would rather see an independent Germany outside NATO, with no U.S. forces on German soil, or a unified Germany tied to NATO but with assurances “that there would be no extension of NATO`s current jurisdiction eastward.” Gorbachev replied. . . One thing was clear: “Any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable.” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 183)

Rice and Zelikow do not, however, take an explicit standpoint as to whether these assurances were valid for the territory of East Germany only or Europe as a whole.

However, the evidence and arguments they present suggest that any such commitments were made in the spirit of German reunification only (Zelikow and Rice 1997).

Another participant in the Bush administration, Robert L. Hutchings, in his book *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War: An Insider's Account of U.S. Policy in Europe, 1989-1992* describes the standpoints of the U.S., West German and Soviet leadership on the possible participation of a unified Germany in the military and political structures of NATO. He supports his arguments with citations from the meetings; however, he does not explicitly state whether the assurances given to the Soviet Union with regards to NATO's enlargement were valid for the territory of unified Germany only (Hutchings 1997).

Michael Rühle argues in "NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities" that "there have never been political or legally binding commitments of the West not to extend NATO beyond the borders of a reunified Germany." He asserts that all the discussions during the negotiations were in the context of German reunification and are valid only for the territory of East Germany. Therefore, the Russian statements about a "broken promise" are baseless (Rühle 2015).

Mark Kramer and Michael Gordon share the view that no commitments were made to the Soviet leaders with regards to NATO's future development. In his article "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia" Kramer writes

no Western leader ever offered any "pledge" or "commitment" or "categorical assurances" about NATO's role vis-a-vis the rest of the Warsaw Pact countries. Indeed, the issue never came up during the negotiations on German reunification, and Soviet leaders at the time never claimed that it did. Not until several years later, long after Germany had been reunified and the USSR had dissolved, did former Soviet officials begin insisting that the United States had made a formal commitment in 1990 not to bring any of the former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO. These claims have sparked a wide debate, but they are not accurate. (Kramer 2009, 41)

Gordon concludes in “The Anatomy of Misunderstanding,” that “the two sides [U.S./West Germany and the Soviet Union] never discussed the possibility of Poland, Hungary or other Central European nations joining NATO. If the Soviets took [Secretary of State James] Baker’s pledge as ruling out the alliance’s expansion, they failed to nail it down” (Gordon 1997). He further cites Philip Zelikow as saying, “No Soviet ever said, ‘NATO may extend to East Germany but no farther’” (Gordon 1997). Gordon supports the idea that the West gave assurances related to the future enlargement of NATO that were limited to the territory of East Germany.

In contrast to the aforementioned authors, Joshua Shifrinson argues that the West made commitments to the Soviet Union not to enlarge NATO. In his article “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion” he writes, “Contrary to the claims of many policymakers and analysts, there is significant evidence that Russian assertions of a ‘broken promise’ regarding NATO expansion have merit” (Shifrinson 2016, 40). He concludes that “[t]here was no written agreement precluding NATO expansion, but non-expansion guarantees were still advanced in 1990, only to be overturned” (Shifrinson 2016, 40).

The review now turns to Russia’s reaction to NATO enlargement after German reunification. In “Russia and NATO’s Enlargement” Luis Tome writes that during a visit to Warsaw in August 1993, President Boris Yeltsin declared his support for Poland’s future membership in NATO. However, under pressure back in Moscow, he revised his statement and “on 15 September 1993 he wrote a letter to US President Clinton and other Western leaders in which he opposed the possible admission of the Central and Eastern countries to NATO” (Tomé 2000, 14).

In his article “Rhetoric and Reality in NATO Enlargement” Stephen Blank describes the Russian position on NATO’s approach to new members during the NATO Madrid Conference in July 1997. As in 1993, the Russian position was against NATO enlargement; however, the approach in 1997 was more aggressive. The author writes “Russia also has shunned a security dialogue with Poland and made it clear that it will use its new seat in the NATO-Russian Council to obstruct Poland’s membership in NATO” (Blank 1998, 24). Blank adds “Russia has already started to blackmail the allies saying that, if there is a second round [of NATO enlargement], especially to former Soviet republics, relations will collapse” (Blank 1998, 28).

John Mearsheimer has not raised the issue of purported commitments made during the negotiations for German reunification as the cause for Russia’s angst. Rather, he has criticized NATO enlargement from a realist perspective. In “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault,” Mearsheimer describes the Russian reaction to NATO enlargement as continuous opposition to the process since the mid-1990s. However, heedless of the Russian objections the enlargement process continued. The tone of the Russian response to the enlargement steps over the years was restrained and dictated not only by their interests but also by their elements of national strength (Mearsheimer 2014).

Mearsheimer reprised his argument in “Defining a New Security Architecture for Europe that Brings Russia in from the Cold,” again noting that Russia continuously argued against the enlargement of NATO eastwards. He focuses on the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008 as a key event. Regarding the Russian reaction in 2008, “NATO said in no uncertain terms that both Georgia and Ukraine would become part of NATO. The Russians, in response, made it clear at the time that this was unacceptable. And they

made it clear they would go to great lengths to prevent that from happening” (Mearshimer 2016, 28-29).

Shifrinson, in the aforementioned “Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion,” describes the Russian reaction to the tranches of NATO enlargement after 2000. He writes that Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev explicitly asserted that NATO enlargement violated the assurances given to the Soviet Union in 1990 during the German reunification negotiations (Shifrinson 2016).

Russia’s opposition to what they characterize as NATO’s approach to their borders might be caused by their perception of threat. Describing the Russian sense of threat, Luis Tome focuses on two Russian concerns over NATO’s possible appearance closer to their borders: first, the fear of the presence of foreign military forces in the vicinity of their borders and second, the fear of being belittled on the world scene (Tomé 2000). Tome writes

Many in Russia concluded that the Alliance sought to draw new dividing lines in Europe, posing new military challenges as NATO’s military forces approached Russia’s borders at a time of profound political-economic crisis and military decline . . . widespread consensus in Moscow is that NATO’s stated intention of developing a genuinely cooperative relationship with Russia cannot be trusted, and that the Alliance seeks to marginalise and exclude Russia from European and international affairs. . . . After the sense that NATO could not be trusted, the second driving force behind Russia’s fierce opposition to the NATO enlargement is the bitter Russian sense of loss its superpower status—the feeling of being humiliated, marginalised, driven out of Europe and outcast. (Tomé 2000, 42-44)

Another source of Russian perception of threat is the developing U.S./NATO missile defense system. In “NATO, Russia and Missile Defence,” Roberto Zadra writes that “Moscow’s key concern throughout the years has been that missile defense in and for

Europe could undermine the Russian strategic deterrent” (Zadra 2014, 52). He cites General Valeriy Gerasimov (then deputy chief of the Russian General Staff) to support his observation: “the concept of the BMD [ballistic missile defence] system currently being implemented is global by nature’; that ‘the assets of [such a] system in Europe and in the Asia-Pacific are all elements of a global system’; and that ‘such a configuration is a threat to the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent assets across our whole country’” (Zadra 2014, 53).

Scholars are divided on the commitments made to the Soviet leadership during the negotiations that led to German reunification with regards to the future NATO enlargement. Some authors argue that such promises were given while others assert that commitments regarding the enlargement of NATO that were made to the Soviet leaders were valid only for the territory of Germany. A third group of scholars find that no such commitments were made from Western leaders to the Soviet leadership in 1989-1990. Regardless, Russia has reacted negatively to NATO enlargement since 1990, arguing that they were assured that the Alliance would not expand eastwards. Their use of this argument has evolved over the years, becoming progressively more prominent over time. The extant literature identifies the reason for this reaction as the perception of NATO as a threat to Moscow`s security and foreign policy interests.

The following chapter will provide a description of the research methodology, which the author developed to answer the research question.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In his research project the author will attempt to identify one of the reasons for the friction between Russia and the West by answering the question: Did commitments made by the United States or West Germany during negotiations over German reunification in 1989-1990 shape the current friction between the United States/NATO and Russia? In support of the research question, the author developed five secondary questions that will allow him to receive a better understanding of the facts and evidence related to the problem.

The author intends to answer the research question by conducting qualitative research. The information required for the research will be collected from various public sources and records such as memoirs, books, journal articles, case studies, newspaper articles, speeches, and government documents. This empirical data will be processed through thorough and unbiased analysis.

The plan for development of the research project is as follows: selection of the topic, development of the research question and related sub-questions, gathering the sources related to the sub-questions, recording of the relevant empirical evidence from the sources, critical and unbiased evaluation and analysis of the evidence, answering the sub-questions in a sequential order, answering the primary research question and drawing conclusions, and formulating proposals for further research on the topic.

The starting point for the entire research project will be the analysis of the negotiations on German reunification. The author will analyze the discussions and

commitments made during the bilateral meetings preceding the “2+4” format during which German reunification was constituted. The author will discuss the purpose of these commitments and how they affected the further decisions and agreements. After analyzing the bilateral meetings, the author will discuss the “2+4” process and its outputs. In order to achieve a thorough analysis, it is important to discuss how these commitments were understood by both parties. The author will answer the sub-question—How were these commitments understood by both sides?—from the perspectives of the U.S., West Germany, and the Soviet Union. The relevant data will be collected from historical records, government reports, interviews, memoirs, and books written by the participants in the negotiations.

Next, the research project will focus on each tranche of NATO enlargement subsequent to the German reunification. The discussion will be divided into three periods: 1991 to 1999, 2000 to 2004, and 2004 to the present. The author will discuss the respective Russian diplomatic and military reactions to NATO enlargement within these periods. The analysis will include the evolution of the Russian response and the reasons behind it. The research will have a specific focus on the arguments used by Russia against NATO enlargement and their relationship to the commitments made in 1989-1990. The relevant data will be collected from periodicals, electronic media, interviews, government reports, records of security forums, memoirs, and diaries.

Next, the author will analyze and discuss the West’s attempts to address the Russian concerns through various partnership ventures and programs. The focus will be on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The paper will

discuss the effectiveness, outputs, and evolution of these endeavors. The relevant data will be collected from the texts of the relevant treaties and agreements, government reports, and interviews.

Finally, the author will discuss how the NATO enlargement process has been affecting the Russian perception of threat since 1990. The research will focus on three threats that Moscow perceives: the Russian sense of being marginalized and humiliated with regards to European security decision-making process, the disposition of NATO troops and installations close to the Russian border, and the U.S. anti-ballistic missile system located on the territory of NATO countries. After analyzing these threats, the author will track the evolution of Russian security and defense strategies since 1993 as they pertain to NATO. The relevant data will be collected from government reports, interviews, records of security forums, and government documents.

The culmination of the research project will be the author`s combining of the outputs of all layers of the analysis to trace the possible relationship between the commitments made in 1989-1990, the NATO enlargement process, and the current Russian perception of threat. The completion of this step will lead to the conclusion of the project, in which the author will provide his answer to the research question and supporting arguments.

The following chapter will provide detailed analysis of the collected evidence relevant to the primary and secondary research questions.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

What commitments were made between U.S./West Germany and the Soviet Union?

The author will provide the data related to this secondary question by discussing the meetings in the period 1989-1990, which led to the 2+4 forum and its outcomes. During the discussion, the author will shed light on the main participants in the meetings and highlight the negotiations with regards to the future alignment of Germany to military-political blocs.

The German unification discussion commenced right after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The western countries were willing to achieve a rapid German reunification, but they had to deal with one significant obstacle—the Soviet Union. U.S. President George H. W. Bush's staff anticipated that “the Soviets were opposed to German reunification, which they thought ‘would rip the heart out of the Soviet security system.’ Their ‘worst nightmare’ was a reunified Germany allied with NATO” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 125). Therefore, to achieve German unification, the approach to the Soviets had to be executed in such a way so as to alleviate their fears and to present the situation in a favorable light (Zelikow and Rice 1997).

Despite the fact that no commitments were made at this initial point, it is important to examine the conversation that took place during the meeting between Bush and Gorbachev at the Malta Summit because it outlines the Soviet position concerning the German question. The meeting took place on the board the Soviet cruise ship Maxim Gorky on December 2, 1989. It was the first official conversation about German

unification between the U.S. and the Soviet leaders. In their conversation, Gorbachev told Bush that he was familiar with the willingness of the West to achieve German reunification (Zelikow and Rice 1997). However, his position remained that “there are two German states, this was the decision of history” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 127-128).

In other words, Gorbachev stated unambiguously that the Soviet Union saw the German future as two separate states—the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In support of his statement Gorbachev shared his concerns about the possible future German unification: “How it is going to look like? Neutral unified Germany, which is not aligned to a military-political alliance or it will be a NATO member? In my opinion, we must understand that is too early to discuss both options at this moment” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 269).

The discussions of unification continued the next day followed by a press conference. The U.S. assessment of the meetings was, “Gorbachev`s relaxed demeanor convinced the Americans that the Soviet leader was malleable on the German question” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 130). However, the American approach to avoiding a situation in which the Soviet Union would firmly refuse to discuss the German unification proved to be of great importance (Zelikow and Rice 1997).

The notion of no NATO enlargement to the east first appeared in a speech given by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher at the Protestant Academy in Tutzing on January 31, 1990, in which he outlined his views on the future process of German unification. His ideas became popularized as Genscher`s Tutzing formula. When he talked about NATO membership for a united Germany, he rejected the concept of a neutral Germany and stated: “Notions that the part of Germany that today constitutes the

GDR should be drawn into the military structures of NATO would block attempts at getting closer.” He continued, “It is NATO’s task to clarify unequivocally that whatever may happen to the Warsaw Pact, there will be no extension of NATO territory to the East, i.e. nearer the borders of the Soviet Union. This guarantee will be significant for the Soviet Union and its attitude” (Elbe 2010, 36). Genscher’s Tutzing formula became a base for the further options that the West offered to ease the Soviets’ concerns with regards to German membership in NATO.

The concept was communicated during the next bilateral meeting, in Washington on February 2, 1990. The participants were Secretary of State Baker from the U.S. side and Genscher from the West German side. The discussion was primarily concerned with the conditions of the unification. In Genscher’s vision Germany had to remain a member of NATO, but to accomplish it, guarantees had to be made to the Soviet Union. The guarantees’ focus would be on NATO not expanding its jurisdiction to the territory of the former GDR. Baker agreed with Genscher’s formulation (Zelikow and Rice 1997). In a joint press conference, Genscher explicitly stated that he and Secretary Baker “were in full agreement that there is no intention to extend the NATO area of defense and security towards the East” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 176).

Following his meeting with Genscher in Washington, Baker went to Moscow to meet with the Soviet leadership. On arriving in Moscow, Baker first met with the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze on February 7-8, 1990. Baker turned the discussion quickly to the German question. He observed that German unification was coming and tried to explain that a neutral Germany would be a bigger threat than a

Germany, which is a member of NATO. With the apprehension of the Soviet leaders and their probable reaction in mind,

To ease Soviet concerns, Baker used the formula he had picked up from Genscher and, turning Genscher's "no extension of NATO" language into a more lawyerly formulation, promised that if a united Germany were included in NATO, there would be ironclad guarantees "that NATO's jurisdiction or forces would not move eastward." But U.S. forces would remain in Europe as long as America's allies wanted them there. Baker also pledged that NATO would evolve into a more political and less military-orientated alliance. (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 180)

Shevardnadze's response to Baker was that the Soviet vision did not include Germany as a member of either NATO or the Warsaw Pact in their current format (Zelikow and Rice 1997).

After his meeting with Shevardnadze, Baker met with Gorbachev on February 9, 1990. His approach was similar to the one he took with Shevardnadze. He shared his formula wherein "if Germany was part of NATO, 'there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction or forces of NATO one inch to the east'" (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 182; Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 334). The Soviet side showed a certain spirit of compromise on the topic of German unification; however, their position concerning Germany's membership in military alliances remained consistent. Later in the conversation Baker asked Gorbachev directly, "whether he [Gorbachev] would rather see an independent Germany outside of NATO, with no U.S. forces on German soil, or a united Germany tied with NATO but with assurances 'that there would be no extension of NATO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east.'" Gorbachev responded that the Soviet political elite would have further discussions on these variants. However, Gorbachev made one thing clear: "Any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable"

and Baker replied, “I agree” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 183; Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 338).

Baker’s handwritten notes from his meeting with Gorbachev on February 9, 1990, outline and confirm the negotiated end state: “End result: Unified Ger. anchored in a *changed (polit.) NATO—*whose juris. would not move *eastward!” (Sarotte 2010, 128).

Meanwhile, the U.S. National Security Council staff developed a new option for the German membership in NATO that significantly differed from Genscher’s formula. According to the new variant, “the territory of the former GDR would have a ‘special military status’ within NATO” and NATO Article 5 will be applicable to the entire territory of Germany (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 184).

Baker received a draft version of this new option. It influenced his comments to the press while he was still in Moscow. He stated that

with a united Germany in NATO, “you will have the GDR as a part of that membership.” There would, he said, just need to be “some sort of security guarantees with respect to NATO’s forces moving eastward or the jurisdiction of NATO moving eastwards” for Germany to be a member of NATO. There might be “some special arrangements within NATO respecting the extension of NATO forces eastward.” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 184)

With his statement for the press, Baker began to slightly sway from the commitments that he had just made to Gorbachev. The day after Baker left Moscow another Western leader went to the Soviet Union to meet with Gorbachev.

The Chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, arrived in Moscow on February 10, 1990. Prior to his meeting with Gorbachev, Kohl received two important notes, one from Baker, and one from Bush. The content of the notes was not identical and was even

controversial. Baker's note described his recent meeting with Gorbachev. It provided a brief assessment of the Soviets' concerns and described the options for a unified Germany's membership in NATO that he provided to Gorbachev. He also stressed the Soviet opposition to both German unification and German membership in NATO (Zelikow and Rice 1997). The message from Bush demonstrated the new political approach that the U.S. National Security Council staff had developed—a “special military status for what is now the territory of the GDR.” That meant an expansion of NATO jurisdiction on the territory of GDR with some limitations (Sarotte 2010, 130).

Kohl decided to remain consistent with the commitments to the Soviet leadership, given by Baker the day before. While discussing the topic of the future German alignment to current alliances, Kohl stated, “there is one thing that we do not want, it is neutrality” providing bad historical examples of German neutrality after 1918 (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 344). Then he added, “We think, that NATO should not expand the sphere of its activity. We must find meaningful balance” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 345). In response, Gorbachev asked Kohl a number of questions about his vision of the future of the German people and the German political line if unification was to happen. Gorbachev confirmed that he did not approve of Germany's membership in NATO (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006). He asserted, “It would be inconsistent for one part of the country [Germany] to be part of NATO and the other, in the Warsaw Pact”. Then he added, “If we lead the entire [Soviet] army from GDR unilaterally, you also wouldn't be able to keep NATO at bay” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 352). As an outcome of the long talk, Kohl received a green light to continue with unification (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006).

On the same day, February 10, 1990, between 4:00 and 6:30 p.m., Genscher spoke with Shevardnadze. According to records cited by Spiegel, Genscher said, “We are aware that NATO membership for a unified Germany raises complicated questions. For us, however, one thing is certain: NATO will not expand to the east.” Understanding the Soviet concerns and the fact that the conversation was carried out in the spirit of Germany, he added explicitly, “As far as the non-expansion of NATO is concerned, this also applies in general.” Shevardnadze responded that he believed “everything the minister [Genscher] said” (Klußmann, Schepp, and Wiegrefe 2009).

In addition to the commitment made by U.S. and West German leaders, NATO’s then-Secretary General Manfred Woerner stated in a speech delivered in Brussels on May 17, 1990, that “the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee” (Pushkov 2007).

The negotiations over German unification continued on February 24-25, 1990 when Bush and Kohl met at Camp David. The future of unified Germany and its participation in NATO were the main topics. The president of the U.S. stated his vision clearly: “It [Germany] must have full membership in the alliance” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 214). Both Bush and Kohl concluded that offering financial support from West Germany to the Soviet Union might be a successful approach to easing the Soviet resistance to German membership in NATO (Zelikow and Rice 1997). At a joint press conference following the talks, Bush announced, “a unified Germany should remain a full member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, including participation in its military structure” (Zelikow and Rice 1997, 216).

Bush informed Gorbachev of the position he and Kohl had negotiated at Camp David in a telephone conversation on February 28. Bush said that “the unified Germany should remain in NATO” and made the commitment that U.S. “would recognize ‘the legitimate security interests’ of all parties” (Shiffrinson 2016, 27). Baker and Bush presented the concept in Moscow on May 18 and in Washington on May 31. According to Zelikow, Gorbachev “did not oppose the new formula,” therefore, the Washington meeting appeared to be the turning point of the Soviet position on the issue of a unified Germany’s right to remain in NATO (Zelikow 1995). This formula was discussed again by Kohl and Gorbachev again some months later.

Kohl went to Moscow for a bilateral meeting with Gorbachev on July 15, 1990. Raising the question of German membership in NATO, Kohl said, “My goal is clear. The whole of Germany would remain in NATO. . . . On the territory of GDR, there will not be NATO forces. If I have understood you correctly, you do not want NATO’s field of action to spread over the former GDR in the next three or four years, while there are still Soviet forces there. GDR’s territory becoming a part of NATO’s domain has to happen only after the Soviet forces are pulled out” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 501). Gorbachev replied, “This is a question of joining two matters of principal. Unified Germany will be a member of NATO. Meaning, GDR will not be within NATO’s field of action while there are Soviet forces in its territory. This way the sovereignty of unified Germany will not be questioned” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 502). Gorbachev and Kohl agreed that the period for withdrawal of the Soviet troops would last for three to four years and would be regulated in a separate agreement (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006).

Kohl and Gorbachev continued their conversation in the village of Arkhyz, Soviet Union on the following day, July 16, 1990. The question of the future alignment of the territory of GDR to NATO was a main part of the discussion (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006). Gorbachev once again shared his concerns about the extension of NATO structures to the territory of GDR by saying, “Germany is a member of NATO, but NATO’s sphere of action does not reach GDR’s territory.” In response, Kohl asked, “While there are Soviet forces there?” Gorbachev responded, “We will see how it progresses” and then added, “The new sovereign Germany will inform us that it understands our concern and that the state members of NATO will not move onward to GDR’s territory with their nuclear weapons.” Kohl repeated his question, “While there are Soviet forces there?” Gorbachev’s response was clear “When we discuss the pulling of the Soviet forces, we will discuss this as well” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 511). Later in the conversation, Kohl attempted to summarize its outcomes: “Sovereign Germany decides for itself which alliance to join. We are talking about Germany remaining a member of NATO. Simultaneously, we are formulating that for the time of the stay of the Soviet forces, NATO formations won’t be moving east” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 512). Gorbachev’s response was that the “Soviet Union will demonstrate understanding that Germany will remain in NATO, however, the withdrawal of Soviet troops must not threaten the security of the Soviet Union” (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006, 513). During the conversation and the press conference the next day, Gorbachev confirmed his position that no foreign troops or nuclear weapons should be located on the territory of the former GDR even after the withdrawal of Soviet troops (Galkin and Chernyayev 2006).

Parallel to the bilateral meetings, the ministers of foreign affairs of the “2+4” states conducted a series of meetings in the period May-September, 1990. During these sessions, the foreign ministers de facto negotiated the final terms and clauses of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, which was signed on September 12, 1990. The text of the treaty envisioned that the Soviet troops would withdraw from Berlin and GDR by the end of 1994. Following the Soviet withdrawal “units of German armed forces assigned to military alliance structures in the same way as those in the rest of German territory may also be stationed in that part of Germany, but without nuclear weapon carriers. . . . Foreign armed forces and nuclear weapons or their carriers will not be stationed in that part of Germany or deployed there.” Article 6 of the Treaty determined that unified Germany has the right “to belong to alliances, with all the rights and responsibilities arising therefrom.” The Treaty on the Final Settlement envisioned that Germans would decide for themselves either to participate in any alliances or not (Department of State 1990).

In the period May-September 1990, the Soviet Union finally agreed to the reunification of Germany and to Germany joining NATO. A number of meetings between the Soviet leadership and Western leaders took place in 1989-1990. Different questions were discussed and a variety of formulations were offered at these meetings, and everything resulted in consensus on the German matter. An interesting point of discussion is how the Soviet and Western leaders understood these commitments since they were not officially documented.

How were these commitments understood by both sides?

To achieve a better understanding of how the commitments made in 1989-1990 were understood in the negotiations, the author will discuss the post-unification standpoints of the Soviet Union, U.S., NATO, and West Germany.

Soviet Union

The starting point of the discussion will be the Soviet standpoint. In an interview for Spiegel in 2009, Shevardnadze was asked to discuss the commitments made to the Soviet leadership by the West in 1989-1990. He explained that it was inconceivable for the Warsaw Pact to disintegrate and for its former members to become members of NATO at the time of the negotiations over the German unification. “An expansion of NATO beyond Germany’s borders was out of the question.” Then the author asked him, “Was the eastward expansion of NATO ever discussed in the inner circles of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1990?” Shevardnadze responded, “The question never came up” (Spiegel 2009a).

He remained consistent in this position. In a later speech in Tbilisi Shevardnadze stated, “There were no such assurances from the West. Even the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the Eastern military alliance, ‘was beyond our imagination’” (Klußmann, Schepp, and Wiegrefe 2009). In an interview with the BBC in 2011, Shevardnadze was asked to discuss the possible “gentlemen’s agreement [with Western leaders] for non-enlargement of NATO eastwards”. His answer was short and concise: “There was not any such an agreement” (BBC 2011). In contrast to Shevardnadze, Gorbachev did not show such a consistency throughout the years.

Gorbachev's statements varied significantly—to an almost 180-degree change. In 2015, The Guardian posted an article dedicated to the misquoting and misinterpretation of Gorbachev's statements on the German question. The article's author argued against a recent misinterpretation of Gorbachev by NATO's spokesman. In support of his case, the author cited Gorbachev's statement of 1993 in response to NATO enlargement.

According to the article, Gorbachev said, "I from the very start called it a great mistake. It was certainly a violation of the spirit of those declarations and assurances that we were given in 1990." NATO enlargement was a mistake because it resulted in a lost dialogue with Russia, which led to a "crisis in European relations" (Roxburgh 2015).

In April 2009, Gorbachev reaffirmed his position in an interview for the German tabloid Bild. He blamed the Western countries for claiming that "NATO would not move a centimetre to the east. They probably rubbed their hands, rejoicing at having played a trick on the Russians." He concluded that the Americans did not fulfill their commitment and the Germans "had also turned a blind eye" (Sputnik 2009). The former Soviet and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoliy Adamishin made a similar assertion in 1997, when he stated, "We were told during the German reunification process that NATO would not expand" (Kramer 2009, 39).

Five years later in 2014, however, in an interview for Russia Beyond the Headlines, Gorbachev distanced himself from his early statements. The interviewer asked Gorbachev why he had not insisted that his Western counterparts put their no-NATO-enlargement commitments into writing. Gorbachev's response was very clear: "The topic of 'NATO expansion' was not discussed at all, and it wasn't brought up in those years. I say this with full responsibility." He clarified his comments by saying, "Another issue we

brought up was discussed: making sure that NATO's military structures would not advance and that additional armed forces from the alliance would not be deployed on the territory of the then—GDR after the German reunification. Baker's statement, mentioned in your question, was made in that context. Kohl and Genscher talked about it."

Gorbachev then explained that the West fulfilled its commitments made during the negotiations in 1990. However, later in the interview he criticized NATO enlargement by restating his words from 1993, "It was definitely a violation of the spirit of the statements and assurances made to us in 1990" (Korshunov 2014).

Gorbachev gave an interview to the German broadcaster ZDF to mark the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 2014. He was asked to comment on the commitments not to enlarge NATO. He replied that even in 2014 he was accused of not having required the agreements that NATO would not expand eastwards be formally put down in writing. He then added, "Back then both NATO and the Warsaw Pact existed. In that case what could we have fixed in writing?" In response the reporter asked him, "Does that mean that it is a myth that you were lied to by the West about the eastwards expansion of NATO?" Gorbachev's response was short and concise: "Yes, that is indeed a myth." He reiterated that such promises were not given by anyone and that the question was not even raised by the Soviet leadership (Yaroshinskaya 2014).

Gorbachev reaffirmed his position in his latest book *The New Russia*, published in 2016. He dedicated a paragraph to the question of commitments made in relation to German unification. He described the charges against him for not insisting that the

Western leaders put their commitments in writing in 1989-1990 as “completely absurd” (Gorbachev 2016, 308). He supported his statement by writing:

German reunification was completed at a time then the Warsaw Pact was still in existence, and to demand that its members should not join NATO would have been laughable. . . . The agreement on the final settlement with Germany stated that no additional NATO troops would be deployed on the territory of the former GDR, and neither would weapons of mass destruction. That meant that NATO’s military structure would not move eastwards. (Gorbachev 2016, 308)

The West

The next point of discussion is how the West understood the commitments made during the negotiations over the German unification. Robert Zoellick, the then—State Department Counselor, provided an interesting explanation of the U.S. approach towards Soviet Union during the negotiations on German reunification in 1990. As quoted by Shiffrinson, Zoellick described the U.S. policy as designed to provide Gorbachev with a sense of understanding from the West about Soviet security concerns while offering him “some things to make him more comfortable with the process” (Shiffrinson 2016, 40).

Jack F. Matlock Jr., the then—U.S. ambassador in Moscow has been consistent in his own statements about the commitments made to the Soviet Union during the German unification negotiations. He told *The New York Times*, in 1995, “We gave categorical assurances to Gorbachev back when the Soviet Union existed that if a united Germany was able to stay in NATO, NATO would not be moved eastward” (Zelikow 1995). Two years later, he again told *Times* interviewer Michael Gordon, “When Gorbachev and others say that it is their understanding NATO expansion would not happen, there is a basis for it.” Matlock said that the Soviets have a point when they claim that they had been promised a no-NATO enlargement. He added that Baker had never gone back on his

commitment that "NATO's 'jurisdiction' would not extend eastward." Matlock explained that the commitment was agreed upon in a more general sense and all later agreements about Germany become isolated cases of the promise (Gordon 1997).

Matlock changed his position in 2014. He was asked by the Russian newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* to write an article on the commitments given to the Soviet leadership in 1989-1990 regarding NATO enlargement. He explained, "This is not a simple question since much was said by many political leaders and most were proposals or ideas for negotiation, not promises." He outlined the main points of the negotiations, one of which concluded with: "All the discussions in 1990 regarding the expansion of NATO jurisdiction were in the context of what would happen to the territory of the GDR. There was still a Warsaw Pact. Nobody was talking about NATO and the countries of Eastern Europe. However, the language used did not always make that specific" (Matlock 2014).

Baker's point of view bears examination, as well. Baker refuted Matlock's initial position. Baker claimed that limiting NATO's policy of accepting new members was never considered an option. "[T]he proposal on NATO jurisdiction had applied only to territory of the former East Germany, the German Democratic Republic, and had been speedily withdrawn." He further explained, "I got off the word 'jurisdiction' very quickly, I do not recall using it with the Soviets. But let's assume I did use it once or twice. We quickly walked away from it. What defeats this whole argument is that we then insisted on the GDR being in NATO, thereby moving NATO eastward" (Gordon 1997).

Zelikow's opinion does not differ from Baker's. He claimed that during the negotiations, the U.S. had gone through a variety of discussions and had presented the Soviets with different options. For their part, the Soviets had not opposed the revised offers. In addition, there was no indication or documentation that the two sides had discussed the potential of Warsaw Pact countries joining NATO. According to Zelikow, "No Soviet ever said, 'NATO may extend to East Germany but no farther.'" Even if the Soviets thought that Baker's commitments are applicable to NATO enlargement as a whole, it was their folly that they had not demanded for those commitments to be put into writing (Gordon 1997).

NATO's official position tracks with Baker and Zelikow's. NATO calls the claim that Western leaders promised that NATO would not expand to the east a "myth." "No such promise was ever made, and Russia has never produced any evidence to back up its claim. There is no written record of any such decision having been taken by the Alliance: therefore, no such promise can have been made." In support of the claim, NATO quotes the aforementioned interview with Gorbachev for *Russia Beyond The Headlines* in October, 2014 (NATO 2017a). The former speechwriter to the NATO Secretary General, Michael Rühle, confirmed NATO's and the American diplomats' standpoint. According to Rühle, the talks and commitments made about NATO's expansion during the discussions in the period 1989-1990 were exclusively about German territory (Rühle 2015).

What was the position of the German? According to Genscher, all the friction points and issues were settled during the negotiations over German unification and the following "2+4" forum. During the meetings and discussions, the matter of limiting

NATO and accepting new members from Eastern Europe was never touched upon. Commenting on his Tutzing formula, Genscher said that his intent was to “help the hurdle” of the Soviet leadership to agree to a reunified Germany. In relation to German membership in NATO he said, “East Germany was not to be brought into the military structures of NATO, and the door into the alliance was to remain closed to the countries of Eastern Europe” (Klußmann, Schepp, and Wiegrefe 2009).

The evidence therefore demonstrates that both Soviet and Western officials’ understanding of the commitments over German reunification are inconsistent. Nonetheless, it is evident that participants from both sides came to be aligned around the same concept, that the commitments were valid only for the territory of the GDR.

What have been the Russian reactions to tranches of NATO enlargement?

The author will organize this section temporarily into three conditional sections. The first section will discuss the Russian position prior the first tranche of NATO enlargement. The second section will discuss the period between the first and second tranches. The last section will be focused on the Russian response covering the period after the second tranche to present. The data within the sections will be presented chronologically.

1991-1999

The period 1991-1999 can be characterized by consistent Russian opposition to the enlargement of NATO with simultaneous pursuit of cooperation and partnership. NATO enlargement was not an issue in the period 1990-1993. In 1991, Russia even

asserted readiness to join the NATO structure. During a meeting with a NATO delegation, the Russian Vice-President, Alexandr Rutskoy, suggested that the Soviet Union should become a member of NATO (Yeltsin 1994). In December of the same year, the Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, stated that Russia “does not regard NATO as an aggressive military bloc’ adding that the ‘[Russian] desire to cooperate with this mechanism and join it is therefore natural’” (Dannreuther n.d., 10). In late December 1991, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced the Russian readiness to deepen the dialogue with NATO on both the political and military levels (Lavrinenko 2011).

Two years later, in April 1993, NATO enlargement emerged as an issue (Waller and McAllister 1997). During his visit to Warsaw in August of the same year, Yeltsin said that he understood Poland’s willingness to join NATO. His initial approval resulted in a Joint Polish-Russian Declaration of August 25, 1993, which stated, “such a move [Poland joining NATO] would not be counter to Russian interests nor to the pan-European integration process” (Tomé 2000, 14). During the same visit, Kozyrev discussed Poland’s membership in NATO and stated that Russia “had no objections if NATO’s stance was ‘not aggressive’ toward Russia” (Perlez 1993). Both Russian leaders gave a green light to Poland to pursue its membership in NATO; however, Yeltsin’s position would change in less than a month.

On September 15, 1993, Yeltsin retracted his earlier position by sending a letter to the leaders of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany in which he argued against the enlargement of NATO to the east. According to Yeltsin, the enlargement was illegal because “the treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany signed in September 1990, particularly those of its provisions that prohibit

stationing of foreign troops within the FRG's eastern lands, excludes, by its meaning, the possibility of expansion of the NATO zone to the East" (Tomé 2000, 14-15).

In the same year, the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia issued a report on NATO enlargement, which outlined the dangers to the Russian interests (Sluzhbiy Vneshney Razvedki 1993). Later, this report became the basis for the official Russian policy on enlargement. In November 1993, during a foreign policy council meeting, Kozyrev announced his opposition to NATO enlargement because the Alliance did not take into consideration the Russian opinion. He suggested as an alternative the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme² (Lavrinenko 2011).

Russia remained consistent in its opposition to NATO enlargement over the following two years. In 1994, Kozyrev concluded that "the greatest achievement of Russian foreign policy in 1993 was to prevent NATO's expansion eastward to [Russian] borders" (Goldgeier 2016). That same year, Yeltsin's adviser Sergei Karaganov, warned that if "NATO expands eastward, Russia under any government will become a revisionist power striving to undermine the already fragile European order" (Kupchan 1994).

Despite the steady position of Russia, the United States decided to take a pro-enlargement stance which took shape in President Clinton's statement in Warsaw in July 1994. Clinton said that the issue of NATO enlargement "is no longer a question of whether, but when and how. And that expansion will not depend on the appearance of a new threat in Europe" (Dannreuther n.d., 16). It resulted in Kozyrev's refusal to sign the formerly agreed PfP Individual Partnership Programme and the special NATO-Russia

² NATO Partnership for Peace programme is discussed on page 52.

protocol³ in December 1994. At a later press conference, he justified his action by stating, “Russia cannot accept NATO’s borders being moved right up to the border of the Russian Federation” (Dannreuther n.d., 17).

Yeltsin confirmed Moscow’s negative stance on NATO enlargement during a meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Budapest in December 1994. Yeltsin said, “Today, it [NATO] is trying to find its place in Europe, not without difficulty. It is important that this search not create new divisions, but promote European unity. We believe that the plans of expanding NATO are contrary to this logic” (Goldgeier 2016). At a subsequent press conference, Yeltsin concisely stated, “Russia cannot accept NATO’s borders being moved right up to the border of the Russian Federation” (Dannreuther n.d., 17).

In March 1995, during a conference in Paris, Kozyrev again warned NATO that its enlargement to the east would create a new division between Russia and the West (Whitney 1995). The Russian Defense Minister, Pavel Grachev, also took a firm position against enlargement. He warned the Alliance of the possible creation of an anti-NATO bloc and a possible alliance with China in response to the NATO enlargement (Larrabee and Karasik 1997). In April 1996, Yeltsin visited China, where he announced the warming of Sino-Russian relations and a shared vision, which opposed NATO enlargement (Dannreuther n.d.).

³ “PfP involvement is a two-stage process. A non-NATO country firstly signs up to a general statement of support for the overall aims of PfP. They then negotiate an individual partnership programme with NATO focused on practical military co-operation” (Smith and Timmins 2001, 89).

In March 1996, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Secretary General of NATO Javier Solana both visited Moscow where they confirmed that the West had not abandoned the idea of NATO enlargement. The Russian Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, explicitly stated after his meeting with Christopher: “Russia will not accept NATO’s enlargement, not because it has the right of veto on any such enlargement, but because it will defend its interests in this new, worsening geopolitical situation.” Solana confirmed after his meeting with Yeltsin that “the position of the Russian Federation on the issue is the same as it was yesterday” (Hoffman 1996).

On June 20, 1996, Yeltsin wrote to Clinton, describing the Russian position on the possible NATO membership of the Baltic states. The Russian standpoint was “it is out of the question even a hypothetical possibility of extending NATO’s sphere of operation into the Baltic states. This perspective is absolutely unacceptable for Russia, and we would consider any steps in this direction as a direct challenge to our national security interests” (Tomé 2000, 25). Only five days later Clinton assured the Baltic presidents that, “the first new members [Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic] should not be the last.” A few months later, the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden stated “for the USA the question was not ‘if’ but ‘when’ for ‘Baltic membership in NATO’” (Tomé 2000, 25).

Despite Russia’s consistent opposition to the enlargement of NATO, Moscow remained open for dialogue and continuously sought diplomatic solutions to the problem. At a joint news conference following the meetings with Solana and Christopher, Primakov shared the Russian opinion that “there is a lot of room for compromise . . . with the exception of moving NATO’s military infrastructure closer to Russia’s territory” (Hoffman 1996). In July 1996, he stated “that is absolutely unacceptable to Moscow—

moving up NATO's infrastructure to our borders. On this basis, Russia is inviting NATO to conduct a dialogue, and now they have agreed to this" (Dannreuther n.d., 22). In September of the same year, Primakov reaffirmed Russian opposition to NATO enlargement at the United Nations General Assembly; however, it seemed that Russia might allow a compromise with former members of the Warsaw Pact to join the alliance (McGuire 1996).

In October 1996, the secretary of the Security Council of Russia, Alexandr Lebed, visited NATO headquarters. While in Brussels, Lebed called for active cooperation with NATO and stated "Russia is not 'going to go into hysterics' if NATO decided to enlarge" (Larrabee and Karasik 1997, 8). Yeltsin described Lebed's behavior in Brussels as "[Lebed] continued to give raucous, scandalous, press conferences and to make startling announcements." In response, Yeltsin decided to assign his staff to prepare Lebed's resignation (Yeltsin 2000, 66). As a result, Lebed distanced himself from his statements in Brussels and after a short period returned to Moscow's consistent political line of opposition to NATO enlargement. In December 1996, the Russian Minister of Defense, Igor Rodionov, reaffirmed the Russian position against the enlargement of NATO. He highlighted the danger of the enlargement of the Alliance during a lecture at NATO headquarters (Larrabee and Karasik 1997).

Russia's response to NATO enlargement resulted in its strengthened ties with Belarus. In the period 1996-1999, Moscow and Minsk signed ten military accords for common defense and established various military platforms for cooperation. The primary argument throughout the process was that enlargement of NATO postured potential

threats in the vicinity of the Russian borders and in response the joint military structure was designed specifically to defend Russia against NATO (Szyszlo 2003).

Yeltsin began to soften his opposition to the enlargement of the Alliance during the Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Helsinki in March 1997 (Lippman 1997). He reaffirmed the view that “NATO [is] making a mistake that would lead to a new confrontation between the East and the West” (Yeltsin 2000, 131). After years of apparent opposition, though, Yeltsin announced that he had not foreseen Russia’s potential ability to prevent the enlargement of NATO. In spite his position that enlargement was a serious mistake, Yeltsin asserted that “in order to minimize the negative consequences for Russia, we [Russia] decided to sign an agreement with NATO” (Woolley and Peters 2017). With this act, Russia de facto agreed with the first tranche of NATO enlargement.

NATO formally invited Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to become members of the Alliance during the Madrid summit in July 1997 (NATO 2001). In response, Primakov stated that this act was conducted “in spite of assurances given by notable leaders of member states of NATO to Russian leaders in the period of 1990-1991” (Lavrinenko 2011, 93).

2000-2004

The next point of discussion will be the period between the first and second tranches of NATO enlargement.

The Russian readiness for cooperation with the Alliance was reaffirmed by Vladimir Putin in March 2000. In an interview for BBC, the Russian president answered a question about the possible membership of Russia in NATO. His response was: “I don’t

see why not. I would not rule out such a possibility—but I repeat—If and when Russia’s views are taken into account as those of an equal partner. I want to stress this again and again” (Frost 2000).

Russia showed a willingness for cooperation again in March 2000. During a meeting between Putin and Secretary General of NATO George Robertson, both leaders agreed to restore contacts between Russia and NATO and to treat each other as “strategic partners.” Putin stated, “Russia is ready for cooperation with NATO” and added, “straight up to joining the Alliance” (S’isoev 2000). A few days later Putin reaffirmed his position by saying, “We are ready to join NATO in its political organization and there is nothing scary about it” (Bulavinov 2000).

Notwithstanding his explicit pursuit of cooperation with NATO, in June 2000 Putin announced Russian opposition to NATO enlargement. In an interview for *Welt am Sonntag*, the Russian president stated, “The eastward expansion of the organization would not be favorable for European stability. The expansion of NATO behind the former Soviet borders would create a completely new situation for Russia and Europe. It would have extremely serious consequences for the whole security system of the continent” (The Baltic Times 2000).

During an interview for a French media, in October of the same year, Putin was asked to discuss whether Russia would oppose the joining of Baltic states into NATO. Putin responded “the Russian position is that we are against the joining of Baltic states into NATO.” Then he shared his incomprehension of the role of NATO. He reiterated his earlier statement about the potential for Russia to join NATO, although noting, nonetheless, that “no one is expecting Russia within NATO.” He then raised the question,

“since nobody expects us to join NATO, why should we be pleased with NATO enlargement and its oncoming toward our borders? This, naturally, troubles us” (President of Russia 2000a).

Russia reaffirmed opposition to the enlargement of NATO numerous times during this period. In January 2001, Putin warned the West about their idea to incorporate the Baltic states into NATO by saying, “we consider the policy of NATO enlargement to be a mistake and we say that it is unacceptable to us” (BBC 2001). In July 2001, the Russian president condemned the enlargement of NATO to the east because it would create “different levels of security on the continent.” He called for an alternative solution such as the “disbanding of NATO or by Russia joining it, or by the creation of a new body in which Russia could become an equal partner” (Associated Press 2001). In October 2001, Putin restated his earlier position: “Our position on the question of NATO enlargement is clear and has not yet changed” (President of Russia 2001). In February 2002, Putin stressed that he favored the “widening and deepening” of the relations between NATO and Moscow, although, he would not “cease opposing the alliance’s eastward expansion unless NATO evolved from a military to a ‘political’ organization” (Tayler 2002).

In March 2004, as the Baltic states’ accession to the alliance approached, Moscow adopted a more overtly aggressive stance toward these states’ entry into NATO. In contrast to the consistently soft and cooperative political line pursued by the Russian president, the Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Ivanov, described NATO’s strategy as “aggressive.” He warned the Alliance that Russia might improve its nuclear defense in response to the possible deployment of NATO aircraft on the territory of the Baltic states (BBC 2004a). Ivanov’s warnings were echoed by the first deputy chief of the Russian

General Staff, Colonel General Yurii Baluevskii, who stated that Russia would take “adequate measures” against the enlargement of the Alliance (Sanderson 2004). In addition, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Aleksandr Yakovenko, announced that Russia might take measures against the airfields and air defenses in the Baltic region (The Baltic Times 2004).

The period between the first and second tranches of NATO enlargement could be summed up as a time of Russia`s willingness for cooperation with NATO and a consistency in its opposition to the enlargement of the Alliance. The Russian president did not see the enlargement of NATO as a serious issue for Moscow. Even at a certain point, the Russian leader pledged readiness to join the political structure of NATO. However, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense remained tougher in their opposition to the enlargement of the Alliance, especially as the Baltic states` accession drew nearer.

2004-present

The following discussion will cover the period after the second tranche of NATO enlargement to the present.

Russia maintained its consistent opposition to the enlargement of NATO after the second tranche had become a fact. Putin restated the Russian position on NATO enlargement during his meeting with the Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, in April 2004. Putin almost repeated word-for-word his statement of 2001 by saying “our position toward the enlargement of NATO is well-known and has not changed” (President of Russia 2004). The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, was

more explicit: “We didn’t want this enlargement, and we will continue to maintain a negative attitude. It’s a mistake” (Shanker 2004). In October 2004, Sergei Ivanov met with the United States’ Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. Ivanov reaffirmed his position on the membership of the Baltic states into NATO and described it as “reserved and negative” (Shanker 2004).

Russia reinforced their warning to NATO through a resolution adopted by the State Duma after the completion of the 2004 NATO enlargement tranche. The resolution described NATO enlargement as a violation of the commitments in the co-operation agreement signed in Rome in 2002⁴. It recommended that the Russian government enhance its nuclear capabilities and deploy additional troops on the western borders. The resolution also urged the new members of NATO to ratify the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), which would limit the deployment of weapon systems near Russia’s borders. The State Duma likewise warned the West that Russia might revise the number of troops in Kaliningrad and Pskov if NATO attempted to shift the “military-political balance” (BBC 2004a).

In November 2006, Sergei Ivanov, in an interview for Spiegel, again criticized the enlargement of NATO. He was asked to elaborate on his comment that NATO deceived Russia with its enlargement plans. Ivanov responded, “We were told at the time [1990] that NATO would not expand its military structures in the direction of the Soviet Union.

⁴ In the context of the current research, it is worth noting that none of the commitments in “NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation” pertain to the enlargement of the alliance of accession of new members to NATO. See http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_19572.htm.

Then came the first wave of NATO expansion, followed by the second. And each time we saw the military infrastructure gradually coming closer to the former Soviet Union” (Spiegel 2006).

Since 2007, Vladimir Putin has taken a firmer stance against the enlargement of NATO. During his speech on Security Policy at the 43rd Munich Conference in February 2007, Putin criticized the enlargement of the Alliance by saying:

we have the right to ask: against whom is this [NATO] expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are those declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr. Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: “the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee.” Where are these guarantees? (Washington Post 2007)

In July of the same year, Putin formally announced that Russia would suspend its implementation of the CFE Treaty. Some of the arguments for his decision were the U.S. plans to deploy ballistic missile defense systems in Europe, the enlargement of NATO into the former Warsaw Pact countries and the fact that NATO members had not ratified the amendments to the CFE Treaty from 1999 (Kramer and Shanker 2007). On November 20, 2007, the Russian president signed a law that suspended Russia’s implementation of the CFE Treaty. The arguments for this decision remained consistent with the aforementioned ones and, in addition, Moscow argued that the treaty was outdated and had been used to limit Russia while NATO enlarged and created opportunities closer to the Russian border (Stratton 2007).

In April 2008, NATO announced the possibility of Ukraine and Georgia joining the Alliance. Putin responded that Russia would treat any enlargement of NATO closer to

the Russian borders as a “direct threat” (Dawar 2008) and promised that Moscow would take “adequate measures” (Allenova, Geda and Novikov 2008). Sergey Lavrov told journalists “We will do all we can to prevent Ukraine’s and Georgia’s accession into NATO.” His statement was followed by General Baluevskii who several days later announced that if Georgia and Ukraine joined NATO “Russia will take unambiguous action toward ensuring its interests along its borders. These will not only be military steps, but also steps of a different character.” As a result, NATO rejected the applications of Georgia and Ukraine for a Membership Action Plan.⁵ Yet, the Alliance did not abandon the idea that both states would eventually become NATO members (Deutsche Welle 2008).

Lavrov summarized the Russian view on NATO enlargement in September 2008. “NATO [had been] expanded in spite of the commitments to the opposite given to us.” Specifically,

the commitment was not to expand NATO. Then, this commitment was broken and NATO started to expand on Eastern Europe. And we were told again, look, yes, we promised you not to expand it, but there is not serious. The expansion would not involve actually placing of NATO military assets on those territories. Then this commitment was broken as well. Military bases of the United States are in Romania and Bulgaria. Then, third, position of missile defense came. (Rose 2008)

The Russian position was reaffirmed by President Medvedev two months later. In an interview for Spiegel he said, “None of the things that we were assured, namely that

⁵ The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a NATO programme of advice, assistance, and practical support tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join the Alliance. Countries participating in the MAP submit individual annual national programmes on their preparations for possible future membership. For more information see http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm.

NATO would not expand endlessly eastwards and our interests would be continuously taken into consideration” (Spiegel 2009b).

The assertions of broken commitments became a common theme for Russian critiques of NATO. Putin remained consistent in his statements. In his address to the State Duma in March 2014, he said “They [the West] have lied to us many times, made decisions behind our backs, placed us before an accomplished fact. This happened with NATO’s expansion to the East, as well as the deployment of military infrastructure at our borders” (President of Russia 2014a). In April of the same year, Putin reasserted the position he set out in Munich seven years earlier. During the annual special Direct Line, Putin’s annual call-in show, he stated, “At one time, we were promised . . . that after Germany’s unification, NATO wouldn’t spread eastward. The then NATO Secretary-General told us that the alliance would not expand beyond its eastern borders. However, it started expanding by incorporating former Warsaw Treaty member-countries and later on, the Baltic states, former Soviet republics.” Putin used the enlargement of NATO to partially justify the Russian operation in Crimea. One of his arguments, along with the U.S. missile defense and the support of the Crimean people, was that if Russia had not taken any action “NATO [would] drag Ukraine” and “NATO ships would have ended up in the city of Russian navy glory, Sevastopol” (President of Russia 2014b).

Russian diplomats were also on board with this line. In September 2014, Lavrov described the enlargement of the Alliance as “provocative” and “completely pointless” (RIA Novosti 2014). Three months later, Aleksandr Grushko, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to NATO, commenting on the existence of agreements for no enlargement of NATO to the east, explicitly stated, “There is such an

agreement.” His argument rested on the text of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and specifically the part, which restricts the Alliance from the deployment of significant forces on the territory of new members (Paniev 2014).

One year later, in December 2015, NATO made its first formal step towards new members since the last tranche in 2009. The Alliance formally invited Montenegro to become its twenty-ninth member (NATO 2015). The response from Moscow was swift and uncompromising. The Russian Foreign Ministry saw the invitation “as a blatantly confrontational step that could have additional destabilizing consequences to the European security” and stated that “a new spiral of NATO expansion directly affects Russia’s interests and forces us to adopt adequate response measures” (Sputnik 2015b).

The measures became apparent twenty days later. Russia decided to suspend its participation in the Joint Consultative Group dealing with the CFE Treaty. The Foreign Ministry’s argument was that “NATO countries continue to find loopholes in the CFE through the alliance’s expansion, simultaneously delaying ratification of the Adapted CFE treaty under various pretexts” (Sputnik 2015a). Lavrov, commenting on the invitation of Montenegro, said, “The mere fact NATO is brazenly moving eastwards speaks about a complete disregard of the obligations undertaken during the disintegration of the Soviet Union.” He revisited the obligations of the West: that the Alliance would not enlarge and NATO would not deploy military infrastructure on the territories of the new members (RIA Novosti 2016).

Putin discussed the increased tension between Russia and the West in early January 2016. He blamed the West for the confrontation saying that “[it] occurred because western leaders ignored advice against expanding NATO and Russia’s post-

communist leaders failed to assert the country's interests following the collapse of the Soviet Union" (Oliphant 2016). Putin criticized enlargement again in June 2016. During the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum, he said, "the Soviet Union has collapsed, and the Warsaw Pact no longer exists, but NATO is still approaching our borders. . . . Where is the threat coming from? There is an absolute disregard for our position [on this matter]" (Knezevic 2016).

Russia's tolerance had exhausted and in October 2016, Moscow warned that it would strengthen its southern and western flanks with three new divisions. This warning came as a response to the proposed deployment of NATO forces in Poland and the Baltic states. According to the Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shoigu, the task of the new formed units would be to "counter NATO's increasing influence" (Iyengar 2016). The State Duma added their voice to this line against the enlargement of NATO as it had done in 2004. In November 2016, Senator Franz Klintsevich said, "In reply to NATO's aggressive actions, to the alliance's attempts to draw more and more nations into their orbit, there will be a harsh and unambiguous response from Russia's side. We will aim our weapons, including the nuclear ones, at any of the alliance's site that would threaten us, wherever these sites are placed." Putin's press secretary Peskov distanced the presidency from Klintsevich's statement, explaining that the lawmakers have no authority in determining Russia's foreign policy, however, Peskov depicted this position as "understandable" (RT 2016).

Russia remained consistent against the enlargement of the Alliance after the second tranche of the enlargement. The response was soft and diplomatic in the first two-

three years. However, since 2007 Russia has taken firmer measures against the enlargement of NATO.

What steps has NATO taken to address Russia's concerns
over NATO enlargement?

Partnership for Peace

In 1993, the United States revised their vision of the future of NATO. The conclusion was that the only feasible course of action was “to reach out to the East and expand that membership and purpose” (Christopher 1998, 129). The U.S. realized that the enlargement of NATO would be perceived as “anti-Russian” in Russia, therefore to execute it they would have to find an approach to ameliorate the Russian anxiety (Christopher 1998). The U.S. adopted the idea of General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for the development of the PfP program. It was designed to build cooperation with former Warsaw Pact countries, including Russia, through training exercises and consultation. Besides, the program was designed “as a way to begin integrating the most capable states into Alliance structures” (Christopher 1998, 130).

In order to achieve its purpose, the program had to be sold to the Russians. Warren Christopher went to Russia in October 1993, where he explained PfP to Yelstin (Christopher 1998). According to Christopher, Yeltsin “had feared that we [U.S.] might try to bring some of Central European states into NATO immediately, while working to keep Russia out.” However, when Yeltsin heard about PfP, he described it as a “stroke of genius” and added that the program would ease the Russian concerns over the willingness of East European states to become NATO members. Christopher responded that NATO enlargement would remain “long-term and evolutionary.” Yeltsin's reply was that “this

really is a great idea, really great” (Christopher 1998, 93). Yet, Christopher later evaluated Yeltsin’s enthusiasm as misunderstanding that PfP would limit the enlargement of NATO (Christopher 1998).

The program was adopted by the Alliance and was formally established in January 1994 with the Partnership for Peace: Framework Document (NATO 1994a). During the negotiations on the future participation of Russia in the PfP program, Moscow requested “special status” and treatment (Schmidt 1994). Both sides agreed “to develop an extensive individual Partnership Programme corresponding to Russia’s size, importance and capabilities. . . . [and] to set in train the development of a far-reaching, cooperative NATO/Russia relationship, both inside and outside Partnership for Peace” (NATO 1994b). As a result, Russia signed up to the PfP framework document in June 1994 (NATO 2017b).

Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev requested a ceremony during a special session of the North Atlantic Council⁶ where Russia would formally join the PfP. However, Kozyrev arrived at the meeting on December 1, 1994 and refused to sign the documents because of NATO’s aspirations to enlarge to the east⁷ (Christopher 1998). A consensus on future relations was achieved in May 1995 when Russia and NATO signed a

⁶ North Atlantic Council is the principal political decision-making body within NATO, which consists of high-level representatives of each member country. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49763.htm.

⁷ See page 37.

document for dialogue and cooperation.⁸ The document granted Russia the option for a “dialogue [with NATO] through ad hoc ‘16+1’ discussions in the North Atlantic Council and Political Committee” (NATO 1995). NATO recognized the “special status” of Russia in the summer of 1994 by offering it a framework for dialogue that had not been provided to any other PfP member. It set the stage for further talks and cooperation between the Alliance and Moscow (Smith and Timmins 2001).

NATO-Russia Founding Act

The negotiations on the possible enlargement of NATO continued in 1997 as well. Primakov restated Russia’s opposition to enlargement but he also announced that Moscow was willing to “minimize the complications that may arise if expansion goes ahead” (CNN 1997b). Russia consistently stated their security concerns over the enlargement of NATO. The Russian Foreign Ministry formulated conditions for further talks on the subject of NATO enlargement. The Alliance had to provide written guarantees of no deployment of either nuclear weapons or foreign troops on the territory of the new members. NATO agreed to these conditions and proposed to strengthen ties with Russia (CNN 1997a). The result was a “fundamentally new relationship” between Russia and NATO, which was documented in the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which was signed in May 1997 (NATO 1997).

⁸ The name of the document is Areas for Pursuance of a Broad, Enhanced NATO/Russia dialogue, and cooperation in a transparent manner. For more information see http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24750.htm?selectedLocale=en.

The Founding Act provided a framework for a Russia-NATO cooperation in political-military matters. Its provisions answered the Russian security concerns in three different aspects. First, members of NATO “have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.” Second, NATO in the current and future security environment would ensure its collective defense by maintaining capabilities “for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces” and specifically “reinforcement may take place, when necessary, in the event of defence against a threat of aggression.” Third, the Founding Act recognized the importance of CFE Treaty adaptation in order to “enhance its [CFE Treaty] viability and effectiveness” in Europe’s changing environment (NATO 1997).

Another key outcome of the Founding Act was the establishment of a new mechanism for consultation and cooperation called the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). It was designed to “enhance each other’s security and that of all nations in the Euro-Atlantic area and diminish the security of none.” The PJC principles aimed to solve potential disagreements between Russia and NATO through political consultations based on “mutual respect.” The Founding Act provided both parties the right of voice but not with the “right of veto over the actions of the other.” Nor did it provide both Russia and NATO with the right to restrict the “independent decision-making” of the other (NATO 1997).

Russia initially looked favorably on The Founding Act. In 1997, the former Russian Prime Minister, Yegor Gaidar, complimented the recently implemented cooperation mechanisms, acknowledging President Clinton for their success. Gaidar wrote that “he [Clinton] has managed to pull off the seemingly impossible: to implement

NATO enlargement without causing irreparable damage either to democratic elements in Russia's political establishment or to U.S.-Russian relations" (Gaidar 1997-1998, 66). Nonetheless, this tactical success would not guarantee Russia as a long-term ally (Gaidar 1997-1998).

This forum for cooperation did not last long. In March 1999, Russia withdrew its representatives from NATO headquarters and suspended contacts with the Alliance over NATO's air operation against Yugoslavia and the associated disregard of Russian opinion (Associated Press 1999). In July, Russia resumed its communication with NATO but it was limited to the ongoing peacekeeping operation in Kosovo (Volhonskii and S'isoev 1999). In 2000, Russia reestablished its full contacts with NATO within the framework of the PJC (Smith and Timmins 2001).

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

Another mechanism aimed at balance and security in Europe was the CFE Treaty. It was signed in November 1990 when both NATO and the Warsaw Pact still existed and only a month after German reunification. It was designed to provide greater stability by "establishing a secure and stable balance of conventional armed forces in Europe" (Bureau of Arms Control 1990). The importance of this treaty for the Soviet Union and Russia was illustrated when it was described as "the cornerstone of European security" (Wilcox 2011, 567) and as having "a crucial importance for Russian security" (Wilcox 2011, 569). The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in February 1991 and NATO's willingness to enlarge required the adaptation of the CFE Treaty to the new security environment in Europe as it was outlined in the Founding Act (NATO 1997).

In 1993, the Russian Foreign Ministry pleaded for revision of the CFE Treaty by highlighting two main issues. First, “[the] limitation on heavy armament, located in the “flank regions,” which are in immediate proximity to the northern and southern flanks of NATO” (Chertkov 1993). Second, the enlargement of NATO, and specifically the potential membership of former members of the Warsaw Pact to the Alliance (Wilcox 2011). In 1996, General Makhmut Gareev echoed this appeal by stating that “the enlargement of NATO would ‘ruin the ratio of power and the proportion of military equipment established by the [CFE Treaty]’” (Wilcox 2011, 570).

The first step towards a solution was made in Vienna in May 1996, when the “Final Document of the first conference to review the operation of the treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe and the concluding act of the negotiation on personnel strength” was signed. This meeting and the negotiated document effectively initiated the talks on the modernization of the CFE Treaty (Bureau of Arms Control 1996). The next major step was made in Istanbul in November 1999 when the CFE Treaty “Agreement on Adaptation” was signed. The updates were primarily dictated by the shifts in the security environment in Europe caused by the potential enlargement of NATO and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (Bureau of Arms Control 1999).

The key outcomes of the Agreement on Adaptation that answered Russian concerns were the replacement of the bloc-to-bloc and zonal limits with national and territorial ceilings, the refinement of the numbers of heavy armament in the flank regions, and the commitment of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to reduce the numbers of their armaments (Wilcox 2011). Mikhail Shelepin, the Director of the Center for Security, Arms Control and Peacekeeping Studies at the Diplomatic Academy of the

Russian Foreign Ministry, stated that the Agreement on Adaptation “at long last eliminated some of the unfair and absurd provisions with respect to Russia that objectively arose in the wake of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the disintegration of the Soviet Union as well as NATO eastward enlargement” (Wilcox 2011, 571).

Despite the fact that the adaptation of the CFE Treaty resolved some of the Russian fears, it was still not fully adequate for the contemporary security environment. It set the stage for Russian doubts. In 2000, the Russian Foreign Ministry officially argued that the current text of the CFE Treaty would give NATO military superiority over Russia with regards to the limited armament and the flank limitations (Wilcox 2011). On the day of the second CFE Treaty review conference, in 2001, Russia stressed the importance of the ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation and argued that the future enlargement of NATO in the Baltics would have “destructive consequences for key provisions of CFE” (Wilcox 2011, 572).

Russia ratified the adaptation agreement in 2004. Meanwhile, NATO enlarged and accepted seven new members into the Alliance. In 2005, Russian officials argued that Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were not participants in the CFE Treaty and, therefore, the limitations were not applicable to them, which would lead to a shift in balance. Moscow also reaffirmed its concern over the delay of NATO members` ratification of the Agreement on Adaptation. The third CFE Treaty review conference in 2006 did not sufficiently calm Russian concerns (Wilcox 2011). As a result, Moscow articulated its negative vision of the CFE Treaty as “‘largely outdated and [having] lost its connection with reality,’ especially because of NATO enlargement” (Wilcox 2011,

576). In 2007, Russia unilaterally suspended its implementation of the CFE Treaty⁹ (Stratton 2007).

NATO-Russia Council

The Declaration on “NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality” established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), in May 2002. It was built on and de facto replaced the PJC. Compared to the bilateral architecture for cooperation in the PJC, the NRC was designed in a way in which each NATO member and Russia had equal rights. The NRC was intended to serve as “a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action” and “continuous political dialogue on security issues” following the principle that Russia and NATO “will work as equal partners in areas of common interest.” The declaration stressed the importance of the CFE Treaty for security in Europe and stated that the NRC would “work cooperatively toward ratification by all the States Parties and entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty” (NATO 1997; NATO 2010).

Moscow used the NRC session in Portoroz, Slovenia in September 2006 to remind the Alliance of the Russian concerns over the delayed ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty and the ongoing “reconfiguration of NATO’s infrastructure” (Sputnik 2006). In response to the Russian actions in Georgia, in August 2008 NATO decided to suspend its participation in the NRC in some areas until the spring of 2009 (NATO 2017b). The Russian operation in Crimea led NATO to “suspend all practical civilian and military

⁹ For details, see page 46.

cooperation between NATO and Russia” on April 1, 2014, but to leave open the “political dialogue in the [NRC] . . . at the Ambassadorial level and above, to allow [the parties] to exchange views, first and foremost on this crisis” (NATO 2014).

It appears that the NRC has been a successful forum for discussions and coordination on some issues concerning Russia and NATO throughout the years. However, it has not succeeded in answering some of the Russian concerns about the enlargement of NATO, ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty, and the deployment of additional troops in the Baltics (President of Russia 2008).

What has been the Russian perception of threat
caused by NATO enlargement?

The sources for the Russian perception of threat could be easily simplified as everything that they believe jeopardizes their national security. In 2014, Putin explicitly summarized the Russian standpoint: “We are obligated to do everything in our power so that the safety is absolutely guaranteed. We have stated and warned many times that we will be forced, exactly forced, to take adequate countermeasures to secure our safety” (Zerkalo Nedeli 2014).

However, it is important to discuss what Russia indeed perceives as a threat to its national security. The current security hazards that Moscow has identified could be narrowed down to the Russian sense of being disregarded in European security decision making, the disposition of NATO troops and infrastructure close to the Russian border, and the deployment of elements of the U.S. missile defense system in Europe. This section of the thesis will examine the three perceived security threats in turn.

The sense of being disregarded from the security decision-making

The Russian sense of being disregarded in the planning and conduct of security policies in Europe is not something new. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has seen itself as a key player in decision making concerning the security of Europe (Krechetnikov 2014). Every time Russian suggestions or objections to the West concerning their national security were ignored, their sense of marginalization was heightened, which led them to take countermeasures.

In the mid-1990s, Sergei Karaganov stated that “[f]or Russians, NATO expansion is a psychological question as much as a strategic one: it involves mutual trust and Western recognition of Russia’s status. . . . The enlargement of NATO will lessen the need of the West to consider our interests” which would lead to the isolation of Russia. Lebed, on his part, presented Russia’s opinion on NATO in a new light, describing it as “a ‘heavy fist’ that Russians see as an ‘imperialist power’ ready to ‘jump on us’ as soon as ‘we are weak’” (Christian Science Monitor 1996).

Early indications that Russia was feeling marginalized or isolated from the security decision-making can be found even before NATO’s first tranche of enlargement had been realized. In 1998 Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of the Russian Duma’s Committee on International Affairs, characterized the enlargement of NATO as “dangerous” and “isolating Russia.” Russia felt “isolated and neglected” and was seeking to be treated as a “responsible partner in the world community [and] to be respected” because Russia’s security issues were not less important than those of Western Europe (Global Beat 1998).

One year later, Yeltsin described the Russian perception of NATO's strategy as ignorant of Russia's national interests. He also discussed the different solutions to this problem in his *Midnight Diaries*, stressing on the option in which "Russia [could] become integrated into NATO and fit into European security as an equal partner. But NATO [was] not expecting us" (Yeltsin 2000, 345).

Vladimir Putin echoed these views in Bucharest in April 2008. He lamented NATO's disregard of Russia's interests in matters of security. Putin described the steps that Russia had taken toward building trust and stated that he expected the same of NATO, however his expectations were yet to be met. The level of successful cooperation was directly linked to "the extent to which NATO respects the interests of the Russian Federation and the Alliance's willingness to compromise on issues shaping the strategic environment in Europe and the world." According to Putin, the main points on which NATO did not consider Russian concerns were the enlargement of NATO, the deployment of military infrastructure on the territory of new members of the Alliance, disagreements on the ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty, and the planned U.S. anti-missile defense in Europe. He concluded that a reborn Russia "is a strong, independent state with its own position. Dialogue [with the West] has not been easy and remains somewhat difficult" (President of Russia 2008).

In 2013, Sergei Shoigu criticized the U.S./NATO plans for missile defense by saying "we have failed to work jointly on this issue. The European missile defense programs are developing, and our concerns are not being taken into account" (Sputnik 2013). In 2014, Putin partially justified the operation in Crimea by citing the enlargement

of NATO as was discussed earlier.¹⁰ He also stressed that should Ukraine eventually would join NATO the Alliance would tell Russia “this doesn’t concern you” and would deploy NATO ships in Sevastopol, which would threaten Russia and cause the country to be “practically ousted from the Black Sea area” (President of Russia 2014b). In January 2016, Putin reaffirmed his opinion that NATO was neglecting Russia’s security concerns in Eastern Europe. He commented on the unwillingness of NATO to hear the Russian concerns and to stop the enlargement by saying “They wanted to reign. They sat on the throne. So, what is next? Now we are discussing possible crises” (TASS 2016a).

The disposition of NATO troops and infrastructure close to Russia

The sense of threat over the disposition of NATO troops and their infrastructure close to Russia is also nothing new. This sense developed over the years in line with the steps of NATO enlargement and reached its peak in the last few years. Yeltsin acceded to the enlargement of NATO during the negotiations on the Founding Act, in 1997. Despite that, he stressed Russian concerns of possible permanent deployment of NATO troops near the Russian border. Clinton eased his fears by stating that NATO did not envision such moves (Lippman 1997). In 2003, Sergei Ivanov shared his concerns over the capabilities that NATO would acquire by accepting the Baltic states as members and by utilizing their airfields. During a ministerial meeting in Colorado Springs, he made the point that it would take only three minutes for the NATO combat aircraft, located in the Baltic states, to reach Saint Petersburg (Shanker 2004). Ivanov warned the West about

¹⁰ See page 48.

the Russian concerns again in March 2004. He asked NATO to abandon its “anti-Russian stance” which Moscow identified with the buildup of NATO installations in the Baltic states. The advisor to the president, Sergei Yastrzhembskii, added that the location of bases in Bulgaria and Romania was understandable because of the operation in Afghanistan but having bases in the Baltics was without basis (Bogdanov 2004).

In Bucharest, in 2008, Putin made very clear that “[w]e view the appearance of a powerful military bloc on our borders . . . as a direct threat to the security of our country.” He claimed that Russia did not believe the pledge that enlargement was not directed against it. He justified Moscow’s lack of trust in promises especially due to the commitments given prior to the other tranches of enlargement (President of Russia 2008). Putin’s speech reaffirmed Dmitry Medvedev’s expression of Russian discontent with the enlargement of the Alliance made a week prior to the meeting in Bucharest (Lowe 2008).

The Russian opposition to what they term NATO’s approach to their borders continued to escalate throughout the years. In December 2015, when NATO invited Montenegro to join the Alliance, Moscow warned the West again of the Russian perception of enlargement as a threat to national security (Sputnik 2015a). Dmitriy Peskov reminded allies that Russia had spoken against enlargement numerous times. He stated that “[t]he expansion of the Alliances’ military infrastructure to the east is bound to lead to counter measures by Russia” (News Front 2015).

In 2016, Lavrov warned the creation of NATO military infrastructure near Russia’s borders would elicit a Russian response using “military-technical measures” (Gordon 2016). He described the enlargement of NATO as an artificial introduction of “Russian threat” into the smaller states in order to legitimize the seizure of “geopolitical

space closer to the Russian borders” (RIA Novosti 2016). In 2016, the Russian Permanent Representative to NATO, Aleksander Grushko, echoed the Russian concerns over the ongoing development of NATO infrastructure closer to the Russian borders. He elaborated on the statements of Medvedev and Lavrov by saying that Russia would use “asymmetrical” responses, which “would not be extremely expensive, but also highly effective” (teleSUR 2016).

The Russian perception of threat caused by the NATO troops and installations located near their borders reached its apogee in 2016. In the summer of that year, members of NATO announced their plans to deploy four battalions in the Baltic states as a deterrence mechanism against possible Russian aggression (Watkins 2016). The Deputy Minister of Defense of Poland contributed to Moscow’s angst by appealing for the deployment of permanent NATO structures in the region. He also added that NATO has a developed “program in which NATO members can have nuclear weapons in the country-ally” (Adl-Tabatabai 2016). Russian officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assessed the NATO plans for the Baltics as a “very dangerous build-up of armed forces pretty close to [Russian] borders” which would require an adequate response from the Russian Ministry of Defense (Iyengar 2016). Minister of Defense Shoigu described the presence of NATO troops in Eastern Europe as one of the main security threats to Russia. In response, Moscow formed “four divisions, nine brigades, and twenty two regiments” (RBC 2016). Two of these divisions were planned to deploy in the Western Military District, opposite the Baltic states and Finland (TASS 2016b). Russia announced that it would deploy additional modern surveillance assets on the border with Poland, the Baltic states and Finland (Sputnik 2016).

Elements of U.S. ballistic missile defense system in Europe

The Russian perception of threat caused by the development of the U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) system in Europe is twofold. First, the Russians sense that the system would reduce its nuclear capabilities; and second, because they believe that the system could be easily turned into an offensive asset.

The expression of Russian concerns over the planned improvement of the U.S. BMD system in Europe could be tracked back to April 2008 when Sergei Lavrov requested the “permanent presence” of Russian military personnel in the planned bases in Poland and the Czech Republic (Deutsche Welle 2008). During a news conference following the NRC meeting in 2010, Medvedev expressed the firm Russian position on the U.S. plans to establish European missile defense launching area.¹¹ In his words, Russia saw the plan as “directed primarily against Russia’s interests.” He acknowledged the Obama administration for altering the U.S. missile defense plans in 2009¹² stressing that it resulted in the cancelation of the Russian plans to deploy missiles and radars in Kaliningrad. Medvedev suggested as a solution to the issue a unified effort between Russia and the West in the further development of BMD in Europe (President of Russia 2010a). One of the main outcomes from the NRC meeting was that both sides agreed on the idea to develop options for joint BMD system (Sputnik 2011).

¹¹ For more information, see https://www.mda.mil/news/history_resources.html.

¹² For more information, see <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/usmissiledefense>.

The ideas for a joint system varied throughout the years. In January 2011, Russia presented its concept. It included a common BMD system with joint decision-making. Dmitriy Rogozin provided his description of the concept as “each side will have its own button to launch operative [missile] systems, but decisions on their application should be made jointly” (Sputnik 2011). NATO responded by announcing its readiness to cooperate with Russia on the issue but proposed a concept for “two independent but coordinated systems working back to back” (Agence France-Presse 2011). Despite the attempts to build a joint BMD system, it did not become reality. In March 2011, Russia stepped back from its initial proposal for a common system and remained concerned about the uncertainty of the way the system would be used (Zadra 2014).

In September 2011, NATO attempted to ease Russia`s concerns by announcing a readiness to provide legal assurances that “the missile defense system is not aimed against Russia” (NTI 2011). In May 2012, Valeriy Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, confirmed the Russian view that the Western BMD system plans were “a threat to the Russian strategic nuclear deterrent assets across [the] whole country” (Zadra 2014, 53). NATO attempted to address the Russian fears with declaration that stated, “NATO missile defence is not directed against Russia and will not undermine Russia’s strategic deterrence capabilities” and tried to encourage further dialogue (NATO 2012).

The West did not achieve the desired effect because the Russian government demanded legal guarantees that would address their concerns. After not receiving any formal agreement, Russia continued to take countermeasures. In April 2012, Moscow

announced the reestablishment of the plan for deployment of Iskander-M systems¹³ in Kaliningrad. The decision came as a response to the U.S. agreement with Poland for deployment of BMD elements on its territory (Sputnik 2012). Following the NRC meeting in October 2013, Shoigu told journalists “Before launching missile defense projects, we need to have firm judicial assurances that the US missile defense system will not be used against Russian nuclear deterrence forces” (Sputnik 2013).

Since then the Russian position has remained consistent and their response continued to evolve. A few days after the NRC meeting in 2013, Moscow took its next step against the Western missile defense plans. Russia agreed to deploy air defense systems on the territory of Belarus in response to the developing Western missile shield. Another measure was taken by Putin when he revoked a Presidential order from 2011, which formed a working group within the Presidential administration, responsible for the coordination with NATO on the issues of the missile defense. The Russian president also repealed the position of “special representative of the Russian President for missile defense interaction with NATO” (Voice of Russia 2013).

In April 2014, Putin made one of his most comprehensive comments on the issue with the U.S. BMD system. He stated that “[the Russian] ground-based strategic missiles will be within their striking range.” He then criticized the BMD system as “not a defensive system, but part of the offensive potential deployed far away from home.”

¹³ Iskander (NATO designation SS-26 Stone) is a short-range ballistic missile designed to overcome air defense systems. For more information see <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/report-russias-dangerous-iskander-m-ballistic-missiles-are-18991>.

Putin shared his concerns over the United States' aversion to a legally binding agreement on the issue. He stressed that while the West continued to pledge that the system was not focused against Russia, when Moscow suggested the signing of "some trifling legal piece of paper, that would say that these systems are not directed against [Russia] . . . [the] American partners have turned down [the] proposal" and elaborated that this begs the question: "why do you refuse to sign anything if you believe this is not directed against us?" Putin then stated that as long as the Western continues deploy those systems in Europe, Russia would have to take countermeasures. He concluded by saying that Russia would remain patient and open for negotiations but it would take needed measures "to guarantee the security of the Russian people" (President of Russia 2014b).

Despite the Russian objections, the U.S. continued to develop the BMD by activating elements in Romania in May 2015. The Russian president's spokesman Peskov said in response "we have been saying right from when this story started that our experts are convinced that the deployment of the ABM [anti-ballistic missile] system poses a certain threat to the Russian Federation" (Kramer 2016). A senior official from Russian Foreign Ministry characterized it as a "part of the military and political containment of Russia" (Emmott 2016).

The U.S. announced that the next step towards improvement of their BMD would be the deployment of elements of the system in Poland. Moscow responded through secretary of the Security Council Nikolay Patrushev, who said, "we know for sure that the global system of missile defense systems is directed against Russia and China" (Sputnik 2015a). The Russian reaction came in November 2016 when Moscow announced the intent to deploy air defense and Iskander-M systems in Kaliningrad.

Viktor Ozerov, chair of the Federation Council Committee for Defense and Security, justified the decision of Moscow by saying that “as a response to such threats [U.S. BMD system], we will have to strengthen our aerospace defense in this area and use additional forces and means to cover the respective objectives and control points” (Kommersant 2016).

Evolution of the Russian national security documents

The final step of the analysis will be the discussion of the evolution of the Russian national security documents and the way that they replicated the shifts in the Russia-NATO relations. The increased friction between Russia and the West has certainly been reflected in the Russian Military Doctrine and the National Security Strategy since 1990. In order to meet the changing security environment, Russia adopted four versions each of the Military Doctrine and the National Security Strategy since 1990.

Russia adopted a basic military doctrine called Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation for the first time in November 1993. The doctrine outlined the different aspects of the threat to Russia. One of the sections was “basic existing and potential sources of external military danger” to Russia. This part of the doctrine identified ten external military dangers. Two of them were directly related to the topic of this thesis. The first was “the expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the interests of the Russian Federation’s military security.” The second was “the possibility of strategic stability being undermined as a result of the violation of international accords in the sphere of arms limitation and reduction and of the qualitative

and quantitative buildup of armaments by other countries” (Russian Federation Security Council 1993).

In 1997, Russia made its next step in the development of the national security documents. In December, the Russian president signed the first National Security Concept known as Russian Federation National Security Blueprint. The security concept offered a more precise version of the text of the military doctrine concerning the expansion of military blocs. This time the Russians were much more specific and in the text of the Russian security concept, clearly stated that “the prospect of NATO expansion to the East is unacceptable to Russia since it represents a threat to its national security.” However, in the analysis part of the document Moscow concluded that the main threats to Russia remained the internal ones (President of Russia 1997).

This document was updated in 2000. The revised version of the National Security Concept identified as two of “the fundamental threats” to the Russian security “the strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO’s eastward expansion” and “the possible emergence of foreign military bases and major military presences in the immediate proximity of the Russian borders” (President of Russia 2000b).

The same year Russia revised its basic provisions for military doctrine and adopted its first National Military Doctrine. Consistent with preceding strategy documents, it defined the “expansion of military blocs and alliances” towards its borders as a threat to military security. Another external threat to the Russian military security identified in the military doctrine of 2000, was “the creation (buildup) of groups of troops (forces) leading to the violation of the existing balance of forces, close to the Russian

Federation's state border and the borders of its allies or on the seas adjoining their territories." It also identified a new threat to security, "attempts to ignore (infringe) the Russian Federation's interests in resolving international security problems, and to oppose its strengthening as one influential center in a multipolar world." Moscow characterized "the violation by certain states of international treaties and agreements in the sphere of arms limitation and disarmament" as destabilizing factor for the military-political situation (President of Russia 2000c).

Russia revised and updated the National Security Concept and renamed it the "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020" in May 2009. As was apparent, the strategy was developed as a guide for the next ten and a half years. The revised document identified as a threat to the national security of Russia the "unilateral formation of global missile defense system." It also highlighted that the suspension of international treaties on the limitation of armaments would have negative consequences for Russian national security. This time the enlargement of NATO was not explicitly described as an existential threat to Russian security. Yet, the security concept reaffirmed the Moscow's opposition to the enlargement of the Alliance. It stated that the leading factor in relations with NATO would remain the "unacceptability [*nepriemlost'*] of Russia to the plans for movement of the Alliance's military infrastructure to its borders." At the same time, it expressed the Russia's readiness to develop relations with NATO following the principles of "equality" and "respect for Russia's interests" (President of Russia 2009).

In February 2010, Russia revised its Military Doctrine for the third time. It repeated many of the existing and largely followed the same principles. A major point

was the distinction between the terms “military danger” and “military threat”¹⁴. Based on these characteristics the factors identified in 2000 as “threats” would be called “military dangers” in the 2010 revision. The text of the 2010 doctrine was much clearer about the enlargement of NATO and its structures. The doctrine identified as a major external military danger to Russia “the desire to endow the force potential of [NATO] . . . and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc.” Moscow remained consistent and with minor alteration in the wording stated that “the deployment (buildup) of troop contingents of foreign states (groups of states) on the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies and also in adjacent waters” was another source of military danger to Russia. Moscow dropped the text from 2000 which identified the attempts to ignore Russia’s security interests as a security threat. However, it added another major point to the list of hazards: “the creation and deployment of strategic missile defense systems undermining global stability and violating the established correlation of forces in the nuclear-missile sphere . . . and the deployment of strategic nonnuclear precision weapon systems.” Moscow altered its perception of the violation of the arms control treaties. The 2010 military doctrine characterized “the violation of international accords by individual states, and also noncompliance with previously

¹⁴ Military danger-a state of interstate or intrastate relations characterized by an aggregation of factors capable in certain conditions of leading to the emergence of a military threat. Military threat-a state of interstate or intrastate relations characterized by the real possibility of the outbreak of a military conflict between opposing sides and by a high degree of readiness on the part of a given state (group of states) or separatist (terrorist) organizations to utilize military force (armed violence).

concluded international treaties in the field of arms limitation and reduction” as a danger to Russian security (President of Russia 2010b).

The next revision of the Russian Military Doctrine came in December 2014. Moscow remained consistent in its evaluation of the potential military dangers to its security. The revision from 2014 almost repeated the “main external military dangers” from 2010: NATO and its enlargement towards the Russian borders, violations of international agreements on the restriction and reduction of armaments, and the deployment of missile defense systems and precision weapons. However, Moscow changed its perception of the attitude and capabilities of the Alliance. In 2010, Russia described NATO enlargement and its military build-up as “desire” where in 2014 it characterized it as a fulfilled action. The 2014 doctrine poses as a danger to national security the “capacity power potential [of NATO] . . . the approach of military infrastructure countries - members of NATO to the borders of the Russian Federation, including through further expansion of the block” (President of Russia 2014c).

On December 31, 2015, Vladimir Putin signed a Presidential Edict with which he approved the revised National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation. Most of the concepts in the document are not new and they restate past Russian standpoints. A noticeable shift is observed concerning NATO. According to the strategy, “the buildup of the military potential of [NATO] . . . the galvanization of the bloc countries’ military activity, the further expansion of the alliance, and the location of its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders are creating *a threat to national security* [emphasis added].” Russia demonstrated that it is still concerned about the deployment of “strategic nonnuclear precision weapon systems” and U.S. missile defense system. The

document restated the Russian position that relations with NATO would be dictated by “the unacceptability [for Russia] of the alliance’s increased military activity and the approach of its military infrastructure toward Russia’s borders, [and] the building of a missile-defense system.” Moscow restated its readiness for “the development of relations with NATO based on equality for the purpose of strengthening general security in the Euro-Atlantic region. The depth and content of such relations [would] be determined by the readiness of the alliance to take account of the interests of the Russian Federation when conducting military-political planning” (President of Russia 2015).

Another revision of the Russian National Military is expected to be made public in the near future. Major General Sergei Chvarkov announced that the military doctrine is still under development because its text needs to be nested with the latest Russian National Security Strategy (Zvezda 2016).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The primary focus of this research was the examination of a possible relation between commitments made in the period 1989-1990 during the German reunification negotiations and the current diplomatic and military friction between the U.S./NATO and the Russian Federation.

This chapter will provide the author's analysis and conclusions based on the evidence presented in the preceding chapter. The discussion will address the secondary research questions and thus will eventually provide an answer to the primary research question. The final part of this chapter will also offer recommendations for further studies.

The evidence in the previous chapter demonstrates that during the negotiations over the German unification, the U.S. and West German officials made certain verbal commitments to the Soviet Union concerning the future enlargement of NATO. Due to diplomatic mastery and the use of carefully selected words by the Western leaders, even today the meaning behind these commitments is a topic of discussion. The author's analysis of the data resulted in his conclusion that both the U.S. and West Germany saw the reunification of Germany as their primary goal. During the bilateral meeting in Washington on February 2, 1990, they both decided to use variations of Genscher's Tutzing formula to ease the initial Soviet opposition to the unification and to bring Moscow to the negotiating table. At that point, in the period February 7-10, 1990, Baker,

Kohl, and Genscher used the concept of no NATO enlargement in a broader geographical meaning, beyond the boundaries of East Germany, during negotiations with the Soviet leadership. Once the Soviets had demonstrated willingness to compromise on their opposition to the unification, the West altered its position in order to achieve its secondary goal, the membership of unified Germany in NATO. This new concept was negotiated between Bush and Kohl in Camp David on February 24-25, 1990. Parallel with the alteration of the wording of their verbal commitments, the U.S. and West German leaders implemented the concept of monetary stimulation to the Soviet Union in order to achieve both their primary and secondary goals. The new concept was communicated to Gorbachev by U.S. officials in February and May 1990 and by Kohl in July 1990. As its second step, the West narrowed its commitments not to enlarge NATO only to the territory of the GDR.

The commitments made prior to the “2+4” forum were verbal and with no legal application, but they led to the establishment of this negotiating forum. The only legal agreement was the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, which de facto answered the Soviet concerns announced by Gorbachev in July 1990. The author concludes that even if the West had made any commitments not to enlarge NATO beyond the territory of unified Germany, they had taken place early in the negotiations. After reaching their primary goal, the West deftly went back on their promises. The Soviets, on their part, did not argue against this alteration of the commitments in time and seemed to be satisfied with the text of the Treaty on the Final Settlement. The analysis of the negotiations also demonstrates that one of the major reasons for the Soviet opposition to

the German unification and the membership of united Germany in NATO was the security implications that these acts might force on Moscow.

The understanding of the commitments was the next main point of the research. Based on the collected data, the author decided to elaborate Shifrinson`s conclusion from it “depends on who is being asked” (Shifrinson 2016, 7) to “it depends on who is being asked and when.” Despite the inconsistency in the statements made by both Matlock and Gorbachev over the years the author concludes, based on the most recent evidence, that the Soviet Union`s understanding of the commitments was in line with the one of the West. Both sides understood them, as they were applicable to the territory of GDR only, which is visible by the most recent statements made by NATO, Shevardnadze, Gorbachev, Baker, and Matlock. Shevardnadze`s consistent assertion of this understanding, and Gorbachev`s arrival at it after some prevarication over the years, offer the strongest evidence for this conclusion.

The analysis of the understanding of the commitments once again confirms the aforementioned author`s conclusion that, throughout the negotiations, the U.S. officials intentionally withdrew their initial broader commitment for no NATO enlargement to the east and altered their assurances to the Soviet Union by narrowing them down to the territory of GDR only. That is made apparent by Baker`s statement cited in the article “The Anatomy of Misunderstanding” in 1997.

The enlargement of NATO to the east was not an issue until 1993. Since then Russia has consistently opposed the eastward enlargement of NATO during the presidencies of Yeltsin, Putin, and Medvedev. The objections to the enlargement have been consistent but not very strong and remained on a diplomatic level until 2007. The

Russian arguments were based on the security implications they perceived that the expanding infrastructure of the Alliance could create for Moscow. Yeltsin first made a statement about alleged violation of commitments made by NATO in the period 1989-1990 in September 1993. Primakov repeated the argument in 1997 when NATO invited Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to become members of the Alliance. Moscow maintained its opposition to the enlargement of NATO throughout the years; however, it did not resurrect the argument of “broken promises” until 2006. Since then it has remained one of the main Russian arguments against the enlargement of the Alliance and has been repeated numerous times by Putin, Lavrov, and Medvedev.

At the same time, the Russians were seeking to deepen the dialogue and strengthen the ties with the West. Russia also demonstrated readiness to compromise on the issue of NATO enlargement if Moscow was included in the decision-making process or even became a member of the Alliance. The readiness of Russia to become a member of NATO was announced by both Vice President Rutskoi in 1991 and Putin in 2000. Russia showed some understanding about former Warsaw Pact members joining NATO; although, in 1996, Yeltsin described the membership of former Soviet states and the Baltic states in particular as unacceptable and as a direct threat to Russia. His statement was echoed in 2004 by officials from the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense. The Russian military and diplomatic reaction against the enlargement of NATO increased gradually with the approach of NATO installations and troops closer to their borders reaching its apogee with the operation in Crimea in 2014.

The West has attempted to answer the Russian concerns by providing different forums and platforms for dialogue and cooperation over the years. Partnership for Peace

and the PJC were designed to give Russia the feeling of having special status in NATO security decision-making. However, they gave Russia the right to voice an opinion but not the right to veto. This somewhat diminished the Russian role in the decision-making and enhanced their feeling of being marginalized. The adaptation of the CFE Treaty dispelled some of the Russian fears, even though it remained inadequate because it had not been ratified by some of the new NATO members. It resulted in Russia's unilateral suspension of the implementation of CFE Treaty in 2007. The NRC was a successful forum for discussions and coordination on some issues of mutual interest to Russia and NATO throughout the years. However, it did not succeed in providing a working platform for consensus building on some of the main security issues: the enlargement of NATO, ratification of the adapted CFE Treaty, and the deployment of NATO troops in the Baltics. The author concludes that despite the attempts to meet the Russian concerns, the West did not successfully integrate Moscow in NATO decision-making and responded with negligence to the Russian appeals for maintaining the balance of armament envisioned in the CFE Treaty.

The author further concludes that Moscow identified three main sources of threat caused by NATO enlargement. First, is the perceived indifference of the West to Russian security concerns relating to European security. The second source of threat for Moscow is the perceived tendency to increase the number of deployed NATO troops in the vicinity of the Russian borders. Despite the fact that this approach was described by NATO as defensive in nature, it triggered in the Russians the so-called security

dilemma¹⁵ that they believe required them to take countermeasures. That was made clear with the build-up of four divisions that Moscow attributes to the need to respond to the increased presence of NATO troops in Eastern Europe. The last and most recent perceived threat is the deployment of BMD systems on the territory of new NATO member states. Both Russia and the West attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to develop a solution to this concern. Russia used the argument of the Western BMD defense to partially justify the operation in Crimea and to legitimize the deployment of Iskander-M missiles in Kaliningrad.

All three perceived sources of threat to Russian national security underpin their concepts of national security and military doctrine. The analysis demonstrates that, since its establishment, the Russian Federation has identified the expansion of foreign military blocs toward its borders as a security threat. Moscow gradually modified the texts of their national security documents over the years, in line with the approach of NATO to their borders. It finally reached the point where all three previously stated consequences of NATO enlargement were identified as threats to the national security of the Russian Federation.

Taking into consideration the answers to the secondary questions, the author will provide his answer to the primary research question: Did commitments made by the United States or West Germany during negotiations over the German reunification in

¹⁵ The security dilemma, also known as the spiral model, is a term, which describes a situation in international politics in which actions taken by a state intended to increase its defensive capabilities, can lead other states to treat them as offensive in nature. It can result in increased friction and even armed conflict (Jervis 1976).

1989-1990 shape the current friction between the United States/NATO and Russia? The short answer is: No, the commitments made in 1989-1990 do not shape the current friction between the West and the Russian Federation. The real source of tension is not even the enlargement of NATO as such. It is the current and potential NATO membership of former Soviet states and deployment of NATO infrastructure and troops on their soil because of their geographical location in immediate proximity to the Russian borders. The author's argument is that Russia has continuously appealed for a dialogue with NATO and demonstrated willingness to compromise with enlargement. Nevertheless, the enlargement of the Alliance could not threaten their security; and NATO troops, infrastructure, and BMD close to the Russian borders would be identified as a threat to the security of the Russian Federation. When Russians felt that their voice had not been taken into consideration, Moscow decided to react using different means. Moscow successfully utilized the ambiguity of the commitments made over the German unification to legitimize and rationalize their counteractions against the perceived security threats posed by the enlargement of NATO. All this contributed to the increased tension between the Russian Federation and the West.

Recommendations for further research

The nature of the problem prompts additional research in several areas. Given the limitations the researcher faced in completing this thesis, additional primary source research, drawing on declassified records from the U.S., Germany and Russia, would likely shed more light on internal deliberations and intentions of key actors in the process of negotiating Germany's reunification.

One area for further research could be focused on how the internal political environment and the role of Politburo affected the Soviet position and attitude during the negotiations on the German unification in 1989-1990. Another area of research, which will provide additional clarity to the problem, could discuss how the capacity of Russia's instruments of national power¹⁶ have been affecting Russian reaction to the tranches of NATO enlargement. It would also be worthwhile to examine other "commitments" that might have affected the U.S./NATO-Russia relationship, such as the so-called Istanbul Commitments Russia and other states assumed when they agreed to the Agreement on the Adaptation of the CFE Treaty in 1999. Delays in implementation and non-implementation by Russia of commitments vis-à-vis Georgia and Moldova, for example, have been a source of tension in the relationship. The current project also prompts further research on the Russian military actions in Ukraine and Georgia and to what extent said actions are in response to the enlargement of NATO. The last area would provide more clarity to the Russian approach against the enlargement of NATO in the economic domain. Further research could discuss to what extent the accession of Russia in the World Trade Organization is related to the enlargement of NATO and whether it has any effect on it.

¹⁶ Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* identifies the instruments of national power as diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff 2013).

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