

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL Monterey, California



## THESIS

**NATO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS:  
OPPORTUNITIES AND OBSTACLES**

by

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June 2002

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the impact of the U.S.-led campaign against terrorism since 11 September 2001 on relations between Russia and NATO. This campaign has provided opportunities to increase cooperation and enhance Russian interactions with NATO's political structure. The thesis also explores the challenges that must be overcome to form a more constructive partnership. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, international terrorism has become a topic of global concern, challenging existing international security structures. Within this context, the prospects for further NATO-Russia cooperation in building a new Euro-Atlantic security structure have dramatically improved. Areas of NATO-Russia cooperation in the war on terrorism include increased economic interactions, shared intelligence, improved military-to-military exchanges, and enhanced institutional arrangements. The May 2002 adoption of an "at 20" framework may bring Russia and NATO together as equal partners in selected areas of common interest while preserving the Alliance's prerogative to act independently. Despite the new optimistic atmosphere, however, many factors could affect the prospects for future cooperation. These include the conflict in Chechnya, politics in the Balkans, Russian behavior regarding WMD and missile proliferation, and Russia's non-strategic nuclear forces (NSNF).

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. THE NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP: 1991-2001, ORIGINS OF COOPERATION AND ANTAGONISM.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. NATO’S TRANSFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH RUSSIA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. NATO ENLARGEMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>C. THE KOSOVO CRISIS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>D. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>III. 11 SEPTEMBER 2001 AND NATO-RUSSIA COOPERATION IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>A. PUTIN’S DECISION AND THE NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH NATO.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>B. JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PUTIN’S DECISION .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1. Mutual Strategic Interests.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2. The War in Chechnya.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3. Economic Support.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>C. FOUNDATIONS FOR NATO-RUSSIA COOPERATION IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1. Increased Economic Cooperation.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2. Shared Intelligence, Broader Diplomacy, and Military Cooperation...23</b>	
<b>D. STRENGTHENING RUSSIAN COOPERATION WITH NATO INSTITUTIONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>E. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>IV. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES TO COOPERATION.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>A. CHECHNYA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE CAUCASUS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>B. THE BALKANS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>C. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND MISSILE PROLIFERATION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>D. RUSSIA’S NON-STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES AND ARMS CONTROL .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>E. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>V. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>43</b>

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the impact of the U.S.-led “war on terrorism” since 11 September 2001 on relations between Russia and NATO. The “war on terrorism” has provided opportunities to increase cooperation and enhance Russian interactions with NATO’s political structure. The thesis also explores the challenges that must be overcome to form a more constructive partnership.

Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, the opportunities to fundamentally alter the existing security environment in Europe and create a more cooperative relationship between NATO and Russia have been made possible by moves on both sides. Using the common fight against terrorism as a basis for further cooperation, NATO and Russia have the opportunity to transform what has at times been an almost adversarial relationship. Such opportunities are rare, and this makes an analysis of the challenges facing the relationship of great importance and interest. Greater understanding of the many variables affecting the NATO-Russia relationship can help facilitate the development of more constructive interactions.

International terrorism has now become an obvious topic of global concern, and it has challenged existing regional and international security structures. Broader cooperation and stronger relationships between states and their security alliances and institutions are needed to counter the shadowy new threat posed by global terror networks. These processes are affecting many relationships, including that between NATO, the central transatlantic security alliance, and the Russian Federation. The changes in the international security environment since the attacks on the United States have dramatically increased the prospects for further NATO-Russian cooperation in building a new European security structure.

In October 2001, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his desire to cultivate a more cooperative relationship with NATO and the West. This raises the question of the form that increased cooperation between the Alliance and Russia may

take. Will NATO's attempts to strengthen the relationship be successful, or will they lead to further disillusionment and disappointment for the Allies and the Russians?

Despite the new optimistic atmosphere generated by Putin and NATO representatives, including Secretary General Lord Robertson, many factors in the relationship could affect the prospects for future cooperation. Because the Allies could not in the foreseeable future fully integrate Russia in the Alliance without undermining its cohesiveness and its ability to act in a crisis, the concept is one of closer cooperation in selected areas. The challenges arise in considering how Russia and NATO could work more closely together without hindering the pursuit of the Alliance's purposes.

This thesis explores the opportunities to create a more robust and constructive NATO-Russia partnership as well as obstacles to this new cooperation in the wake of the terror attacks on the United States. It provides a qualitative analysis of selected issues based on primary and secondary sources.

Chapter II reviews the historical context and framework of the analysis based on the evolution of the NATO-Russia relationship from the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-1991 to 2001 before the attacks of 11 September. This review attempts to explain the historical origins of cooperation and antagonism between Russia and NATO from the early attempts to bring Russia into the Euro-Atlantic security community through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), later to be restructured and replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) to Russia's fears and concerns over NATO enlargement and the divisive crisis over Kosovo in 1999.

Chapter III discusses the nature of the post-11 September NATO-Russia partnership and the factors that led to President Putin's decision to seek a closer partnership. Foundations for cooperation such as increased economic interactions, shared intelligence, improved military-to-military exchanges, and enhanced institutional arrangements are then examined.

Chapter IV focuses on the obstacles and challenges to cooperation that continue to complicate NATO-Russia relations despite the new opportunities to create a strengthened partnership and the benefits that this increased cooperation could provide. These issues

include the conflict in Chechnya and other Russian operations in the Caucasus, political order in the Balkans, Russian behavior regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile proliferation, and Russia's non-strategic nuclear forces (NSNF).

Chapter V offers conclusions and discusses the future of the NATO-Russia relationship and the prospects for a lasting security framework in Europe.

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## **II. THE NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP: 1991-2001, ORIGINS OF COOPERATION AND ANTAGONISM**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the historical context of the evolution of the NATO-Russia relationship during the 1990s and the period preceding the attacks of 11 September 2001, providing a framework of analysis for the NATO-Russia partnership that has developed since the attacks. This chapter begins with a review of NATO's transformation after the end of the Cold War, including its decision to seek cooperation with Russia and other former adversaries. This process of cooperation led to the policy of NATO enlargement.

NATO enlargement and Russia's various responses to it over the course of the decade have been central in the evolution of the relationship. This evolution has transpired through a series of measures such as Partnership for Peace (PfP), open to all former adversaries and other states in the Euro-Atlantic region, and the formation of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) through the NATO-Russia Founding Act. NATO has sought to assuage Russian fears and concerns, and has tried to conduct its policies without causing serious political rifts with the Russian Federation. By the end of the 1990s, the process of NATO enlargement and engagement in Central and Eastern Europe coupled with the rapid decline of Russian power and influence left relations increasingly strained despite the avenues for cooperation that had been created. This strain in relations was further intensified during NATO's intervention in the Kosovo conflict in 1999. The combination of Russian distrust over NATO's intentions in enlargement, the Russian perception of increasing marginalization and disregard for Russian interests, and Russian opposition to NATO's Kosovo operation threatened to undermine the prospects for further cooperation as the twenty-first century dawned.

### **A. NATO'S TRANSFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH RUSSIA**

The North Atlantic Alliance guarded Western Europe from Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces and invasion for over forty years. It did so based on the collective defense commitment formulated in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. NATO's very existence

was based on countering the threat from the east through a combination of conventional and nuclear capabilities for deterrence and defense. Without the external threat posed by the Soviet Union, the very existence of the alliance would be called into question. The rapid and surprising fall of the communist regimes in the Soviet bloc pushed this issue to the forefront in 1989-1991. If NATO was to continue to be relevant in this new, evolving security environment, it would have to change.

Since the unraveling of the Soviet empire in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the North Atlantic Alliance has undertaken a dramatic process of transformation in response to the changing world. No longer facing a military threat from the Soviet Union, NATO began to reassess its role within a radically altered European security environment.<sup>1</sup> Because of this reassessment of the missions and roles of the Alliance, the 1990s were a period of transition. Without the threat of attack from the Soviet Union, NATO's primary mission of collective defense seemed to be fading into irrelevance.

The transformation during the 1990s brought NATO from an orientation focused mainly on collective defense to one with additional new missions within the broader context of what the Allies called "cooperative security" across the Euro-Atlantic region. One of the most important and visible of these new missions is cooperation with former adversaries and other non-NATO nations.<sup>2</sup> This new mission has included institutions such as Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The latter eventually was restructured and replaced by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. NATO enlargement was also a natural outgrowth of this process of cooperation. At the Alliance's 1997 Madrid Summit, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were invited to join NATO.

This process has led to the engagement, both direct and indirect, of the Russian Federation. From very early on, NATO's policies were often ambiguous and ill-defined. According to a British analyst, Jonathan Eyal,

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<sup>1</sup> David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 72.

The alliance tried to portray the process of enlargement as a measured operation in which the credentials of each candidate state were properly examined in an impartial way. In fact, NATO's enlargement was a haphazard affair and the semblance of unanimity which member states wished to project was shattered just when this unanimity mattered most.<sup>3</sup>

This left Russia guessing about NATO's intentions as it dealt with its own difficult period of imperial withdrawal and international weakness. As the communist regimes of Eastern Europe collapsed one after another, a political vacuum quickly developed in the region. The West feared that some countries in Eastern Europe might fall into a period of violence and lawlessness. Engagement was needed to promote democratization and cooperation with Western institutions. The initial Western responses to Eastern Europe (including the NACC and PFP) would do much to shape the process of NATO enlargement in the future, affecting the policies and attitudes of East European, Russian, and Western governments.<sup>4</sup>

## **B. NATO ENLARGEMENT**

While the West's initial focus was on dealing with the unification of Germany, Eastern Europeans began expressing their desires for integration with the West on all levels. Even Russia articulated long-term goals of integration with NATO in 1991.<sup>5</sup> On 23 December 1991, Boris Yeltsin announced that Russia had a long-term policy goal of joining the Alliance. This would not be the last time high-ranking Russian officials would make similar statements. For example, such statements were made in December 1993 by Boris Yeltsin, and in October 1996 by Ivan Rybkin.<sup>6</sup> Whether these comments were merely symbolic gestures or represented an effort to undermine the role of the Alliance as a collective defense organization is debatable. However, it was obvious to all that

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Eyal, "NATO's Enlargement: Anatomy of a Decision," *International Affairs Vol. 73,4*, October 1997, p. 695.

<sup>4</sup> Eyal, p. 697.

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," in Mark Webber, ed., *Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation*, (London: Macmillan/St Martin's Press, 2000), p. 48. See "Yeltsin Appeal to North Atlantic Cooperation Council on NATO Membership," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 23 December 1991.

<sup>6</sup> David S. Yost, "The New NATO and Collective Security," *Survival*, Summer 1998, p. 158, note 22.

Russian integration into NATO would fundamentally alter the function of the Alliance, and the concept was not taken seriously by most observers in the West at this time. The German Defense Minister Volker R  he stated in 1994, “Russia cannot be integrated, neither into the European Union nor into NATO...if Russia were to become a member of NATO it would blow NATO apart...”<sup>7</sup>

According to Jonathan Eyal, the Western response to Eastern Europe’s desire for integration was luke-warm at best: “the West, as always, counselled patience; it even suggested that the old Warsaw Pact should be maintained, supposedly because this made the administration of arms control agreements easier.”<sup>8</sup> In the realm of security issues, the Western governments advised the Eastern Europeans in the early 1990s that they should adopt a set of “interlocking institutions.” NATO’s contribution to this process was the NACC.

The NACC was established in December 1991 to bring together all members of the Alliance with nine Central and Eastern European countries in a consultative forum.<sup>9</sup> After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the NACC was expanded to include the former Soviet republics constituting the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This forum represented NATO’s first attempt to create a formal dialogue with its former adversaries, and it was “conceived as a means to overcome the divisive legacy of the Cold War.”<sup>10</sup> This dialogue was achieved through a series of seminars, conferences and workshops that discussed a wide range of issues, including peacekeeping, civil emergency planning, defense budgeting, and interoperability issues.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the open and constructive dialogue generated through the NACC, its limitations soon became apparent as a broader level of engagement was sought throughout the former Soviet bloc. With the crisis in the former Yugoslavia demonstrating the strength and importance of NATO, calls for more robust forms of engagement began to take shape. First proposed by US Secretary of Defense Les Aspin in

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<sup>7</sup> Volker R  he as quoted in Yost, “The New NATO and Collective Security,” p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> Eyal. p. 699.

<sup>9</sup> *NATO Handbook* (Brussels, NATO Office of Information and Press: 2001), p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 96

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

October 1993, PfP was founded in January 1994 as a vehicle to promote cooperation in security matters between the Alliance and individual states wishing to participate.<sup>12</sup> The North Atlantic Council declaration of 11 January 1994 stated, “The Partnership will expand and intensify political and military cooperation throughout Europe, increase stability, diminish threats to peace, and build strengthened relationships by promoting the spirit of practical cooperation and commitment to democratic principles that underpin our Alliance.”<sup>13</sup> The PfP Framework Document included the following functions to be performed by each participant to fulfill the objectives of the program:

- a. facilitation of transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes;
- b. ensuring democratic control of defence forces;
- c. maintenance of the capability and readiness to contribute, subject to constitutional considerations, to operations under the authority of the UN and/or the responsibility of the CSCE;
- d. the development of cooperative military relations with NATO, for the purpose of joint planning, training, and exercises in order to strengthen their ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian operations, and others as may subsequently be agreed;
- e. the development, over the longer term, of forces that are better able to operate with those of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance.<sup>14</sup>

Founded as a vehicle to promote cooperation in security matters between the Alliance and individual states wishing to participate, PfP was in fact a compromise solution to engagement.<sup>15</sup> It made meaningful and constructive individual partnerships possible, within the constructs of Individual Partnership Programs (IPPs), but it stopped short of incorporating the new partner states as full members of the Alliance. While PfP

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<sup>12</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p.97.

<sup>13</sup> North Atlantic Council declaration, January 11, 1994, par. 14. [www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Partnership for Peace: Framework Document, par. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, p. 52.

was never intended to be a program to admit new members into the Alliance, it was clear to most parties that it could serve to smooth and facilitate the path to membership for some partners.

Led by a resurgence of nationalistic forces and continued economic decline, a more confrontational policy began to take root in Russia.<sup>16</sup> Many Russians hoped that NATO would be regarded as a relic of the Cold War, to be replaced by new Pan-European security institutions, and continued to view the alliance as a genuine military threat to Russia's national security.<sup>17</sup> Russians presented several arguments against enlargement.<sup>18</sup> Many Russians argued that it would create a new dividing line between Russia and the rest of Europe, which would isolate the country politically and economically. Many Russians also believed that enlargement was a betrayal of the promises made by the West over the terms of German reunification. Many Russian politicians have claimed that German Chancellor Helmut Kohl promised Russia during the negotiations for reunification that NATO would not expand if a reunited Germany was allowed to remain within the Alliance.<sup>19</sup> Russians have also asserted that the West betrayed Russia when it reneged on an unwritten agreement made by President George Bush with Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 that guaranteed that the West would not exploit Russia's weakness for its own profit.<sup>20</sup> Moderate Russian politicians feared that NATO enlargement into Eastern Europe would inflame radical nationalist elements in Russian politics, and would propel these nationalists and radicals into power. This fear most vividly manifested itself after the unexpected strong performance of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's "Liberal Democratic" party in the December 1993 national elections. Thereafter Russian nationalist, conservative and radical views hostile to the West could no longer be ignored.

Caroline Kennedy-Pipe asserts that "Moscow claimed PfP represented a success for Russia for it showed that western capitals had taken into account Russian objections

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> Eyal, p. 699.

<sup>20</sup> Eyal, p. 698. For further discussion of these Russian assertions, see Yost, *NATO Transformed*, pp. 135-6.

to the expansion of NATO.”<sup>21</sup> Russians were nonetheless still suspicious, however, with regard to NATO’s intentions for future enlargement. Some Russians saw PfP not as a means of permanently postponing enlargement, but as a foundation whereby some states could develop closer links with the alliance and eventually join. These suspicions and mistrust of NATO delayed the cultivation of a more cooperative relationship. Russia postponed participation through its own Individual Partnership Program (IPP) until 1995.<sup>22</sup> Russian participation in PfP has nonetheless been minimal, limited mainly to non-military matters such as civil-emergency issues.<sup>23</sup> This low level of participation can be explained partly by Russian sentiment toward PfP typified by a statement made by Vladimir Lukin:

If the intention of this formula [PfP] is to defer the East European countries’ affiliation to NATO, ‘Partnership’ should be welcomed. If the intention is to anesthetize Russia for the period that its Eastern neighbors are being dragged into NATO, Russia’s refusal to undergo such anesthesia should be clearly and definitely stated.”<sup>24</sup>

Lukin’s comments reveal the basic misunderstanding about NATO enlargement shared by many Russians. Countries were not “being dragged into NATO,” but were eagerly seeking membership in the Alliance. Above all, the Alliance had not considered the enlargement process as directed in any way against Russia’s security interests.

In other respects, however, Russian suspicions and concerns were well-founded. PfP did not put to rest the issue of enlargement. Many Central and East European states did view PfP as a vehicle for movement toward full membership in the alliance. Military-to-military contacts and cooperation could facilitate the eventual integration of a partner state’s armed forces into the Alliance’s military structure. Despite Russian objections and proposals for alternative security structures, many East European states continued to push for membership in NATO.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 136.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Vladimir Lukin as quoted in Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 136.

<sup>25</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, p. 53.

Owing in part to such pressures, the United States began in 1993-1994 to openly endorse the principle of enlargement.<sup>26</sup> This process culminated at the July 1997 NATO Summit in Madrid when the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were formally invited to join the alliance. The path to enlargement was paved, however, by the signing of the “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security” between Russia and NATO in May 1997. The Founding Act established the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), which would serve as a consultative body between NATO and Moscow and which would be used to resolve disagreements. Russia was also invited to send an ambassador and liaison team to NATO headquarters in Brussels. Russians believed that Moscow was finally getting a means to influence the NATO decision-making process. The signing of the Act reflected a shift in Russian policy. Moscow began to concede the inevitability of NATO enlargement, but wished to gain as many concessions from NATO as possible.<sup>27</sup> While Moscow would accept NATO enlargement, it would draw a “red line” around former Soviet republics, precluding them from future membership. This Russian policy has increasingly led to confrontation over the prospective NATO membership of the Baltic states.

### **C. THE KOSOVO CRISIS**

Russia soon discovered the limits of the PJC’s utility during the Kosovo crisis in 1999. When the Rambouillet negotiations broke down in 1999 after a long period of Russian resistance to Western pressures on Belgrade to accept a settlement to the crisis, NATO’s military campaign began. Russia harshly denounced NATO’s use of force. Russian leaders were apparently more disturbed by the precedent that the action might create than motivated by concern for the Serbs. Russia failed to influence NATO’s decisions during the crisis, and Russians claim that Moscow was not even consulted through the PJC, merely informed of decisions already made.<sup>28</sup> Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov, an official in the Defense Ministry, stated, “NATO ha[d] negated the

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<sup>26</sup> Roland Dannreuther, “Escaping the Enlargement Trap in NATO-Russian Relations.” *Survival*, vol. 41, Winter 1999-2000, p. 152.

<sup>27</sup> Kennedy-Pipe, p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 60.



fundamental principles upon which Russia's relations with this bloc were based."<sup>29</sup> The Kosovo crisis strained NATO-Russian relations to new lows. Russia suspended its meager participation in PfP, recalled its representatives from NATO headquarters, and suspended the PJC.

Although a warming of NATO-Russian relations has occurred since early 2000, the balance between cooperation and confrontation has been unpredictable and in constant flux. Russian politicians have sought to balance popular anti-Western sentiments with Russia's need for Western aid and support. Understanding this balance, Russian officials have sought after every crisis to patch up relations with the West.<sup>30</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

NATO's efforts to develop an open and constructive relationship with Russia have been less than fully successful. NATO has courted Russian cooperation, but in Russian eyes the Alliance has often disregarded Russian concerns. NATO's efforts to bring East-Central and Southeastern Europe into the Euro-Atlantic security framework through PfP and (in selected cases) the more politically controversial means of enlargement have risked the alienation of Russia, which continues to view NATO suspiciously and as a potential threat to its national security. Bringing the former Warsaw Pact nations and potentially also former Soviet republics into NATO is intended to promote stability and to lay the foundations for security and prosperity throughout the Euro-Atlantic region in the Western view. In a widespread Russian view, however, this process threatens Russia with encirclement, isolation from the West, and an expansion of the Alliance's sphere of influence at Russia's expense.<sup>31</sup>

The first wave of post-Cold War NATO enlargement and the prospects for further rounds have left many Russians bitter. Furthermore, the NATO operation against Yugoslavia in 1999 did much to confirm Russian fears about NATO's true ambitions, raising greater obstacles to NATO-Russian cooperation and threatening to undo the progress developed through institutions such as PfP and the PJC.

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<sup>29</sup> Ivashov quoted in Kennedy-Pipe, p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> Dannreuther, p. 147.

<sup>31</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, p. 133.

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### **III. 11 SEPTEMBER 2001 AND NATO-RUSSIA COOPERATION IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM**

In the morning hours of September 11, 2001, two hijacked commercial jetliners slammed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City in an act that killed over 3,000 individuals. Another commandeered aircraft, as part of the coordinated attack, plowed into a wing of the Pentagon, killing 184 Department of Defense employees. Only the heroic actions of passengers in a fourth aircraft prevented yet another attack on another Washington D.C. landmark. These calculated and deliberate attacks sent shock waves around the world and signaled the presence of new dangers in the international security environment.

International terrorism has now been recognized as a global threat, challenging existing international security structures. In this new environment, broader cooperation and stronger relationships between states and alliances, including NATO, are needed to counter the shadowy new threat posed by global terror networks. The changed global political and security environments since the attacks on the United States have dramatically improved the prospects for greater NATO-Russian cooperation in building a new European security structure.

Visiting NATO headquarters in the wake of the attacks, as part of a two day summit organized by the European Union, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that Russia was prepared to reconsider its opposition to NATO enlargement including former republics of the Soviet Union in an effort to transform its security relationship with the West.<sup>32</sup> Putin stated:

If NATO takes on a different shade and is becoming a political organization, of course we would reconsider our position with regard to such expansion, if we are to feel involved in such processes. They keep saying that NATO is becoming more political than military. We are

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<sup>32</sup> William Drozdiak, "Putin Eases Stance on NATO Expansion, Closer Security Ties with West Pursued," *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2001.

looking at this and watching this process. If this is to be so, it would change things considerably.<sup>33</sup>

Putin also declared Russia's support and cooperation for the US war on global terror networks, to include thwarting terrorist financing, intelligence sharing and tracking WMD proliferation.<sup>34</sup>

These discussions placed Russia, long at the margins of Western security frameworks, firmly in the Western camp in the war against terrorism. In the optimistic mood of the moment, NATO Secretary General Robertson stated, "These discussions mark a major milestone in the NATO-Russia relationship. We have identified a number of new areas where NATO and Russia can work together."<sup>35</sup>

These statements could mark the beginning of a new era and usher in a level of unprecedented cooperation between Russia and NATO. Secretary General Robertson stated:

For some forty years NATO and Russia sat and glowered at each other, for another ten years we tip-toed around each other but now I believe that we are entering an era where substantial and practical cooperation is going to build a unique relationship between us.<sup>36</sup>

This cooperation could lead to a fundamental change in the European security environment, and it could eventually make way for some form of Russian integration with NATO. While not asking for immediate membership in the alliance, Putin did state that Russia should be a "primary NATO ally."<sup>37</sup> Neither Putin nor Robertson stated that they saw any reason why Russia should not be a member of NATO eventually.<sup>38</sup> This raises the question of the form the increased cooperation between the Alliance and Russia

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<sup>33</sup> Drozdiak, "Putin Eases Stance on NATO Expansion."

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Secretary General Lord Robertson, "NATO Speech: NATO SecGen & Russ. Pres. Putin," October 3, 2001, ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s0110003a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s0110003a.htm))

<sup>37</sup> Putin quoted in indirect discourse by John Newhouse, "A New Alliance Could Nudge Aside the Old" *The Washington Post*, November 4, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

may take. The recent decision to create a new Russia-NATO council “at 20” addresses this question.

In May 2002, the North Atlantic Council made the following announcement:

We welcome the decisive and substantial deepening of the NATO-Russia relationship, which marks an historic step towards the Alliance’s long-standing goal of building a secure, cooperative and democratic Euro-Atlantic area. We look forward to the approval this afternoon by the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council of the document on the creation of the NATO-Russia Council, where NATO member states and Russia will work as equal partners in areas of common interest, while preserving NATO’s prerogative to act independently. The document will be adopted and signed at the inaugural session of the Council, to be held at a Summit meeting of Heads of State and Government in Rome on 28 May. We are confident that the creation of the Council will lend new impetus and substance to our partnership with Russia, and make a substantial contribution to our common goal of a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe, as enshrined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.<sup>39</sup>

The exact working of this new structure in practice is nonetheless still unclear, and many critical questions remain unanswered. To what extent will Russia engage in important and substantial participation that goes beyond the limited achievements of the PJC? To what extent, if any, will Russia be granted meaningful decision-making powers in cooperation with the Alliance while remaining outside NATO? While there are more questions than answers for many of these issues of cooperation at this early stage, work has been underway to define answers since late 2001.<sup>40</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the effects of the September 2001 attacks on the NATO-Russia relationship. The chapter explores the factors behind Putin’s decision to form a strategic partnership with the West in the wake of the attacks and the prospects for a broader, more cooperative relationship between Russia and NATO.

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<sup>39</sup> Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council Held in Reykjavik on 14 May 2002, 14 May 2002, par. 11.

<sup>40</sup> “NATO Update: Proposals for closer NATO-Russia relations,” November 21, 2001. ([www.nato.int/docu/update/2001/1119/e1121a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2001/1119/e1121a.htm))

## A. PUTIN'S DECISION AND THE NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH NATO

In the hours after the attacks on the United States, Russian President Putin telephoned President Bush not only to offer his support and friendship, but also to inform the U.S. President that Russia was canceling military exercises planned in the Pacific.<sup>41</sup> These exercises would have involved strategic aircraft probing the outer edges of North American airspace. The cancellation of the exercise was significant because it allowed valuable North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) assets to be reallocated for the defense of the US homeland in response to the terrorist attacks.

Putin would be the first head of state to call Bush. On 11 and 12 September, the two discussed methods of cooperation in the combat against international terrorism.<sup>42</sup> A US official described these conversations as setting a radically different tone in relations with Russia: "I think there is a historic opportunity but it can be missed."<sup>43</sup> From these beginnings, Russia has embarked on a broad-based and dramatic effort to increase its cooperation with the West. This cooperation could transform Russia's relationship with the West, and it has already placed Russia firmly in the Western camp in the war against terrorism.

This represents a radical shift in Russian foreign policy. Despite various government declarations to the contrary, key elites in Russia have continued to view NATO as an adversary. Russian society has generally agreed in viewing NATO expansion as a threat to the country's security. While Putin made overtures to the West, suggesting broader Russian participation in European and Euro-Atlantic institutions in 2000 and 2001, his vision did not involve expanded Russian engagement with NATO, but new European political and security institutions in which Russia could be an equal member. On 3 September 2001, during a visit to Finland and just one week before the terrorist attacks, commenting on the possible inclusion of the Baltic states in the Alliance, Putin declared that NATO enlargement was a risky mistake and that the Alliance did not

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<sup>41</sup> Frederick Kempe, "Making the Most of the Russian Embrace," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, November 7, 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Unnamed U.S. official quoted in Henry Plater-Zyberk and Anne Aldis, "Russia's Reaction to the American Tragedy." *Conflict Studies Research Centre. Occasional Brief No 84*, September 20, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Kempe, "Making the Most of the Russian Embrace."

enhance the security of Europe. “Pushing NATO’s limits to Russia does not create a universal security in Europe, it does not solve any key issue in Europe.”<sup>44</sup>

Putin’s visits with leaders of the EU, NATO, and the United States since September 2001 have laid the foundation for further cooperation with the West and could alter the relationship between Russia and NATO. This could have a fundamental impact on the security and stability of Europe and perhaps the world. As NATO invoked the collective defense clause in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, Putin offered his support in waging the war against global terrorism. Putin stated in Houston on 15 November 2001, “We are prepared to expand cooperation with NATO and we are prepared to go as far as the Atlantic alliance is prepared to go.”<sup>45</sup> The forms of support offered include increased economic cooperation (with greater Western access to Russian oil and natural gas reserves), shared intelligence, diplomatic initiatives facilitating US access to Central Asia, military- to-military interactions, and enhanced Russian roles in cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance.

Putin made his bold overtures to the West in an adverse domestic political environment. Most Duma leaders were only partially supportive of joining the anti-terror coalition, while many elites involved with national security were hostile to the concept. 54 percent of the Russian public favored Russian neutrality, while 70 percent felt that Russia should deny American forces access to Central Asia, according to a public opinion poll.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Putin’s pro-Western stance threatens to enrage many in the Russian ruling elite. Sentiments within Russia’s elite circles have grown increasingly anti-Western in recent years as Russia has continued to struggle with its economic problems and with crime and corruption. Many Russians have blamed these problems on the West.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Paal Aasaether, “Putin Warns NATO expansion into Baltics “A Mistake,”” Agence France Presse, September 3, 2001.

<sup>45</sup> Peter Finn and Peter Baker, “NATO and Russia Reinventing Relationship.” *Washington Post*, November 15, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> James Kitfield, “Putin’s Leap of Faith,” *National Journal*, October 6, 2001.

<sup>47</sup> See Vladimir Shlapentokh, “Russian attitudes toward America: A split between the ruling class and the masses,” *World Affairs*, Summer 2001.

## **B. JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PUTIN'S DECISION**

### **1. Mutual Strategic Interests**

With Russian opinion less than fully supportive of increased cooperation with the West, why did Putin act in this manner? It appears that he acted in accordance with his interpretation of Russia's interests. First and most important are Russia's security interests. By siding with the United States and NATO, Russia gets help in countering Islamic militancy on its southern flank. Because the Russians lack the capability to eliminate the threat on their own, support for the American effort is consistent with Russian security interests.<sup>48</sup> Putin appears to have made the decision to place Russia's security policy in a firm Westward orientation. NATO Secretary General Robertson commented on Russia's decision to move toward NATO as follows:

I want to make it very clear that NATO and Russia are in partnership together for good, cool-headed reasons, because it's in the interest of Russia and the interest of NATO that we build that relationship. Russia wants to have a more secure and stable world outside and NATO wants a degree of predictability and stability in how it deals with Russia both now and into the future.<sup>49</sup>

### **2. The War in Chechnya**

Another reason for Putin's alignment of Russia with the West in the struggle against terrorism is that it helps to justify Russia's war in Chechnya and mutes Western criticism over Russian prosecution of the war.<sup>50</sup> Russia can now claim that it is fighting against a common enemy as it attempts to destroy the bands of international Islamic terrorists operating in Chechnya and beyond. This seemed to be working even as early as September 2001, when German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder began calling for a milder view of Russia's role in Chechnya: "Regarding Chechnya, there will be and must be a more differentiated evaluation in world opinion."<sup>51</sup> Some observers speculate that

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<sup>48</sup> Andrei Piontkovsky, "What Allies Does Today's Russia Need?" *The Russia Journal*, October 26-November 1, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Secretary General Lord Robertson, "NATO Press Conference," November 22, 2001, [www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011122b.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011122b.htm)

<sup>50</sup> Kempe and Kitfield.

<sup>51</sup> Schröder quoted in Steven Erlanger, "Schroder Urges Milder View of Moscow Role in Chechnya," *New York Times*, September 26, 2001.



Russia's possible decision to expand its military campaign to include the destruction of Chechen training camps in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge may be welcomed and supported by the West if it is coordinated with the Georgian government and possibly the US military. The deployment of US special forces to the region to train the Georgian military in counterinsurgency operations has highlighted the strategic importance the West is beginning to place on the region, which has fallen under scrutiny in the hunt for the remaining international terrorist bases of operations.<sup>52</sup>

### **3. Economic Support**

While Putin's overtures were not made on a quid pro quo basis, the implications of broader engagement with the West could manifest themselves in the economic sphere. Putin hopes to improve Russia's financial status by gaining some relief from foreign debt and faster entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) may be realized because of his policies.<sup>53</sup> Putin's meetings with EU officials resulted in promises of the acceleration of Russia's bid to join the WTO, a process that has been delayed for over a year.<sup>54</sup> Membership in the WTO would be highly valuable for Russia in its relations with the EU because the EU has emerged as Russia's key trading partner.<sup>55</sup>

## **C. FOUNDATIONS FOR NATO-RUSSIA COOPERATION IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

Putin has realized that these benefits can only be achieved through closer cooperation with the United States, its European allies, and NATO's Euro-Atlantic security structures. The events of 11 September 2001 presented him with an opportunity to bring Russia from the margins of Europe not only into the European mainstream as an important and productive player, but as a constructive member of the Euro-Atlantic community as well. According to Celeste A. Wallander of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, "Putin has changed the objective—he wants to be

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<sup>52</sup> See Alexander Goltz, "A Humanitarian Intervention," *Russia Journal*, Vol.5, No.6, February 22-28, 2002. According to Goltz, the US Ambassador to Georgia, Philip Remler, has stated that terrorists fleeing Afghanistan have entered the Pankisi Gorge and have linked up with the Chechen combatants.

<sup>53</sup> Kitfield, "Putin's Leap of Faith."

<sup>54</sup> Geoff Winestock, "Putin Appears to Get Ear of US, EU on Two Fronts-West is Receptive to Russia Regarding WTO Entry, Hears Ideas on NATO," *The Wall Street Journal*, 04 October 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

one of the Europeans cooperating with the United States. He and his advisors have concluded that's better than being on the outside."<sup>56</sup>

### **1. Increased Economic Cooperation**

As part of its cooperation with the West, Russia hopes to foster increased trade. To help achieve these ends, Russia has put itself in a position to exploit its vast oil and natural gas reserves and offer them as an alternative to reliance on resources in the Middle East. Producing one-tenth of the world's oil supply and one-third of its natural gas, Russia has become a critical exporter of energy resources and could function as a safer and more reliable partner than Middle Eastern states.<sup>57</sup> Russia, in fact, finds itself in the unique position of being able to offset Saudi Arabia's dominant position in the global energy market and could hypothetically displace OPEC as the most important energy supplier to the West. Through aggressive development of Russia's energy reserves resulting in an over one million barrel per day (mmd) increase since 1999, the Russian government has placed itself in a position to "assume a far more significant position in the world petroleum sector than ever before."<sup>58</sup> According to Edward L. Morse and James Richard:

Moscow's political leaders, as well as its corporate leaders in oil and gas, are portraying Russia's oil firms as stable sources of supply, willing to add output to the market to keep prices reasonable and thus revive the global economy. In the eyes of these leaders, the new geopolitics of energy can help Moscow gain both economically and politically. In economic terms, energy production lets Russia integrate itself into the industrialized West. In political terms, energy resources can be used to buttress Moscow's goal of becoming a key partner of the United States.<sup>59</sup>

Russia has increased its market share at OPEC's expense and it is increasingly resilient against market manipulation and price fixing by the cartel. With the building of major pipelines through the Caspian basin and the Transcaucasus, Russia's energy

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<sup>56</sup> Wallander quoted in Fin and Baker, "NATO and Russia Reinventing Relationship."

<sup>57</sup> Sabrina Tavernise and Birgit Brauer, "Russia Becoming an Oil Ally" *New York Times*, October 19, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> Edward L. Morse and James Richard, "The Battle for Energy Dominance," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, March/April 2002, p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

resources are now increasingly available to the West. Such an arrangement could promote a higher level of interdependence, and thereby help Russia gain closer ties with the EU, a goal it has been pursuing.<sup>60</sup> More extensive economic interactions with the West could translate into closer cooperation in other areas, including security.

## **2. Shared Intelligence, Broader Diplomacy, and Military Cooperation**

The most important aspects of Russia-NATO cooperation in the “war against terrorism” include diplomatic, intelligence, and military activities. The ability of American troops to use bases in Central Asia and to overfly Russian territory would be critical in any war effort in Afghanistan. Russian cooperation and diplomatic support in gaining access to bases in the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where thousands of US personnel have been stationed for both combat and non-combat operations, have been essential in the war effort.

Russian cooperation on the military front has been meaningful and unprecedented. In a 24 September 2001 television address, Putin offered military support for the US campaign, to include search and rescue operations, use of Russian airspace, and weapons transfers to Afghan opposition forces.<sup>61</sup> Russia has supplied the Afghan Northern Alliance many of its heavy weapons. Rumors of further Russian military assistance have persisted, including reports of the United States hiring experienced Russian mercenaries to fight in Afghanistan.<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps the most important component of Russian cooperation, however, has been the sharing of intelligence. During a 5 November 2001 visit by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to Russia, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov confirmed Russian cooperation in the intelligence field: “To a large extent, it [cooperation] concerns Russia’s use of special services and here I cannot comment any further.”<sup>63</sup> This intelligence has reportedly come in the form of more precise targeting information.<sup>64</sup> The

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<sup>60</sup> William Drozdiak, “Putin Eases Stance on NATO Expansion: Closer Security Ties with West Pursued.”

<sup>61</sup> Kitfield, “Putin’s Leap of Faith.”

<sup>62</sup> “Rumors of War” *Russia’s Week*. Vol VI, Issue 44, November 28, 2001. ([www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org))

<sup>63</sup> “Rumsfeld and Putin Praise Cooperation,” *Moscow Times*, November 5, 2001.

<sup>64</sup> Eric Schmitt and Steven Lee Myers, “US Escalating Efforts to Bomb Taliban Caves,” *New York Times*, November 6, 2001.

Russians have helped identify caves, tunnels and command centers known to be used by Afghan Taliban forces. An unnamed Pentagon official stated, “The Russians are being very helpful. There’s a lot of stuff coming in. The problem now is sifting through it.”<sup>65</sup>

#### **D. STRENGTHENING RUSSIAN COOPERATION WITH NATO INSTITUTIONS**

These areas of cooperation are laying the framework for broader Russian interactions with NATO and have been critical in the campaign against the terror networks. Secretary General Robertson stated on 4 February 2002, “Intensified NATO-Russia cooperation is a central pillar of the global struggle against terrorism. Without close cooperation between Europe’s two major security players, no anti-terrorism strategy can work.”<sup>66</sup> In order to institutionalize this cooperation and transform the NATO-Russia relationship for the long run, Russian interactions with the Alliance will have to be strengthened. On 14 May 2002, the NAC and representatives from Russia agreed to fundamentally alter the existing mechanisms for cooperation, going beyond the framework created through PfP and the PJC. They approved the creation of the NATO-Russia Council, which will replace and broaden the functions of the PJC, giving Russia a voice as an equal partner in selected areas of common interest. This new framework goes beyond the old mechanisms to provide broader means of institutionalizing cooperation. In his speech before the German Bundestag on 25 September 2001, Putin explained the problems of continuing on the same path regarding NATO and the need for a new and broader form of participation for Russia:

Despite all the positive things that have been achieved over the past decades, we have not yet managed to work out an efficient mechanism for cooperation. The coordination organs, which have been established so far, do not give Russia any real opportunity to participate in the preparation of decisions. Nowadays, decisions are sometimes made without [consulting] us at all, and then we are emphatically asked to approve them. Then there is once again talk about loyalty to NATO; it is even said that without

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Secretary General Lord Robertson, “NATO Speech: NATO-Russia Cooperation in Combating Terrorism: A Good Idea Whose Time Has Come,” February 4, 2002, [www.nato.int/docu/speech/202/s020204a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/202/s020204a.htm)

Russia it would be impossible to implement these decisions. We wonder whether this is normal, whether this is a real partnership.<sup>67</sup>

The discussions about transforming the relationship have centered on a November 2001 proposal presented by British Prime Minister Tony Blair.<sup>68</sup> Blair's proposal has called for the creation of a new "Russia-North Atlantic Council" (RNAC). The RNAC might be used to coordinate policies in areas such as peacekeeping in the Balkans, civil emergency planning, defense modernization, and WMD proliferation.<sup>69</sup> Such an arrangement would move beyond the PJC, and give Russia an equal voice on specific issues. Instead of a traditional "19 + 1" arrangement, an approach institutionalized in mechanisms such as the PfP and the PJC, the RNAC would treat all twenty participants on an equal basis.<sup>70</sup>

This proposed arrangement has generated positive reactions. The proposal was not only endorsed at a meeting of the PJC, where NATO and Russian representatives agreed that development of an "at 20" framework would be pursued, but at the foreign minister level in the NAC.<sup>71</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated:

Russia does not raise the question of joining the North Atlantic alliance; at the same time, we are prepared to cooperate with it in areas of shared interest. The experience of the last decade proves that such cooperation can be effective only if it is based on the principles of equality. Hence the idea of creating a mechanism of cooperation within the framework of "the 20" –the NATO member nations and Russia—which can provide joint development and implementation of decisions in the fight against terrorism and in responding to other contemporary challenges.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Putin addresses German parliament in Russian and then German," BBC Monitoring International Reports, September 25, 2001.

<sup>68</sup>"Russia-NATO Talks: In Veto Veritas?" *Monitor-A Daily Briefing on the Former Soviet States*. Vol VII, Issue 218, November 28, 2001. ([www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org))

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Patrick E. Tyler, "Gingerly, NATO Plans Broader Role for Moscow," *New York Times*, 07 December 2001.

<sup>72</sup> Igor S. Ivanov, "Organizing the World to Fight Terror," *New York Times*, 27 January 2002.

This brings up the issue of whether Russia would be given a form of veto power over NATO decisions. Such an arrangement could leave many Eastern European countries such as the Baltic states extremely uncomfortable as they seek full membership in the alliance. It could also throw into question NATO's continuing mission as a collective defense organization. The NAC has attempted to address this issue by specifying the topics that NATO and Russia would deal with on an "at 20" basis. Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller said, "They cannot get a veto about enlargement."<sup>73</sup> Moreover, Secretary General Robertson stated that the Alliance would retain its ability to undertake independent action.<sup>74</sup>

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, Russia and NATO have moved to form a constructive partnership based on shared strategic and economic interests that could fundamentally alter the nature of the NATO-Russia relationship that has developed since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Putin's bold overtures to the West have made possible an unprecedented level of cooperation in the war on terrorism, contributing to the successes the United States and its allies have achieved in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The cooperation between NATO and Russia in the ongoing conflict has provided the impetus to alter the institutional mechanisms defining the relationship. The concept of "at 20" interaction in a new Russian-NATO council provides means to expand cooperation beyond the parameters of the present conflict, and it may address Russian concerns over NATO without undermining NATO's primary role as a collective defense organization.

Questions still remain, however, concerning the exact institutional mechanisms of cooperation. For instance, how will the new structures handle Russian disagreements within the "at 20" framework? Secretary General Robertson's statements about retaining NATO's ability to take independent action even within the context of the new agreed framework suggest that much work has yet to be done regarding true Russian integration into the West. Despite this, steps have been taken that could lead to profound changes in the Euro-Atlantic security environment.

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<sup>73</sup> Tyler.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

## **IV. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES TO COOPERATION**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine several divisive issues that continue to present problems in the NATO-Russia relationship. How might these issues affect the prospects for strengthened NATO-Russia relations in the post-11 September 2001 context? Since the early 1990s, these issues have been recurring obstacles to a more cooperative relationship between the Alliance and Russia. These obstacles to cooperation have been manifest in the often adversarial attitude toward NATO expressed by Russians. NATO has sought since 1991 to adapt to new security requirements and has accepted new roles and members, while Russia has dealt with the loss of its empire, economic disarray and internal strife. The obstacles to cooperation have reflected ingrained mistrust between Russia and the Alliance, as they have struggled to redefine themselves in a new security environment. Animosity and mistrust were never fully surmounted during the transformational decade of the 1990s, and they continue to present challenges for broader Russian integration into Euro-Atlantic security institutions. These adversarial attitudes and various specific obstacles must be overcome to achieve broader integration for Russia.

These obstacles continue to complicate NATO-Russia relations today despite the new opportunities to create a strengthened partnership and the shared interests that have supported enhanced cooperation since 11 September 2001. The selected issues to be discussed are all problems that have created serious disagreements between NATO and Russia. They include the Russian involvement in the conflict in Chechnya and elsewhere in the Caucasus, political order in the Balkans, Russian behavior and policies regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile proliferation, and Russia's non-strategic nuclear forces (NSNF) and arms control.

### **A. CHECHNYA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE CAUCASUS**

A major obstacle to a more cooperative NATO-Russia relationship since 1994 has been Russian behavior in Chechnya and other areas of the Caucasus. The origins of the first Russian intervention in Chechnya in 1994 included political maneuverings by the

Yeltsin regime and the conviction that the drive for Chechen independence led by General Dzhokhar Dudayev represented a genuine threat to the authority and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.<sup>75</sup> The subsequent Russian invasion, both massive and brutal, claimed the lives of thousands of civilians. The almost indiscriminate killing of Chechen civilians by the Russian military left the Russians with little support or sympathy from the West. Western objections to the use of indiscriminate force were repeated when the second war in Chechnya began in 1999.

The origins of the second Russian intervention in Chechnya are murkier. Some observers attribute it to the rise of Islamic militancy and/or Chechen terrorism inside Russia. According to one interpretation, the war was a result of a deal between Prime Minister Putin and the General Staff. A short victorious war would give Putin popularity and credibility and ensure favorable results in the December 1999 elections for the Duma, paving the way for his election as president in March 2000. The military in return would get a higher profile, more autonomy, and increased defense spending.<sup>76</sup>

Regardless of the political maneuverings within the Russian government, the situation in Chechnya had clearly deteriorated to a point of crisis by 1999. Following Russia's defeat in August 1996 during the first Chechen war and the eviction of Russian forces from Grozny, an uneasy peace was established in the region.<sup>77</sup> Weary of war, the Russians withdrew completely from Chechnya, leaving the region to competing warlords and banditry. The threats Russia faced from this destabilized region subsequently mounted. Foreign Islamic militants from the Middle East took advantage of the instability and moved into Chechnya.

The period from 1996 to 1999 was a bloody one for Russia. A pattern of banditry, kidnapping, and bombings inside Chechnya, in the border region, and inside Russia itself claimed 1,300 Russian lives.<sup>78</sup> It is still not clear who was responsible for these attacks, but the Russians began to use them as a pretext for renewed intervention in the region.

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<sup>75</sup> For a complete discussion on the war's origins, see, Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 56-101.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen Blank, "Russia's Ulster: The Chechen War and its Consequences," *Demokratizatsiya*, Winter 2001.

<sup>77</sup> Anatol Lieven, "Nightmare in the Caucasus." *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2000, p.146.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p.148.



Evidence suggests that the Russian military had already formulated an invasion plan when Islamic fighters from Chechnya invaded neighboring Daghestan.<sup>79</sup> This incursion into Daghestan helped remove any lingering public opposition to renewed military operations in the region. Russia's response was a massive invasion of Chechnya aimed at reconquering and pacifying the lawless semi-state under the guise of an "anti-terror operation." In November 1999, Vladimir Putin, then Prime Minister, declared, "From the moral point of view, our position is absolutely transparent and substantiated. We shall never sit down at the negotiating table with bandits."<sup>80</sup> However, the campaign, which was initially backed by broad popular support in Russia, has deteriorated into a bitter guerrilla war. Russian operations have been conducted with unrestrained brutality against the Chechen population, resulting in the death and displacement of untold numbers of Chechen civilians.<sup>81</sup> According to Anatol Lieven, "Hundreds of civilian deaths as a result of the Russian bombardment [of the Chechen capital, Grozny,] had already occurred by the first week of November [1999]."<sup>82</sup>

The Western response to the Russian campaign since 1999 has been extremely critical, as during the 1994-1996 conflict. Until the reformulation of Western views began in September 2001, most Western governments and expert observers agreed that Russian behavior in Chechnya involved grave human rights abuses, including indiscriminate bombing of civilian targets, torture and murder.<sup>83</sup> Russia has attempted to limit Western knowledge about events in Chechnya by placing restrictions on press coverage and constraining access to Chechnya by organizations such as the OSCE and the UN, steps that have also attracted criticism. Because of these reported abuses by Russia, rifts in the relationship between Russia and the West have been opened, affecting the Russian attitude regarding cooperation with NATO. The Alliance has also been at the forefront of

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<sup>79</sup> Blank, "Russia's Ulster: The Chechen War and its Consequences."

<sup>80</sup> Putin quoted in Robyn Dixon, "Russia Justifies War in Chechnya to U.N. Chief; Conflict: Premier says Moscow won't negotiate with terrorists despite Western pressure for a settlement," *The Los Angeles Times*, 14 November 1999.

<sup>81</sup> Lieven, p.158.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Steven Erlanger, "Schröder Urges Milder View of Moscow Role in Chechnya," *New York Times*, September 26, 2001.

opposition to Russian actions in Chechnya. In May 2000, the NAC issued the following statement:

We remain deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in Chechnya, in particular the difficult situation of displaced persons and reports of widespread human rights violations by all sides and disproportionate and indiscriminate use of Russian military force.<sup>84</sup>

## **B. THE BALKANS**

Conflicting interests in the Balkans have at times constituted another obstacle to cooperation between NATO and Russia. Russian interests in the region stem from two historical factors: (a) strategic and (b) religious and cultural.<sup>85</sup> Russia's traditional strategic interests in the region have been the security and stability of its frontiers and the blocking and balancing of the expansion of other great powers.<sup>86</sup> The religious and cultural or "Pan-Slavic" interest has always been relegated to a secondary or supporting interest. Some Russian observers have viewed NATO as an instrument of U.S. power and to a lesser extent evidence of German resurgence in Europe. Because of this distrust of the Alliance, Russia has sought to limit its roles and influence in the region, to include opposing the interventions the Alliance undertook in Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>87</sup> According to F. Stephen Larrabee, Russian policy in the Balkans has stemmed from several strategic objectives:

(a) to prevent Russia's diplomatic isolation and avoid an open break with the West; (b) to defuse and deflect pressure from both the nationalists and the pro-Serb lobby in the Duma; (c) to ensure that Russia remains a major player in the Balkan game; (d) to prevent NATO from 'imposing' a solution that would exclude Russia; (e) to ensure that the UN, where Russia is a member of the Security Council, is the main international

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<sup>84</sup> Final Communiqué: Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held in Florence on 24 May 2000, May 24, 2000, par. 44.

<sup>85</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, "Russia and the Balkans: Old Themes and New Challenges," in Vladimir Baranovsky, ed. *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 389-90.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> For a useful discussion of common Russian views concerning NATO's role in the Balkans, see Nadia Alexandrova Arbatova, "Russia and NATO: a Russian View," in Rob de Wijk, Bram Boxhoorn, Nikolaas Hoekstra, ed. *NATO after Kosovo* (Breda: Royal Netherlands Military Academy, 2000), pp. 56-59.

forum for discussion and implementation of policy towards the former Yugoslavia; and (f) to prevent a spillover of the fighting.<sup>88</sup>

The history of Russia-NATO interaction in the region shows this clear pattern. After a period of relatively constructive cooperation in the Balkans, which began before the collapse of the Soviet Union and continued through mid-1992, and which included efforts by both sides to contain the growing conflict in Yugoslavia and avoid the state's disintegration, Western relations with Russia regarding the region began to be strained.<sup>89</sup> Strengthened by difficulties in liberalization and democratization and the continued decline of the Russia economy, conservative political forces began to gain strength on the Russian domestic political scene. Russian policy increasingly became pro-Serb, anti-NATO, and uncooperative with the West. The Russian military made secret arrangements in 1993 to supply the Serbs with tanks and surface-to-air missiles in violation of the UN arms embargo, according to British defense reports.<sup>90</sup> Throughout the Bosnia conflict, Russian arms continued to flow to Serbian forces covertly, while Russia began to openly support the Serbs on the diplomatic front.<sup>91</sup>

Despite Russian sympathies for the Serbs, Russia's main goal in the Balkans was to prevent NATO from imposing its solutions to the conflict, thus marginalizing Russian influence in the region.<sup>92</sup> This intention can be inferred from Russia's critical reactions to the NATO-imposed heavy weapon exclusion zone around Sarajevo and the NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions. Russia's presentation of alternative face-saving measures to the Serbs demonstrated Moscow's desire to be taken seriously as a major international player in the region.<sup>93</sup>

The pattern of Russian behavior continued into the Kosovo crisis in 1998-1999. During the period leading up to the Rambouillet discussions, Russian diplomats resisted

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<sup>88</sup> Larrabee, pp. 395-6.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 393.

<sup>90</sup> Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the War for Kosovo* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), p. 214.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Larrabee, pp. 395-6.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 396.

Western initiatives to formulate a compromise solution to the conflict and were considered successes if they postponed discussions to future meetings.<sup>94</sup> While some Russian policy-makers harbored anti-Western and pan-Slavic sentiments, others expressed no love for Milosevic and his cohorts, but instead were motivated by a desire to protect and preserve Russian influence in the region.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, Russia did nothing to discourage or moderate Serbian actions in Kosovo and continued to support the Yugoslav delegation at Rambouillet despite its obstructive behavior. Russian actions in effect amounted to a green light for continued Serbian operations against the ethnic Albanian Kosovar population.

The Russian reaction to the NATO intervention in the Kosovo conflict, Operation Allied Force in March-June 1999, was especially hostile. It created a large lingering rift in the relationship, evident in Russia's temporary suspension of the PJC. The NATO intervention stirred up anti-American and anti-Western sentiments, and influential Russians drew parallels between Kosovo and Chechnya.<sup>96</sup> Some Russians feared that the Kosovo campaign would be used as a model for NATO intervention within former Soviet territory or within Russia itself—in Chechnya.<sup>97</sup> Prominent Russians argued that NATO's intervention in the Kosovo conflict fundamentally undermined the emerging security framework established under the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act and threatened the future of NATO-Russian relations. These fears led the Russians to transform their military doctrine, which in April 2000 named NATO in no uncertain terms as Russia's chief military concern and potential future opponent.<sup>98</sup>

References to NATO's Kosovo operation can be found in the doctrine, which states that one of the main “destabilizing” influences upon the current military-political situation has been “the utilization of military-force actions as a means of ‘humanitarian intervention’ without the sanction of the UN Security Council, in circumvention of the

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<sup>94</sup> Oleg Levitin, “Inside Moscow's Kosovo Muddle,” *Survival*, Vol.42, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 136.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Oksana Antonenko, “Russia, NATO and European Security after Kosovo.” *Survival* 41-4, Winter 1999-2000, p. 132. On growing anti-American sentiment, see “Anti-Americanism Winning Over Russia's Elite,” *The Russia Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 49, 9-15 December 2000.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Alexei G Arbatov, *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya*, The Marshall Center Papers, July 2000, p. 1.

generally accepted principles and norms of international law.”<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the doctrine states that one of the main external threats to the Russian Federation resides in “the expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the Russian Federation’s military security.”<sup>100</sup>

Russia’s participation in the NATO-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia (Stabilization Force, or SFOR) and Kosovo (Kosovo Force, or KFOR) may well be intended to enable Moscow to influence events on the ground. Given the anti-NATO tone of Russian policy, it may seem odd that the Russians would cooperate in the NATO-led peacekeeping forces. However, the Russians have given several reasons for their participation.<sup>101</sup> First and most importantly, participation is justified by the fact that Russian involvement prevents NATO from unilaterally setting up a permanent military presence in the region. Participation is also justified by the belief that it reaffirms Russia’s own interest in the Balkans by protecting the Serb population in Kosovo, thus preserving Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity. In short, it establishes a level of influence on the ground; there would be none without participation.

### **C. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND MISSILE PROLIFERATION**

One of the most divisive and dangerous issues in recent decades has been preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and delivery methods. The debate has taken on new urgency since the September 2001 attacks on the United States, owing to fears of WMD technology falling into the hands of terrorists. Russia’s technology transfers and assistance to states hostile to the West that seek WMD capabilities have been at the forefront of debates over this issue. Russia’s behavior has raised serious concerns over its commitment to the global non-proliferation regime. The issue extends beyond the security and control of nuclear warheads, fissile materials, and sensitive technologies in Russia. It also encompasses technology transfers in violation of international agreements.

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<sup>99</sup> “Russian Federation Military Doctrine, Approved by Russian Federation Presidential Edict of 21 April 2000,” April 21, 2000, par. 3, available in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, CEP20000424000171.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, par. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Antonenko, p. 137.

Recognizing the dangers posed by WMD proliferation, the Alliance at the 1999 Washington Summit rededicated itself to counter the spread of WMD and related technologies.<sup>102</sup> The Allies “initiated a more vigorous and structured debate on WMD issues.”<sup>103</sup> According to the “Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” NATO’s principal goal is to “prevent proliferation from occurring or, should it occur, to reverse it through diplomatic means.”<sup>104</sup> Such activities, including strict adherence to the various non-proliferation regimes, make NATO an important vehicle to promote non-proliferation in interactions with Russia.

Much of the West’s coordination and cooperation with Russia goes through NATO, because the Alliance offers an institutional structure to engage the Russian Federation in the context of Euro-Atlantic security. NATO’s Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (DGP) has become critically important in this engagement. Established in 1994 to recommend improvements in NATO’s defense posture to counter emerging threats posed by WMD proliferation, the DGP has been utilized to formulate NATO’s counter-proliferation initiative, which serves as a basis for discussions with Russia in forums such as PfP.<sup>105</sup>

Despite Russia’s official acceptance of various non-proliferation and export control regimes, serious problems persist. Russia’s behavior indicates that Moscow is not yet as fully committed to non-proliferation as it claims to be. Evidence shows that Russian organizations, commercial and governmental, continue to engage in WMD and missile technology transfers to several foreign governments.

One of the major sources of income for the Russian government in the 1990s has been the sale of military weaponry and technological assistance. In the interest of short-term profit, Russia may in fact be undermining its own security by selling sensitive technologies to potentially dangerous customers. Three countries stand out in this respect: China, Iran, and Iraq, although Russian activities extend further afield. The Russian

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<sup>102</sup> *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), p. 139.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>105</sup> “Department of Defense Response,” ([www.defenselink.mil/pubs/prolif97/secii.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/prolif97/secii.html)), p. 12.

Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) depends on the sales to these and other countries.<sup>106</sup>

China has been an especially lucrative customer.<sup>107</sup> Despite the potential threat to Russia that China presents, Russia has continued to sell sensitive technology to the Chinese, including guidance systems from the SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs and three advanced upper-stage rocket engines in violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).<sup>108</sup> An entire factory has been transferred to China that produces components for the SS-27 (TOPOL-M) ICBM. Moreover, Russians are helping China build up to 50 new nuclear reactors.<sup>109</sup>

In the case of Iran, Russia has taken over the long delayed Bushehr project. While Bushehr has no capability to produce weapons grade fissile material, Minatom has offered the Iranians vast amounts of knowledge at bargain prices.<sup>110</sup> Russian technology transfers to Iran have also included SS-4 missile technology.<sup>111</sup> Since 1996, Iranian graduate students have routinely studied under the direction of Russian nuclear scientists in Moscow.<sup>112</sup> Russian scientists have even traveled to Iran to give lectures in Tehran.<sup>113</sup> In addition, Russia offered to build a gas centrifuge and a 40-megawatt heavy-water research reactor that would allow for the production of weapons grade fissile material.<sup>114</sup> This deal was well on its way to becoming a reality until Washington discovered the plans and began to publicly protest.

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<sup>106</sup> Stephen Blank, "Dreams of a Salesman," *The World and I*, October 1998, pp. 1-3 and Judith Perera, "Russia's Nuclear Industry: Not Dead Yet," *Energy Economist*, October 1998, pp. 5-6.

<sup>107</sup> Blank, p.4.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-5.

<sup>110</sup> Carla Anne Robbins and Andrew Higgins, "Dangerous Diversions- The Superpowers Fuel a New Arms Race," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 1998.

<sup>111</sup> Blank, p.3.

<sup>112</sup> Michael Dobbs, "Collapse of the Soviet Union Proved Boon to Iranian Missile Program," *Washington Post*, 13 January 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Carla Anne Robbins and Andrew Higgins.

In the case of Iraq, a shipment of 800 guidance gyroscopes from dismantled SS-18 missiles was diverted to that country.<sup>115</sup> These components came from a government-operated missile dismantling facility operated partly through U.S.-provided Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) funds. The shipment was discovered and intercepted in Jordan before it reached its destination. It is unclear whether there was official involvement or sanctioning of the shipment, but at the very least, it offers an illustration of the lax export control and pervasive corruption found in Russia.

#### **D. RUSSIA'S NON-STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES AND ARMS CONTROL**

Russia's policies regarding non-strategic nuclear forces (NSNF) remain a major obstacle to the creation of further arms control regimes and continue to play a divisive role in the country's relations with NATO.<sup>116</sup> With an estimated stockpile of 10,000 to 30,000 NSNF warheads, Russia's NSNF arsenal greatly exceeds that of the United States in numerical terms.<sup>117</sup> According to Russian political-military authorities, Russian NSNF compensate for Russia's conventional military weakness in the face of NATO's capabilities and perceived intentions, and these weapons have thus taken on increased importance in Russian military doctrine.<sup>118</sup> Russian perceptions of the utility of NSNF serve as incentives to retain these weapons. Indeed, some prominent Russians are apparently willing to consider abandoning the 1991-2 commitments to limit NSNF. Russian policies and attitudes make reaching NSNF reductions and verification agreements all the more difficult.<sup>119</sup>

This has created special concern within the Alliance. In a 1996 communiqué, the North Atlantic Council stated:

At a time when NATO has vastly reduced its nuclear forces, Russia retains a large number of tactical nuclear weapons of all types. We call upon

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<sup>115</sup> David Hoffman, "Missile Parts Sent to Iraq Detailed: Russian Group Offers Findings," *Washington Post*, 11 April 1998.

<sup>116</sup> David S. Yost, "Russia's Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces," *International Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 3, July 2001.

<sup>117</sup> Alain Richard, French Minister of Defense, quoted in David S. Yost, *The US and Nuclear Deterrence in Europe*, Adelphi Paper 326 (New York: Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1999), p. 50.

<sup>118</sup> Yost, "Russia's Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces," p. 531.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*, p. 551



Russia to bring to completion the reductions in these forces announced in 1991 and 1992, and to further review its tactical nuclear weapons stockpile with a view towards making additional significant reductions.<sup>120</sup>

These concerns have been intensified by repeated Russian attempts to link NSNF reductions to the removal of U.S. nuclear forces from Europe. Such Russian proposals may be intended to play on European fears over the enormous quantity of Russian NSNF and thereby to drive a wedge between the United States and the European Allies over the issue of US nuclear forces in Europe.<sup>121</sup> However, many European officials and experts support the retention of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe with a view to possible future negotiations with Moscow. The elimination of the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe would deprive NATO of any leverage in such negotiations.

## **E. CONCLUSIONS**

Since 1991, several issues have complicated the pursuit of improved NATO-Russia relations, even at times promoting mistrust and animosity between the two sides. In a situation in which Russia has been attempting to deal with its loss of power and prestige, Russians have often viewed NATO as exploiting Russia's weakened condition for its own benefit. It is therefore hardly surprising that there have been serious challenges in the evolving NATO-Russia relationship.

There have nonetheless been opportunities for more cooperative relations between Russia and the West. These opportunities have not been fully developed mainly due to the conflicting interests of the Russian elites. Powerful domestic political forces continue to play an important part in the formulation of Russian foreign policy. The Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Atomic Energy, the foreign intelligence service, and the military-industrial complex have all found it in their interests to perpetuate an adversarial relationship with the West.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Final Communiqué, Ministerial Meetings of the Defense Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group, December 17, 1996, par. 9 as quoted in Yost, *The US and Nuclear Deterrence in Europe*, p. 51.

<sup>121</sup> Yost, *The US and Nuclear Deterrence in Europe*, p. 51.

<sup>122</sup> European Commission Forward Studies Unit, *Shaping Actors, Shaping Factors in Russia's Future* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 15-20, 21-22, 52-53.

The Minatom and Ministry of Defense policies of selling sensitive technologies to China and WMD proliferants are pursued because they bring much-needed capital to Russia's cash-strapped agencies. Furthermore, the conflict in Chechnya has brought more power and political muscle to the military. Russia's doctrinal commitment to nuclear weapons, including non-strategic nuclear forces, has caused some concern and consternation in the West; but it has made it clear that Russia's military remains a force to be reckoned with, despite the deterioration of its conventional forces. In the Balkans, Russia's foreign policy elite has tried to minimize foreign influence in a region that Russians have traditionally considered within their sphere.

Much work must be done to overcome these obstacles. This effort cannot come only from the West. The Russian leadership must undertake the difficult and potentially dangerous task of reining in the Russians- notably the vendors of sensitive technologies- who have served their own interests at the expense of Russia's interests. While it is not possible or reasonable to expect NATO-Russia cooperation and agreement on all issues (the Allies do not agree on every issue), a change in mentality and outlook must take place to address the many difficult challenges the Alliance and Russia will face in the future and to make possible broader integration of Russia in Euro-Atlantic security institutions.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the various obstacles to improved NATO-Russia relations, including serious disagreements about some issues, there are some grounds for optimism. The shared interests in combating international terrorism have provided a means to move past some of these issues. In fact both sides have shown willingness to compromise on issues involving common strategic interests. These developments may bring Russia closer to the West in the global campaign against terrorism and allow the Russians the opportunity to benefit from a stronger relationship with the West.

In the case of Chechnya, the West has found a new moderate position for the Russian point of view. Some Western leaders have softened their criticism of Russian human rights abuses. In an effort to garner Russian support in the war against terrorism, the West is now willing to revise its views on Russian operations in Chechnya. Lord Robertson, the NATO Secretary General, stated in a speech in Moscow on 22 November 2001, “We will continue to have differences. But we must discuss them openly and try to understand each other...But we have certainly come to see the scourge of terrorism in Chechnya with different eyes.”<sup>123</sup>

In the Balkans, where the main issue of contention has been Russia’s resistance to NATO’s influence, a NATO-Russia rapprochement over terrorism may lead to more cooperation in the future. Russian participation in SFOR and KFOR, regardless of Moscow’s motives in initiating the participation, has created a bridge for further understanding and cooperation, which has served to lessen bilateral misunderstandings.

Russia’s pledges to combat WMD and missile proliferation as part of the war on terrorism may help eliminate some of the problems over this issue. At the very least Russia’s new approach may serve to open up more constructive dialogues on the issue. Furthermore, the results of the November 2001 and May 2002 Bush-Putin summit meetings are promising; they may lay the foundations for more comprehensive arms

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<sup>123</sup> Secretary General Lord Robertson, “A New Quality in the NATO-Russia Relationship,” November 22, 2001. ([www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011122a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2001/s011122a.htm))

control agreements and compromises on issues such as NSNF and missile defense in the future.

Since 11 September 2001, President Putin has dramatically and boldly cast his future and Russia's with the West. During this time, Putin's popularity at home has grown, signaling support for his policies.<sup>124</sup> This bodes well for the future of NATO-Russian cooperation, because anti-Western elements in the military and the foreign intelligence service may be held in check by Putin's strong and popular leadership. Cooperation also depends on continued reciprocal steps from the United States and other NATO Allies toward Russia. The Allies have agreed that Russia must be treated as an important and equal player in Euro-Atlantic security structures.

The new "at 20" framework for NATO-Russia relations may hold the answers to this question. Going beyond Russia's limited participation in PfP and the historical constraints of the PJC, the "at 20" framework may finally make Russia an essential partner in Euro-Atlantic security affairs, while preserving NATO's institutional integrity. Once a cooperative relationship between NATO and Russia has been institutionalized, old animosities and distrust may be surmounted, laying the foundations for more cooperation and integration in the future. If successful, the "at 20" framework may provide the springboard to achieve this goal.

There still remain reservations about the prospects for NATO-Russia dialogue and cooperation, both within Europe and Russia. Even in the United States, splits have reportedly arisen within the government over the role Russia should play in Europe, with the State Department considered firmly behind an "at 20" NATO-Russia arrangement and the Department of Defense portrayed as wavering on the issue.<sup>125</sup> The recent trouble in the construction of an "at 20" framework highlights the continuing opposition in some countries.<sup>126</sup> Some influential people in NATO nations still see Russia as a potential

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<sup>124</sup> Aleksander Tsipko, "How Putin's Pro-American Stance Plays on Russia's Domestic Political Scene," *Prism: A Monthly on the Post-Soviet States*. Vol VII, Issue 11, November 2001. (www.jamestown.org)

<sup>125</sup> Robin Wright, "The World & Nation; Russia Co-Chairs NATO Meeting; Alliance: Historic joint statement pledges a deeper relationship. But members disagree on the scope of cooperation," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 2001.

<sup>126</sup> John Chalmers, "NATO Talks With Moscow Hit Snag," *The Moscow Times*, March 18, 2002.

hindrance in Alliance decision making. Moreover, some Russians still see NATO as an institution that is inherently hostile to Russia and that seeks to deny Russia any meaningful participation in Euro-Atlantic security frameworks. Fears that Russian concerns and interests will not be taken into account in the building of a new NATO-Russia framework persist. In March 2002 Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov expressed his displeasure at the manner in which the NATO-Russian talks to build an “at 20” framework progressed, saying that the proposals have been “purely cosmetic.”<sup>127</sup>

These problems and concerns suggest that the old mindsets held by some people on both sides will be hard to overcome. However, distrust must be set aside to build a relationship that is more beneficial to both sides and that in the long run enhances the security of the Euro-Atlantic region. According to Secretary General Robertson,

There is no issue more important to the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area than the further development of a confident and cooperative relationship between us. We now have a unique opportunity to build a better, more stable future with full and wholehearted Russian participation.<sup>128</sup>

Can the new Russia-NATO partnership thrive as the memories of 11 September 2001 begin to fade and the war on terrorism shifts from Afghanistan to other parts of the world? Some factors suggest that a long-term partnership can be sustained. Russia’s energy reserves will probably grow in importance to the West in the future, and the country’s geographic position will ensure its relevance to many international security questions.

The United States should firmly support efforts to promote positive Russia-NATO interactions on an “at 20” basis. This framework may ensure continued constructive dialogue and cooperation in the campaign against the terrorist networks. The “at 20” framework may enable Russia to play an important role in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture with a meaningful contribution to the decision making process regarding certain issues. Russia would nonetheless not be able to interfere with the Alliance’s core collective defense mission. Closer cooperation with the West may also lessen the

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<sup>127</sup> Ivanov quoted in “NATO: ‘No Snags’,” *The Moscow Times*, March 21, 2002.

influence of the anti-Western Russian elites and thereby help re-orient Russia's sometimes adversarial foreign policy to one more amenable to close relations with Western nations.

Regardless of the final institutional forms of the relationship, a stronger and more cooperative NATO-Russia relationship based on trust, mutual understanding, and shared Western values should be developed, with the terrible events of 11 September 2001 as a catalyst for change. Such a relationship could lead to a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous Euro-Atlantic region for generations to come.

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<sup>128</sup> Secretary General Robertson quoted in Wright.

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