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**Research Report**

## Russia-Nato relations: Stagnation or revitalization?

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# SWP Research Paper

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik  
German Institute for International  
and Security Affairs

*Hannes Adomeit / Frank Kupferschmidt*

## Russia–Nato Relations

Stagnation or Revitalization?

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**Russia–Nato Relations  
Stagnation or Revitalization?**

For more than a decade, Nato has attempted—by means of practical cooperation and multifaceted contacts—to establish with Russia a “qualitatively new” relationship governed by mutual trust and understanding. This goal had initially been regarded among members of the Western alliance as attainable. Today, however, the Nato-Russia relationship is viewed with a sense of disappointment and concern. The United States consider Russia more of a nuisance and obstacle for the solution of international problems than a constructive and reliable partner. The new Nato member states in East-Central Europe even look upon Moscow as a potential threat to European security.

The Kremlin has done little to dispel such perceptions. Ever since president Putin’s speech at the 43rd Munich International Security Conference on February 10, 2007, harsh rhetoric in relation to the U.S. and Nato has prevailed. But Moscow’s martial approach has not been limited to the verbal level. It has also adopted corresponding military measures. It has since 2001 increased its defence expenditures by a factor of four; instituted programs for the modernization of conventional and nuclear weapons; and reinstated long-range strategic bomber flights that had been stopped after the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, it has cancelled its implementation of the treaty on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) and threatened to exit from the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear missiles (INF).

Against this background, the question needs to be asked why the expectations of a qualitatively new relationship between Russia and Nato prevalent in particular after the terror attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, and the foundation of the new Nato-Russia Council failed to materialize, and why some analysts even consider the relations to be in a state of crisis. In an attempt to answer this question, a first step is to examine the extent to which such perceptions are, in fact, a fair portrayal of the state of affairs or whether the balance sheet of cooperation and conflict looks more positive.

Second, assuming that perception and reality are congruent and that the relationship between Russia and Nato can indeed be properly characterized as not only being stagnant but in crisis, determinants and

motive forces responsible for this situation need to be identified.

Third, the result of this examination will be used in an attempt to outline options for German and European policy and to address the problem as to whether approaches must confine themselves to mere administration of stagnation or whether—in spite of all the mutual disappointment—enough assets have been accumulated that can be utilized once more favorable external conditions obtain.

Concerning the first issue, the study shows that the balance sheet of assets and liabilities is perhaps not as negative as press commentary and some academic treatises suggest, but the liabilities nevertheless outweighed the assets. Many activities had a mere symbolic quality and failed to change the substance of relations. However, on the positive side of the balance sheet, although Russia may not have become a “strategic partner” of Nato it also has not (re)turned to the status of potential enemy. Conceptual consensus has been achieved in several areas and cooperative practices as well as structures have been developed that could be utilized for a revitalization of relations.

In order to make this possible, to turn to the second issue, changes in the external conditions responsible for the current state of affairs would be necessary. This includes, above all, internal developments in Russia under prime minister Putin and president Dmitry Medvedev. It stands to reason that the harsh rhetoric and uncompromising policies in Russia’s foreign policy last year were closely related to the country’s earlier turn away from liberal democracy, market economy with fair competition, a law-based order and civil society. The danger visible in sketchy outlines at the end of Putin’s first turn that increasingly authoritarian and centralizing features of the domestic political system would be projected to the foreign policy realm became a reality at the close of his second term. At first it affected Russia’s approaches and policies on post-Soviet space but later also the relationship with the West, including Nato.

Another determinant emanating from Russian domestic politics rests in the power and influence of the so-called *siloviki*, the representatives of military and domestic and international security ministries and agencies, first and foremost of which the security services. Their power is not likely to vanish in the new domestic constellation Medvedev–Putin but it could wane under the new president to some degree, making changes in Russia-Nato relations more probable.

In view of this possibility, to deal with the third issue, European government representatives and parliamentarians should proactively strive to shape the framework for a fresh start in the relationship. Such an end would be served, for instance, if they were to proceed from the position that even the *siloviki* have no interest in a substantial deterioration of relations with Nato and thus react to martial rhetoric with equanimity. Western decision-makers should also advocate more extensive utilization of the Nato-Russia Council as a forum for practical cooperation. As a result of domestic political changes in Russia and a new president in 2009 in the United States, the chances for a reinvigoration of the relationship could rise.

Conventional arms and arms control in Europe are of concern for all members of Nato but primarily its new East-Central European members. The Western alliance should, for that reason, attempt to defuse the conflict over ratification of the CFE treaty and its adaptation. Nato should, however, continue to insist that Russia fulfill the political commitments it has assumed in 1999 at the OSCE summit in Istanbul and withdraw its troops, military equipment and ammunition stocks from Georgia and Moldova. The fact that this has not occurred remains the only reason for non-ratification of the treaty by the Nato member states. The Atlantic alliance, finally, should discuss in the Nato-Russia Council the four missile defence projects which concern all of its members: (1) the proposal submitted by Putin to the Nato Secretary General for the construction of a mobile, European-wide non-strategic missile defence; (2) the program under the auspices of Nato for the protection of Nato forces engaged in military operations (Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence, ALTBMD); (3) the feasibility study of the alliance concerning the whole spectrum of missile threats to Europe; and (4) the plans of the United States for the stationing of components of its strategic missile defence in Poland and the Czech Republic. Talks on these projects should focus in particular on their conceptual interlinking but also on possibilities for Russian participation.

## Evolution of Russia-Nato Relations

At the turn of the new century, the relationship between Russia and Nato appeared to change substantially and for the long term. Two reasons warranted such perceptions: the consolidation of Putin's power after the presidential elections in March 2000 and the terror attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., in September 2001. Up to these incisions the relations between the two actors were strained because of a number of controversies, first and foremost by the conflict over Kosovo and the Nato air attacks against Yugoslavia in spring 1999. Moscow reacted to the military intervention with a broadly based anti-Nato campaign, accusing the alliance *inter alia* of having committed "aggression," acted in "contravention of international law" and aided and abetted "genocide of the Serbs." Russia suspended its participation in the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), and even after the resumption of cooperation in that body in June 1999, Russian-Nato consultations remained limited to the subject of Kosovo. The relations remained tense also because of the accession to Nato of three former members of the Warsaw Pact: Poland, Czechia and Hungary. Nato, furthermore, prepared a new round of eastern enlargement, the inclusion of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, that is, three former Soviet republics, and would thereby step over the "red line," which Russia already under Yeltsin had drawn for the Western alliance along the borders of the former Soviet Union. It looked as if the fabric of relations between the Atlantic alliance and Russia was ruptured and could not be mended for years to come. The transfer of power in Russia to Putin and the consolidation of his rule, however, ushered in a significant improvement of relations between the two actors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the reorientation of Russia's relations with the United States and Europe before September 11, 2001, see Hannes Adomeit, *Putins Westpolitik—Ein Schritt vorwärts, zwei Schritte zurück*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 8 (April 2005).

### New Approaches under Putin

The new beginning was connected with Putin's aim of restoring Russia's power and international influence by means of domestic political stabilization and comprehensive modernization of the economy. At that time, that is, before the sharp rise of the oil price and the enormous hard currency earnings for Russia, achievement of the latter goal only appeared possible through large-scale investments from Western industrialized countries. These, in turn, could be expected to flow only in conditions of improved relations between Russia and the West. Putin drew the appropriate practical conclusions from this and made stringent efforts to rearrange the relationship with the United States and Europe and, at the institutional level, with Nato and the European Union. In relation to Nato, this reorientation found its expression in Moscow's decision in the year 2000 gradually to resume cooperation in the Permanent Joint Council. This included consultation concerning the creation of a military liaison mission at the Russian general staff (which, indeed, occurred in 2002). At the beginning of 2001, Russia consented to Nato opening an information office in Moscow.

The terror attacks of September 11 enhanced the policy change which Putin had initiated. It now extended to central aspects of Russia's attitudes and approaches towards Nato. This included the question of the geographic area covered by the Nato treaty. The air attacks against Yugoslavia had demonstrated conclusively that the alliance was prepared to intervene "out of area." Russian diplomats, however, had always opposed any extension of the area covered by Nato operations. Thus, they argued that the Nato "aggression" against Yugoslavia not only constituted a violation of the UN Charter but also that it contravened the Nato treaty. This argument, however, became obsolete when Russia agreed to successive UN mandates for Nato-led peacekeeping operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

As the scope of Nato operations was extended even further after September 11, 2001, to Afghanistan, Russia again agreed to it. It consented to UN resolution 1386 which provided for an International



Security Assistance Force in the country and to Nato assuming the leading role in ISAF starting from August 2003.<sup>2</sup> Beyond that, Russia opened its air space for the military operations of the international coalition against the Taliban and al-Qaeda; furnished intelligence data; and accepted a U.S. military presence on post-Soviet space, in Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Kyrgistan). Thus, the joint struggle against international terrorism provided a specific purpose and long-term goal for Nato-Russia cooperation. For a substantial change in the relationship, however, more changes in Russian attitudes and policies were still necessary. These concerned, first, the eastward enlargement of Nato; second, the question as to its basic character; and, third, possible institutional arrangements linking Russia to the alliance.

Concerning the first problem, the Russian foreign and international security establishment characterized (and still characterizes) Nato's eastward enlargement extension to the east as "moving ever closer to Russia's border" and a threat to Russian security. Based on this position, it has opposed the building of any kind of military infrastructure of the United States and Nato in the former member states of the Warsaw Pact and Union republics and threatened various "countermeasures." For instance, it has asserted that Nato's expansion necessitated revision of Russia's military doctrine as well as the structure and deployments of its armed forces.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the Russian political and military establishment gave its opposition to Nato's eastern enlargement a moral dimension: In the negotiations on German unification 1990, Western political leaders had given

binding assurances that Nato would not move "one inch farther to the east" of unified Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Moscow had been unable to prevent a first round of Nato enlargement with the inclusion of former Warsaw Pact member states in the alliance and was thereafter aiming with its criticism at membership of former Soviet republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). As part of his endeavour to reorder Russia's approach to the Atlantic alliance, Putin now had to develop arguments and provide justification as to why he could agree to Nato transgressing the "red line" drawn by his predecessor along the borders of the former Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> The solution to this problem, to address the second issue, lay in Putin's demand for a "transformation" of the character of Nato. If Nato became "more political than military," he claimed prior to the accession of the seven new members in the second round of enlargement, "that would change things considerably." If Nato took on "a different shape and were to become a political organization, of course, we would reconsider our position with regard to [Nato's] expansion."<sup>6</sup>

Connected with this demand, to turn to the third problem, was the search for an improved institutional tie to the alliance. An argument can be made that the then existing Permanent Joint Council met perennial Russian needs of safeguarding the country's status and prestige as Russia and the Atlantic alliance were, under the chairmanship of Nato's Secretary General, represented there as equal partners. Russian political leaders and diplomats, however, professed to be dissatisfied with this arrangement as they were confronted in that body with positions that had been

<sup>2</sup> "Security Council Authorizes International Security Force for Afghanistan," UN Security Council Resolution 1368 (2001), Press Release SC/7248, <[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sc7248.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sc7248.doc.htm)>. As late as 2004, deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizov welcomed "the decisive role which Nato is playing in Afghanistan"; in a press conference on June 24, 2004, *RIA Novosti* (in Russian) June 25, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Such threats of "countermeasures" were made as early as November 1993 in a report by the Russian foreign intelligence service; a summary of which was published in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, November 26, 1993, pp. 1, 3. They were reiterated, for instance, in October 2003 in the Russian defence ministry's publication, *Aktual'nye zadachi razvitiia Vooruzhennykh Sil Rossiiskoi Federatsii* (Current Tasks of the Armed forces of the Russian Federation); see [www.mil.ru/articles/article5005.shtml](http://www.mil.ru/articles/article5005.shtml). In the West, this document has variously been referred to as "White Book" or "new military doctrine."

<sup>4</sup> Whatever the "assurances" Western political leaders may have given Gorbachev in private talks, the question of a possible eastern enlargement of Nato never formed the subject of negotiations on German unification. Significantly, the London Declaration of Nato of July 1990, which was meant to facilitate Gorbachev's consent to unified Germany's membership in Nato, did not contain any reference to the enlargement issue. The record on this has been reconstructed by Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev. An Analysis Based on New Archival Evidence, Memoirs, and Interviews* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1998), pp. 528-39.

<sup>5</sup> President Yeltsin had drawn the "red line" in an interview with British newspaper *The Guardian* on May 15, 1998, at the G-7/G-8 summit in Birmingham; *Interfax* (in Russian), May 15, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Putin at Nato Headquarters, October 3, 2001, Suzanne Daley, "Putin Softens His Stance against Nato Expansion," *New York Times*, October 4, 2001; see also the Kremlin's website, [www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/10/03/0002\\_type82914type82915\\_137394.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2001/10/03/0002_type82914type82915_137394.shtml).

agreed upon in advance among the then 19 member states. That “Nineteen plus One” construct was, according to Russian precepts, to be replaced by an arrangement which would make it possible for Russia’s voice to be heard and taken into consideration before decisions were taken. The solution that was to be found in December 2001 was the arrangement of “Nato at Twenty,” which provided for the inclusion of Russia as one of the participants on an equal footing with the Nato members in a new Nato-Russia Council. The last session of the PJC at foreign ministers’ level took place in May 2002. In the same month, the new institutional arrangements, which were meant to usher in “qualitatively new relations” between the two actors, were solemnly announced at the Nato-Russia summit in Rome.<sup>7</sup>

What, then, does the balance sheet of Nato-Russia relations since May 2002 look like? One of the many facets of integration theory starts from the idea that an increase in cooperation and communication among lower and middle echelons of the bureaucracy and among professionals—the “low politics” level—will “spill over” into the realm of “high politics,” where matters of principle, security issues and long-term policy are decided. On the basis of such notions, the question needs to be asked whether the many projects and programs agreed upon with Russia and the activities of the Nato-Russia Council and its 27 bodies, among which 17 working groups, have indeed led to a “qualitatively new relationship” at the highest level.

<sup>7</sup> “Summit Meeting of Nato and Russia at the Level of Heads of State and Government Rome, 28 May 2002,” Nato Press Releases and Official Documents, [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0205-rome/0205-rome.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2002/0205-rome/0205-rome.htm); see also “Nato-Russia Relations: A New Quality, Declaration by Heads of State and Government of Nato Member States and the Russian Federation,” [www.nato.int/docu/basic/b020528e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/b020528e.htm).

### The Nato-Russia Council

The central institution and most important venue for the relations between Nato and Russia is the Nato-Russia Council (NRC) created in May 2002 at the Nato-Russia summit in Rome. The meetings of the council are chaired by the Nato Secretary General. They take place at least once a month at the level of the permanent representatives and the military representatives. The foreign ministers, the defence ministers and the chiefs of general staff meet twice a year, and the heads of state and government at irregular intervals.

An important institutional innovation in comparison to its predecessor, the Permanent Joint Council, constituted the creation of a preparatory committee at the level of political advisors, which meets at least twice a month. The committee offers opportunities for informal exchanges of opinion concerning political subjects and problems of cooperation. Whereas only two working groups existed under PJC auspices, the NRC harbors 27 subordinate working groups and committees. This high number in itself testifies to the breadth of subject matter covered by the council. According to testimony of Nato officials, the atmosphere of the meetings is said to have improved “dramatically.”

The status of the Russian representation was elevated in March 2003 when the head of the federal border troops, Lieutenant-General Konstantin Totsky, was appointed Permanent Representative at Nato. The assignment corresponded to the practice common in the Putin era to place leading representatives of the “power ministries and agencies,” the *siloviki*, in leading positions of government and the economy. As a sign of changed Russian attitudes and lessened importance of Nato in Russian foreign policy, Totsky was replaced in January 2008 by Dmitry Rogozin, who had earned a reputation as a nationalist.

The military liaison offices of Russia at the Nato headquarters in Mons in Belgium and Norfolk in Virginia and, correspondingly, Nato’s Military Liaison Mission to the General Staff in Moscow play an important role for practical cooperation between Russia and Nato. Annual working programs of the NRC and annual programs for military cooperation define priorities and specific measures to be adopted and implemented.

## Areas of Cooperation

The fields of Nato-Russia cooperation are impressive in their breadth. The results achieved are, however, less impressive. It is often necessary to make stringent and time-consuming efforts in the 27 subordinate working groups and committees before any measurable progress can be achieved.<sup>8</sup>

In comparison with the meetings of the Permanent Joint Council, the quality of the dialogue on current international security issues in the NRC has improved.<sup>9</sup> The emphasis of its proceedings is on mutual information, consultation and coordination which, in turn, are to lay the basis for decisions and joint action. Examples of the political dialogue having resulted in joint positions concerning border control in the Balkans (February 2003), defence reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina (July 2003) and the presidential elections in Ukraine (December 2004).

In 2007, the NRC launched a pilot project for counter-narcotics training of Afghan and Central Asian personnel. The initiative aims to help address the threats posed by the trafficking in Afghan narcotics. It seeks to build local capacity and to promote regional networking and cooperation. Until the end of the year, more than 330 representatives from six countries affected by the narcotics trade participated in 16 training programs.<sup>10</sup>

Controversial subjects of international security are also being addressed in the NRC. Examples are the developments in Georgia, Ukraine and Central Asia as well as the political commitments assumed by Russia at the Istanbul OSCE summit. If the views of the council members are irreconcilable, they may officially put on record that they “agreed to disagree.”

<sup>8</sup> A summary of the organizational structure and subject matter addressed in various committees is provided on the NRC website, [www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/EN/structures.shtml](http://www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/EN/structures.shtml).

<sup>9</sup> This review of Nato-Russia cooperation for the most part draws on Nato's official summary, “Nato-Russia Council: Key Areas of Cooperation,” [www.nato.int/issues/nrc/cooperation.html](http://www.nato.int/issues/nrc/cooperation.html). The military aspects of cooperation will be examined in a separate section below; see pp. 13.

<sup>10</sup> The six countries in question are Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

### Joint Action against Terrorism

Russia and Nato devote special attention to combating terrorism. An *ad hoc* working group develops common assessments of terrorist threats in the Euro-Atlantic area and aims at taking appropriate joint action. Three high-ranking NRC conferences dealt with the question as to the tasks with which the armed forces are confronted in combating terrorism; corresponding recommendations were made to the council. These led to the “Nato-Russia Action Plan on Terrorism,” which was adopted in December 2004.<sup>11</sup> For the main part, it contains preventive measures. These pertain to implementation of agreements for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the participation of the Russian Navy in Nato's Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in the Mediterranean; protection of civil aviation; comprehensive information exchange; and procedures for coping with the consequences of terror attacks, e.g. in the framework of assistance for civil emergencies.<sup>12</sup> Realization of this voluminous program has made progress. In May 2007, another conference attempted to develop a better understanding of terrorist methods and tactics. The liaison unit responsible for the exchange of intelligence information is working satisfactorily according to both Russian and Nato member states' assessments, and thus far, two Russian naval vessels have participated in Operation Active Endeavour.<sup>13</sup>

### Prevention of Proliferation

Cooperation has intensified also in the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of technology for ballistic and other types of missile. NRC working groups develop common assessments of global trends in the spread of weapons of mass destruction and examine possibilities of practical cooperation in the protection against

<sup>11</sup> “Nato-Russia Action Plan on Terrorism,” [www.nato-int/docu/basicxt/b041209a-e.htm](http://www.nato-int/docu/basicxt/b041209a-e.htm).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Concerning Operation Active Endeavour see below, p. 14, the section on military measures.

risks emanating from chemical, biological and nuclear substances. Exercises have been held in Russia, Britain, the United States and France which are to improve the capacity of the countries in question to deal effectively with nuclear accidents.

At present, the greatest danger of proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles is posed by Iran. Nato and Russia officially agree that nothing should be done to help the Islamic Republic in any effort it may make to become a nuclear power. Faced with criticism of its cooperation with Iran on nuclear energy, notably the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, Moscow is providing assurances that its cooperation with Iran, including the delivery of nuclear fuel rods to the Bushehr plant, does not have any military application. It also avers that it is adhering to the international regime for the control of missile technology (MTCR) and that it does not help Teheran to acquire technology for ballistic and other missiles. The credibility of these assertions may be open to doubt.<sup>14</sup> Differences about the question as to which means are most appropriate in the effort to curb Teheran's nuclear ambitions exist between the United States and some European countries, on the one hand, and Russia on the other. The dissension is of considerable importance as the Iranian program for the enrichment of uranium is proceeding unabated. The Iranian issue, therefore, can be considered an example of both cooperation as well as conflict in the Nato-Russia relationship.<sup>15</sup>

## Peacekeeping Operations

Founded on the positive experience of cooperation in the Balkan peacekeeping operations and the confidence derived from there about the feasibility of joint peacekeeping operations, Russia and Nato have developed a concept that could serve as the basis for further peacekeeping operations. The concept provides for a detailed plan of action which, in case of such operations, is to assure smooth cooperation between Nato allies and Russia. The planning and execution of

<sup>14</sup> For the extent to which Russian assertions concerning its nuclear cooperation with Iran and adherence to MTCR are credible see Hannes Adomeit, *Russlands Iran-Politik unter Putin—Politische und wirtschaftliche Interessen und der Atomstreit*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 8 (April 2007).

<sup>15</sup> For Iran as a matter of Russian-Nato controversy see the chapter below on areas of conflict.

peacekeeping operations would be a complex task and would require careful preparation. Joint exercises are, therefore, envisaged for consultation, planning and decision-making in an emerging crisis. At present, however, it is quite uncertain under what conditions and in which geographical area an NRC-led peacekeeping operation would be conceivable.

## Theater Missile Defence

The main goals of cooperation in the area of theater missile defence are interoperability and the elaboration of procedures for joint operations to defend against ballistic missiles which are directed against forces engaged in military operations.<sup>16</sup> The conceptual problems connected with it were discussed on the basis of a proposal handed by Putin to Nato Secretary General Lord Robertson in February 2001 which envisaged building an European-wide, mobile, non-strategic missile defence.<sup>17</sup> In relation to the proposal thus far four command post exercises have been held—the last one in Germany in January 2008. Whereas the purpose of the preceding three exercises was, by means of computer simulations, to test a common operational concept for missile defence, this time the main purpose was planning for the effective employment of forces. Up to now, Nato has invested three million Euros in studies and exercises for cooperation in theater missile defence.<sup>18</sup>

## Military Reform

Russia and the Nato member states need armed forces which are well trained and well equipped in order to

<sup>16</sup> The term interoperability refers to the ability of armed forces to act together in a multinational framework. For modern armed forces, which are called upon to contribute to international stabilization and the management of crises, such ability is one of the most important preconditions for successful operations.

<sup>17</sup> For an analysis of the relevance and the first stages of discussion of the Russian proposal in Nato see Klaus Arnold, *Russlands Vorschlag zur nicht-strategischen Raketenabwehr in Europa*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 28 (September 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Zur Entwicklung und Produktion russischer Raketenabwehrsysteme siehe Hannes Adomeit, *Russlands Rüstungsindustrie: Struktur und internationale Verflechtungen*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 15 (September 2004), pp. 32–35.

be able to respond to the whole spectrum of potential threats in the 21st century. As mentioned, if joint operations were to be conducted interoperability of Russian and Nato forces would be crucial. For that purpose, structures and communication systems capable of multinational cooperation as well as complementary military capabilities would be necessary. Such requirements could be better met by military reforms in Russia—and thus its successful implementation in the interest of the alliance. The support Nato is providing, therefore, aims at the development of the armed forces, the management of personnel and budgetary resources and reform of the arms industry but it also is assist Russia in coping with the negative consequences which inevitably arise from military reforms. Corresponding programs concern the retraining of former officers and men and problems of conversion of defence industry.<sup>19</sup>

### **Military-Industrial Cooperation**

Military reforms in Russia are also meant to create new perspectives for military-industrial cooperation—not least for the reason that joint research, development and production in this area promise more cost-effective solutions. Obstacles to cooperation, however, are different national policies, business practices and economic structures (e.g. private enterprises in Nato countries and state enterprises in Russia) as well as pervasive secrecy and bureaucracy. In order to remove some of the obstacles and improve the preconditions for successful defence industrial cooperation, a project has been set up with the participation of seventeen NRC members and Switzerland. The project has already contributed to greater transparency and mutual confidence. Another result thus far is the compilation of a hand book that provides information on the documentation necessary for military-industrial cooperation.

### **Other Areas of Cooperation**

The areas of cooperation dealt with thus far are characterized by its broad scope. There are, however, areas which have a more limited focus. One of these

is the *Cooperative Airspace Initiative* for cooperation in air space management and control. Its purpose is to ensure the immediate transmission of important data on civil and military air situation between Russia and Nato member states. Air space safety and transparency are to be increased and thereby the danger reduced that terrorists use aircraft for attacks on civilian or military targets.

*Logistics* play a key role for mobile forces engaged in multinational operations remote from their home bases. To ensure the flow of supplies, improved coordination and the pooling of resources are necessary. Several NRC initiatives deal with logistic cooperation, both civilian and military. By means of a comprehensive exchange of information—for instance, concerning logistic practices, employment principles, structures and experiences—a solid basis for mutual understanding in that field is to be created. Tangible results thus far have not been achieved, not least because logistics is a difficult area even among Nato members. However, there has been some progress in the practical cooperation on air transport and air-to-air refueling. Agreements are being prepared for the efficient redeployment of troops for joint operations and exercises. Furthermore, an agreement is now in place, signed at the Nato summit in Bucharest in April 2008, which provides support of ISAF in Afghanistan. The accord is to facilitate ground transport of non-military goods on a northern route through Russian and Central Asian territory. Another agreement under negotiation concerns air transport to Afghanistan to allow use of Russian air space and cargo aircraft. All this demonstrates that Moscow, for reasons of its own, is clearly interested in the success of ISAF and underlines the fact that practical cooperation is feasible when Nato and Russian interests coincide. The accord reached on ground transport and the successful conclusion of the talks on air transport could also provide a first impulse to overcome the stagnation prevalent at present in Nato-Russia cooperation.

Cooperation in the response to *civil emergencies* concentrates on the improvement of interoperability, more effective procedures and the exchange of information and experience. Several seminars have been conducted and exercises held, e.g. in Russia in 2002 and 2004, and in Italy in 2006. These have contributed to enhance civil-military cooperation in responding to catastrophes and terrorist attacks. In the exercise conducted in Italy, 400 representatives from 29 Nato and partner countries had to deal with the task of neutralizing a “dirty bomb” planted by fictitious

<sup>19</sup> See “NRC Working Group on Defence Reform and Cooperation,” [www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/EN/structures\\_11.shtml](http://www.nato-russia-council.info/htm/EN/structures_11.shtml).

terrorists. The operation of multinational teams in that simulated attack permitted testing of procedures and communications systems, and to draw conclusions for necessary improvements.

Priority in the *cooperation in science* in the framework of the Nato program “Science for Peace and Security” is the application of science to the protection against terrorism and other threats. This concerns the detection of explosives, safeguards against chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear materials, research into social and psychological consequences of terrorism as well as internet security and transport safety. Yet other fields of cooperation deal with the prediction and prevention of catastrophes, and with ecological problems caused by civil and military activities. Two research scholarships were instituted at the Nato Defence College in Rome in order to support research on military reform. Overall, the science program is able to dispense 221 scholarships for Nato member and partner countries. In 2006, 51 Russian researchers received scholarships under the program.

## Military Cooperation

Practical cooperation between the armed forces is one of the most important and multifaceted areas of cooperation between Russia and Nato. To be achieved in this context is the exchange of information about structures, processes and procedures as well as command and control practices so as to further mutual understanding and improve the conditions for interoperability. Concerning counter-terrorism, missile defence and logistics, civil and military approaches usually complement each other. The subsequent portrayal focuses on the latter aspect.

As another preface to the examination of Nato-Russia military cooperation, not all the planned activities are taking place. For instance, according to Nato reports, in 2006, 70 of 82 planned activities were carried out. In 2007, 83 activities were included in the annual work plan and yet again a significant part of them failed to be implemented.<sup>20</sup> Cancellations by Russia, which account for the major part of the unrealized projects, were due to insufficient funding, unsatisfactory knowledge of foreign language or political intervention—the latter demonstrating that

cooperation does depend on the political climate existing at any given time. Yet at the same time, the fact that in 2007 practically the same number of projects was agreed upon as in the preceding year shows that Russia continues to be interested in maintaining the fabric of relations with Nato.

**Exercises and Training.** When troops are called up for common peacekeeping or crisis management operations, they have to be able to operate in multinational command and force structures. Improvement of interoperability, therefore, is an important goal of military cooperation between Russia and Nato. The alliance has developed a corresponding framework program, important components of which are training and exercises but also force employment principles, technical standards and procedural questions. The establishment of interoperability with the 15th motorized rifle brigade in Samara, which in the Russian armed forces is designated for peacekeeping operations, is one of 50 individual measures planned by Nato’s Supreme Headquarters Europe (SHAPE). The Nato military liaison mission in Moscow in 2005 administratively supported more than 250 program activities, in the course of which about 1,000 officers, men and women participated (in comparison, in 2003 there were approximately 70 activities with about 400 individual participants). The major part of these activities concerned problems of interoperability. This applied also, among other things, to several joint maneuvers of Nato and Russia, including a naval exercise, and a number of bilateral exercises in which individual members of the alliance and Russia participated.

**Status of Forces.** In May 2007 the Duma ratified the Status of Forces Agreement, (SOFA) which had been prepared in April 2005 by Nato and Russia under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The agreement can be regarded as another sign of normalization of relations since all Nato countries have concluded such agreements with each other. The purpose of these accords is to codify the conditions for the presence of the respective armed forces on the territory of the partner states. This concerns the legal status of the armed forces, financial and fiscal matters and, as the case may be, immunity from prosecution. The agreement will facilitate joint maneuvers in Russia, or with Russia in Nato member countries, and to ensure the transport of Nato troops, equipment and supplies to Afghanistan.

<sup>20</sup> “Fact Sheet on Nato-Russia Military Cooperation,” [www.nato.int/docu/comm/2007/0705-chod/fact-sheet-nato-russia.pdf](http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/2007/0705-chod/fact-sheet-nato-russia.pdf).

**Operation Active Endeavour.** Russian participation in this operation was, as mentioned above, envisaged in the joint action plan against terrorism of December 2004, and originally two Russian combat ships and a supply vessel were to take part.<sup>21</sup> However, the Atlantic Alliance was able only, after lengthy interoperability tests with Nato vessels, to give the green light for the participation of one Russian ship, the frigate “Pytliv,” on September 15, 2006. According to informal Nato sources, the frigate operated in the allied task force for about a week and then left it. One year later, it was the frigate “Ladny” that was dispatched by the Russian Navy to take part in the Mediterranean operation but only for three weeks. As it turned out, the preparation of these vessels for their integration into a Nato task force was more difficult and consumed more efforts than expected because the Russian crews had to be familiarized with Alliance communications systems and procedures and often did not possess sufficient knowledge of English. For the first time, Russian units were using the same encryption as Nato. For the year 2008, plans envisage participation of a third Russian unit in OAE.

**Search and Rescue at Sea.** After the sinking of the nuclear submarine “Kursk” in August 2000, an accident in which all 118 crew on board perished, Nato and Russia embarked upon closer cooperation in the search and rescue at sea. In February 2003, a framework agreement was concluded between the two actors on the extraction and rescue of submarine crews. Since then, corresponding exercises have been held regularly.

**Conclusion.** As broad as the military cooperation between Russia and Nato may be, in regard to practically every aspect of that cooperation Russia, at some stage in the process or *ex post facto*, is on record of having attached qualifications and limitations, put forward reservations or demanded special treatment. This fact of Russia-Nato cooperative life has to be borne in mind when embarking on a realistic assessment of assets. Before turning to this, it is necessary to examine conflicts and liabilities of the relationship.

<sup>21</sup> “Nato-Russia Action Plan on Terrorism” [fn. 11] and “Meeting of the Nato-Russia Council at the Level of Foreign Ministers,” Nato Headquarters Brussels, December 9, 2004, [www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p041209e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p041209e.htm).

## Areas of Conflict

### The “Putin System”

Domestic political developments in Russia have increasingly led to controversy and political conflict between Russia and the West, including Nato.<sup>22</sup> After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there were widespread expectations in the West that the new Russia would be democratic, based on the rule of law, market-oriented with fair competition and would develop a civil society. In the course of Putin’s second term in office, however, a political system was created—labeled “Putin system” by academic specialists—that distanced itself from the principles of liberal democracy. “Soviet” principles again became important building blocs in the political architecture. These include the abolition of checks and balances, centralization of political, economic and social processes, the reconstitution of a monolithic party on the shape of United Russia and attendant mass organizations for the mobilization of society (e.g. the youth organization *Nashi*), limitation of the freedom of the media, curtailment of NGOs critical of the government and the removal of mechanism that could be used to hold the government and the bureaucracy to account.<sup>23</sup>

The feature of Russian domestic politics that is of primary importance for the relationship between Nato and Russia, however, is the increased influence of the representatives of the power ministries and agencies, the *siloviki*. Among them, former and current members of the internal security agency FSB, one of the successor organizations of the Soviet KGB, play a prominent role.<sup>24</sup> For the relationship between Russia and Nato,

this poses three problems. First, the new power elite tends to project and impose its conceptions of domestic order to the foreign policy realm. Second, they adhere to values which are significantly different from those in Western politics and society. This is important for the Nato-Russia relationship since the Western Alliance is not only an association of states having common or similar security interests but also a community based on values. Third, the *siloviki* cling to stereotypes of national and international reality at odds with those prevalent in the West. These include traditional stereotypes about Nato.

### Outdated Stereotypes

One of the widely shared stereotypes in Russia, and one that is especially apt to poison the relationship with Nato, is the idea that influential circles in the West—above all, in the United States—were now, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, aiming at the dissolution of Russia. In the pursuit of this objective, the image continues, they were using Nato as one of their instruments. Putin not only has failed to counteract such perceptions but has provided backing for them.<sup>25</sup> Practically irrespective of political atmosphere of the day, Nato in Russian portrayals, time and again is characterized as an aggressive alliance. The Alliance, Putin ruled at the beginning of his first term in office, “was and is a military-political bloc with all the threats that are inherent in an alliance of this kind.”<sup>26</sup> In October 2003, the then

<sup>22</sup> The likelihood that this would occur was already evident during Putin’s first term in office; see Adomeit, *Putins Westpolitik* [fn. 1]; see also Heinrich Vogel, *Russland ohne Demokratie—Konsequenzen für das Land und die europäische Politik*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 38 (October 2004), and James Sherr, *Russia and the West: A Reassessment*, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, The Shrivenham Papers, No. 6 (January 2008).

<sup>23</sup> See Heinrich Vogel, “Russischer Neokonservatismus und die europäische Politik,” *Internationale Politik*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (February 2008), pp. 44–52.

<sup>24</sup> The rise of the *siloviki* has been comprehensively documented and analyzed by Eberhard Schneider, *Putins zweite Amtszeit—Stärkung der Machtvertikale und wachsender Einfluss des*

FSB, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 1 (January 2006); “Russia under Putin: The Making of a Neo-KGB State,” and “Putin’s People: The Former KGB Men Who Run Russia Have the Wrong Idea about how to Make It Great,” *Economist*, August 24–31, 2007, [www.economist.com/world/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=9682621](http://www.economist.com/world/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9682621).

<sup>25</sup> Thus, to take just one of the many examples, on May 26, 2004, Putin said in his annual message (*poslanie*) to the federal assembly (Duma plus Federation Council): “Not everyone in the world wants an independent, strong and self-assured Russia”; [www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/2021\\_64906.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/05/26/2021_64906.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> Putin in an interview with the *Financial Times* (online), December 11, 1999.



defence minister and current first deputy premier, Sergey Ivanov, imputed to the military planning and the political declarations of Nato an “anti-Russian orientation.”<sup>27</sup> And at the 43rd *Munich International Security Conference* in February 2007 Putin called the eastward enlargement of Nato a “serious provocation.”<sup>28</sup>

Such characterizations set in motion a damaging interaction: As the power elite in Moscow time and again decries “Nato’s advance to the Russian borders” and thereby evokes associations of encirclement, it reinforces a siege mentality among the population and fuels anti-Western sentiment that is never far removed from the surface of public opinion. Thus, polls reveal that 80 to 85 per cent of the Russian population has a negative predisposition to Nato.<sup>29</sup> These attitudes and attendant threat perceptions among the population, in turn, are used by the political leadership to legitimize its rule, build on the “vertical of power,” strengthen its control over the “strategic sectors” of the economy and to increase defence expenditures.

Nato has made some attempts to counteract the negative stereotypes. For instance, from May 11–26, 2006, a “Nato-Russia Rally” took place in Russia. The rally consisted in a series of public events all over the country, from Vladivostok to Kaliningrad. Its purpose, according to Nato Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, was to raise “the awareness of the new reality of partnership and cooperation.”<sup>30</sup> However, given the inauspicious conditions outlined above, it is doubtful whether such exercises in public diplomacy have much chance of success. Decision-making processes in the “Putin system” do not run bottom-up but the other way around. Therefore, if the interaction between negative stereotypes of the Alliance among the population and the utilization of these perceptions by the leadership is to be stopped, the Kremlin has to take initiatives to break the damaging cycle.

Diverging concepts of domestic and international order and negative stereotypes increase distrust—on

both sides. This has consequences for Russia-Nato relations on post-Soviet space.

## Rivalry on post-Soviet Space

In Moscow today, thinking in terms of spheres of influence, correlation of forces and zero-sum games (the loss of one side is the gain of the other) is as prevalent as in the Soviet past. Thus, Putin has stated that, in international relations, “no vacuum” could exist, and therefore: If Russia were to abstain from an active policy in the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] or even embark on an unwarranted pause, this would inevitably lead to nothing but to other, more active states vigorously filling this political space.”<sup>31</sup>

Russia’s attitudes and behavior in the area from the Baltic to Central Asia show that political practice is congruent with the precepts of Realist theory. Moscow, for instance, is intent on fostering CIS integration—which, according to Putin, is the “main priority” of Russian foreign policy—both bilaterally and by means of organizations such as the Common Economic Space and the Eurasian Economic Community.<sup>32</sup> Military integration in the CIS area, too, is one of the means used and one to be strengthened—as witnessed, for example, in the upgrading of the 1992 Collective Security Treaty, in 2002, to Collective Security Treaty *Organization*. The fact that Moscow regards the post-Soviet space as its sphere of interest and strives to retain as much influence there as possible is evident in its policies *vis-à-vis* the sub-regions and individual countries of this area.

**The Baltic States.** Russia’s attitudes and policies towards the Baltic states demonstrate that its foreign policy establishment still has not reconciled itself with Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian membership in Nato. Putin, for instance, has stated: “The manner in which the Baltic States joined Nato is sheer boorishness.”<sup>33</sup> Similarly, deputy foreign minister Vladimir

27 *Aktual’nye zadachi razvitiia Vooruzhennykh Sil* [fn. 3].

28 Putin at the 43rd Munich International Security Conference, February 11, 2007, [www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?sprache=en&id=179](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?sprache=en&id=179).

29 Igor Plugatar, “Atlantisty proigryvaiut v Kieve, no torzhestvuut v Tbilisi” [The Atlanticists Lose in Kiev but Are Triumphant in Tbilisi], *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, September 29, 2006.

30 Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the NRC meeting at the level of foreign ministers, April 27–28, 2006, in Sofia; see [www.nato.int/docu/speech/2006/s060428c.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2006/s060428c.htm).

31 Putin in a speech at the conference of Russian ambassadors on July 12, 2004, [www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2004/07/74399.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2004/07/74399.shtml).

32 Putin in his annual message (*poslanie*) to the Federal Assembly in April 2005, [www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml). In his annual message of April 2006 he said: “The relations with our closest neighbors were and are the most important part of Russia’s foreign policy.”

33 Putin at a meeting with foreign participants of the forum

Chizov is on record as having said: "I can tell you quite frankly and unmistakably that this [the accession of the Baltic States to Nato] does not please us."<sup>34</sup> Russian government officials and military leaders have stated that it would be "very negative" if Nato forces or equipment would be stationed in the Baltic States, in fact, that "any footprint, as small as it may be" would be unacceptable.<sup>35</sup> In particular, they have voiced their objection to the inclusion of the three countries into Nato's integrated air defence. They have, for that reason, opposed Nato's F-16 air patrols and criticized E-3A (AWACS) reconnaissance flights in Baltic air space. Yury Baluevsky, in his then position of deputy chief of the general staff, even warned of "adequate countermeasures" if Nato were to "exacerbate the situation in the proximity of Russia's borders."<sup>36</sup> Another military spokesman alluded to such possible countermeasures, stating that Russia would station S-300 air defence missiles at the western borders of Belarus so as to bolster the joint Russian-Belarus air defence.<sup>37</sup>

**Belarus.** In reaction to U.S. plans for the deployment of components of a strategic missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic, Russia has issued warnings that it could station weapons systems in Belarus to deal with this alleged threat. Officials have even warned that Russia could deploy in its neighboring country weapons systems "which have something to do with nuclear weapons."<sup>38</sup> This cryptic reference, as military spokesmen later clarified, was to the SS-26 Iskander short-range missile, which can be equipped with nuclear warheads. Belarus, moreover, wants

to furnish its own missile forces with this weapons system.<sup>39</sup> All of this serves to underline that Moscow and Minsk are closely cooperating in military affairs, not only on air and missile defence and tactical missiles but also on border protection.

The military cooperation between Russia and Belarus is proceeding irrespective of the fact that, for Nato, Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko is *persona non grata*. In disputes between the two countries in January and August 2007 Belarus lost its privileged position in the gas and oil trade with Russia. At several stages in the controversy, Moscow exerted severe pressure on Minsk. However, this change of attitude and policy has nothing to do with an altered approach in the Kremlin in order to persuade or force Lukashenko to change course and move in the direction of democracy, a law-based state, a market economy with fair competition, and a civil based society. It is rather connected with a change in perceived Russian self-interest and profits. Thus, as in other areas of the post-Soviet space, Russian and Nato policies run at cross-purpose.

**Moldova.** In its relations with Moldova, Russia—or at least parts of the power elite in Moscow—also endeavours to retain control and to exert influence on domestic developments and the foreign policy orientation of the country. Although Chisinau actively cooperates with Nato in the PfP framework, it does not, because of constitutional restrictions, strive for Nato membership. Moldova's biggest problem, however, is the loss of control over Transnistria, where separatists supported by Moscow have established an orthodox communist regime with all its features such as concentration of power among the few, bureaucratic arbitrariness, suppression of freedoms and a pervasive secret service. Russia is posturing as the guarantor of peace and security and strictly opposes the internationalization of the conflict, including any possible Nato-Russia peacekeeping mission. As its preferred solution it has advanced a plan of a "joint state," that is, a Moldovan-Transnistrian entity that would *de facto* cement a separate Transnistrian state protected by Russian military power. The Kremlin has rejected any criticism that it is exerting any pressure on Chisinau but representatives of the middle echelons of the Russian "vertical of power" are less sanguine about it. One of them has stated with

"Russia on the Eve of the New Millennium" on September 6, 2004, in Novo-Ogarovo; as quoted by one of the participants, Nikolay Zlobin, Director of the Russia and Asia Program at Center for Defence Information, Washington, D.C., *Izvestiia* (online), September 10, 2004. The term which Putin used was *khamstvo* (rudeness, boorishness).

<sup>34</sup> Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizov at a press conference on June 24, 2004, <http://www.fednews.ru>; see also RIA Novosti (in Russian), June 25, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Thus, for instance, the then special advisor to the president on foreign policy, Sergei Iastrzhembskii, in March 2004 in an interview with the *Financial Times* during a visit at Nato HQ; see Judy Dempsey, "Moscow Warns Nato Away From the Baltics," *Financial Times*, March 1, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> "Russia Warns U.S. on Baltic Deployment," IHT, 19.3.2004, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> "Russische Raketen Richtung Westen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 3, 2004, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> Statement by the Russian ambassador in Minsk, Alexander Surikov, RIA Novosti, August 28, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> "Weißrussland will auch aufrüsten," *Russland Aktuell*, [www.aktuell.ru](http://www.aktuell.ru), November 14, 2007.

disarming frankness: “The Russian army will remain in the region as a stability factor. Moscow needs guarantees that the Moldovan leaders sincerely want to become a strategic partner within the Commonwealth of Independent States. ... Chisinau [must] realize that if it tries to sit on two chairs—European and Russian—it will fall to the ground.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, Moldova faces a stark choice: It either gives up Nato and EU orientations or it will continue to suffer economic and political consequences.

**Ukraine.** Ukraine, too, is one of the foci of conflict in the Nato-Russia relationship. The Russian foreign and defence establishment does not, in principle, deny that Ukraine has the right to join Nato. However, as former defence minister Ivanov has explained, the accession of Ukraine would be a problem because the country “has formed a single whole with Russia for centuries.” The two countries “shared historical and cultural values, and the unity of interests and numerous family ties give a special character to relations between our peoples.” For these reasons, any “attempt at a sharp and hardly justified switchover to Western values may become a serious destabilizing factor [sic], primarily for Ukrainian society itself.”<sup>41</sup> Another argument used by Russian political and military leaders is that if Kiev wanted to become a member of the Alliance, it “would have to annul its obligations in relation to the [Russian] Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol until 2017.”<sup>42</sup> Finally, “the majority of Ukrainians do not want to integrate with Nato, while part of the political elite does not wish to exacerbate relations with Russia.”<sup>43</sup>

To emphasize its opposition to Ukrainian Nato membership, Moscow has issued various threats, supported anti-Nato demonstrations on the Crimea and made counterproposals such as, for instance, offering safeguards against external interference in

<sup>40</sup> Vasily Zubkov, “Russia–Moldova: Kremlin Wants Deeds, Not Words,” *RIA Novosti*, August 28, 2006. Zubkov is head of the RIA Novosti’s section on economic affairs.

<sup>41</sup> Ivanov in an interview with *La Stampa* February 9, 2006, quoted on the website of the Russian defence ministry, [www.mil.ru](http://www.mil.ru); see also *Interfax* (in Russian), February 9, 2006. The notion that Western values could be a destabilizing factor (for Russia) became evident in Russian reactions to the Orange Revolution.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* Ivanov’s interpretation of the Nato treaty or convention to the effect that Kiev, if it wanted to become a member of Nato, had to annul its agreements with Moscow on the Black Sea Fleet, is not shared by the alliance.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

Ukraine’s internal affairs.<sup>44</sup> The threats were especially strong prior to and at the April 2008 Nato summit in Bucharest, where the Alliance was to decide whether or not to offer Ukraine (and Georgia; see below) a Membership Action Plan (MAP)—usually a prelude to actual membership. Thus, after talks with Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko in Moscow in February 2008, Putin linked possible Ukrainian membership in Nato (“limitation of Ukrainian sovereignty”) to the US plans for the stationing of anti-ballistic missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic and saying that Russia would have to take “counter-measures” and “be forced to target its nuclear offensive systems at Ukraine.”<sup>45</sup> In April, after the meeting of the Nato-Russia Council, which Putin attended, he stated unequivocally (having in mind both Ukraine and Georgia): “The presence of a powerful military bloc on our borders, whose members are guided, in particular, by Article 5 of the Washington treaty, will be seen by Russia as a direct threat to our country’s security.”<sup>46</sup>

Although, officially, both Nato and Nato member countries deny that the refusal to offer MAP to Ukraine (and Georgia) at the Bucharest summit had anything to do with Russian threats, unofficially, concerns about possible Russian reactions, including the future cooperation between the Alliance and Russia, did play a significant role. In the case of Ukraine, another important reason was, indeed, the low level of public support for Nato membership in the country.

**Georgia.** It appears that even more so than with Ukraine, Nato’s abstention from offering a Membership Action Plan to Georgia had much to do with Russian threat postures. On September 21, 2006,

<sup>44</sup> If anyone were to interfere in Ukrainian internal affairs, Putin has said, Russia would “provide assistance to our closest neighbour the fraternal Ukrainian republic, to protect her,” and “in that case, I assure you, the presence of Russia’s Fleet would not be irrelevant.” Quotation and analysis by Vladimir Socor, “Putin Offers Ukraine ‘Protection’ for Extending Russian Black Sea Fleet’s Presence,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 3, No. 200, October 30, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> At the joint press conference in Moscow on February 12, 2008, [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/02/12/2027\\_type63377type63380\\_160013.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/02/12/2027_type63377type63380_160013.shtml).

<sup>46</sup> At the press conference in Bucharest on April 4, 2008, after the meeting of the Nato-Russia Council, [http://www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml?day=4&month=04&year=2008&value\\_from=&value\\_to=&date=&stype=&dayRequired=no&day\\_enable=true&Submit.x=11&Submit.y=10](http://www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml?day=4&month=04&year=2008&value_from=&value_to=&date=&stype=&dayRequired=no&day_enable=true&Submit.x=11&Submit.y=10).

Nato had offered Tbilisi the instrument of Intensified Dialogue.<sup>47</sup> Yet even to this step, Russia reacted in a manner that did not leave any doubt about the extent of Russia's opposition to Georgian Nato membership. That reaction, in turn, was linked to one of the many crises in Georgian-Russian relations, this one caused by the arrest of Russian officers of the GRU military intelligence in the same month—a step to which Tbilisi was legally entitled. Putin, in response, accused the Georgian leadership of having adopted a policy of “state terrorism”<sup>48</sup> and of following, “both inside the country and in the international arena, the policy of [Stalin's secret police chief] Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria.”<sup>49</sup> Defence minister Ivanov claimed that “banditry” in Georgia had become government policy; the situation in the country were “reminiscent of 1937.”<sup>50</sup> In rapid succession, Russia was taking steps and adopting postures usually associated with impending military intervention, including the withdrawal of embassy staff; deportations of ethnic Georgians from Russia; closure of the state borders; rupture of road, rail, sea, and air communications; stop of postal services and money transfers; orders of “shoot to kill” to Russia's remaining military forces in the country; and the announcement of naval maneuvers off the Georgian coast.

Significantly for the present inquiry, Russian foreign minister Lavrov linked the Georgian moves to Nato, saying that “the latest [Georgian] provocation and latest statements with regard to the Kodori Gorge, which are in conflict with all existing accords, followed close on the heels after the Nato countries' endorsement of the policy of intensified cooperation with Georgia.”<sup>51</sup> He also voiced suspicion that Georgia

wanted to instrumentalize Nato for a military solution to end the “frozen conflicts” in its breakaway provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>52</sup>

Nato-Russian controversy on these issues sharpened in quick succession in the weeks after the Bucharest summit as Putin signed a decree authorizing direct official relations between Russian government bodies and Abkhazia and South Ossetia, accepting as valid the secessionist authorities' “legislation” in the respective territories; Russia announced the deployment of additional troops in Abkhazia, supposedly as a reaction against “Georgian troop deployments” in the Kodori Gorge region of Abkhazia;<sup>53</sup> a Russian MIG 29 fighter jet, apparently operating from Abkhazia, shot and destroyed a Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle over Georgian airspace; and foreign minister Lavrov warned that “If Georgia puts in place the threat it has made on a number of occasions about the use of force in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, we would be forced to take retaliatory measures to protect the lives of our citizens.”<sup>54</sup>

Nato reacted to these moves with sharp rebukes, asserting that “the steps taken by Russia and [its] rhetoric concerning the threat of force have undermined Georgia's territorial integrity” and that “the decision to send more troops to Abkhazia does not contribute to stability but undermines it.”<sup>55</sup>

**Central Asia.** Given the recent moves by Russia allowing Nato civilian goods to be supplied to ISAF in Afghanistan on a northerly route through Russia, the on-going negotiations concerning air transport to Afghanistan and the possible use of Russian cargo planes for that purpose, the divergence of Nato and Russian positions and policies in Central Asia is more ambiguous than on European post-Soviet space. Whereas Putin, after September 11, 2001, had—perhaps *nolens volens*—accepted a United States military

said that the gorge would henceforth be known as Upper Abkhazia and that the restoration of central power there would lead to the return of Abkhazia proper to Georgian control.

<sup>52</sup> In an interview the defence ministry's newspaper, *Krasnaia zvezda* (online), December 12, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> However, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia confirmed that there had not been any unusual Georgian troop deployments near the conflict zones.

<sup>54</sup> Foreign minister Lavrov on April 29, 2002, at a meeting with EU officials, Reuters, April 29, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Nato spokesman James Appathurai on April 29, 2008, after a meeting of Allied ambassadors with Russian foreign minister Lavrov, *Georgia Update* (online), May 1, 2008.

<sup>47</sup> “Nato Offers Intensified Dialogue to Georgia,” *Nato Update*, September 21, 2006, [www.nato.int/docu/update/2006/09-september/e0921c.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2006/09-september/e0921c.htm).

<sup>48</sup> “Moskva i Tbilisi na poroge kholodnoi voiny,” *Pervyi kanal—novosti*, October 1, 2006. Putin's charge of “state terrorism” was carried by the First Channel of Russian TV but deleted on the Kremlin's website.

<sup>49</sup> At a session of the Russian national security council on October 1, 2006, [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/10/01/0000\\_type63378\\_111833.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/10/01/0000_type63378_111833.shtml).

<sup>50</sup> “Rossiia trebuet osvobodzheniia voennykh v Gruzii i vvodit otvetnye mery,” *Agentstvo natsionalnykh novostei*, September 28, 2006.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted by Yuri Simonian et al., “Tbilisi proshel tochku vozvrata,” *Nezavisimatai gazeta*, September 29–30, 2006. The Kodori Gorge separates Georgia from Abkhazia. Earlier in the summer, Tbilisi had successfully dislodged a local militia leader who dominated the gorge and installed an Abkhaz government in exile there. Georgian president Saakashvili

presence in the region, in July 2005 the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at its summit meeting in the Kazakh capital of Astana, reportedly on Russian initiative, demanded the withdrawal of US forces and closure of their bases within two years. Uzbek president Islam Karimov, presumably for reasons of his own, demanded that Washington close its air base in Khanabad even within six months, a demand with which Washington had to comply.<sup>56</sup> However, the US has continued access to the Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan so as to support its “Enduring Freedom” operation in Afghanistan. But if there is more ambiguity about US-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, it may have much to do with the fact that initial assumption in 2001 about the strength and duration of American influence in the region have turned out to be exaggerated and the Russian position in the area has been strengthened.

### CFE Treaty and Adaptation

Yet another liability on the balance sheet of the Nato-Russia relationship is the December 2007 “moratorium”—*de facto* the cancellation—of Russian adherence to the treaty on conventional forces in Europe. One of the foundations of Nato-Russian controversies lies in the link which the Alliance has drawn between conventional arms control and Russia’s military presence on post-Soviet space: In May 2000, the Nato council at its ministerial meeting in Florence, Italy, adopted a decision which provided that Nato would ratify CFE treaty adaptations only if Russia were to meet the obligations it had assumed *vis-à-vis* Georgia and Moldova. The adaptations were, after lengthy prior negotiations, signed at the OSCE summit meeting in Istanbul in November 1999 but agreement, especially by Tbilisi and Chisinau, would not have been forthcoming if Russia had not committed itself to the withdrawal of its military forces, equipment and ammunition from the two newly independent states.<sup>57</sup> Second, the difficulty and complexity of the

<sup>56</sup> In November 2005, the base was closed. As for Karimov’s motives, American and Western European leaders had been pressing him to allow an international investigation into his regime’s bloody crackdown on demonstrators May 13 in the eastern Uzbekistan city of Andijan.

<sup>57</sup> Only Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have thus far ratified the treaty. The CFE treaty adaptations, including their appendices, are available online at [www.osce.org/documents/doclib/1999/11/13760\\_de.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/doclib/1999/11/13760_de.pdf) and [www.osce.org/](http://www.osce.org/)

issue also rests in the connection Putin has established between non-ratification of the CFE adaptations by Nato, the Alliance’s eastward enlargement and the planned stationing of components of the US strategic missile defence in Europe. Third, Russia is no longer content with the mere ratification of the CFE adaptations by the Nato member states but is intent on their revision—i.e. adaptation of the adaptations to allegedly new conditions.

From Nato perspectives, the 1999 adaptations already meet the new post-Cold War geostrategic situation in Europe: After the dissolution of the military-political blocs and the first Nato eastward enlargement, the core provisions of the 1990 CFE treaty were replaced by a complicated system of national and territorial ceilings. Destabilizing concentrations of weaponry were to be prevented by, among other things, limitations of equipment in smaller geographic areas. In that context, Moscow successfully sought to limit the military options of Nato. This occurred in the form of the Alliance committing itself, not to station “substantial combat forces” in the new member states, and these in turn accepted national limits. For instance, whereas the original CFE treaty theoretically would have allowed Poland to station 11 500 battle tanks, in the adapted treaty Warsaw consented to a territorial limit of 1,577 tanks, irrespective of whether these would be Polish or foreign.

Given the obvious advantages of the treaty and its adaptations for Russia, the Kremlin time and again has demanded their ratification by the Nato members, including the Baltic countries and Slovenia, four Alliance members, which did not exist as sovereign states when the CFE treaty was concluded in 1990. Moscow argued that their exclusion created a strategic grey area, in which Nato at least in theory could conventional and nuclear weapons without their being subject to any limitation or inspection and verification regime.<sup>58</sup> Russia, however, is now also expressing

[documents/doclib/1999/11/13761\\_de.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/doclib/1999/11/13761_de.pdf). This summary and analysis of the CFE treaty, its adaptations and implementation draws on Hans-Joachim Schmidt, *Die Anpassung des KSE-Vertrags und die Gefährdung der globalen Rüstungskontrolle*, Frankfurt a.M.: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK), HSFK-Report No. 5 (2000), and Gebhardt Weiß, *Zur Anpassung des KSE-Vertrages an neue Sicherheitsstrukturen in Europa*, Cologne: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien (BIOst), 1997, Aktuelle Analysen, Part 1, No. 45/1997; Part 2, No. 46/1997.

<sup>58</sup> Article XVIII of the adapted treaty specifies the conditions under which other OSCE member states can accede to the

dissatisfaction with the adaptations of 1999. This became evident at a conference of the member states of the CFE treaty called upon Russia's initiative in Vienna on June 15–17, 2007. The Russian negotiators specified their dissatisfaction in six points, calling them an “action plan for the revitalization of the treaty”<sup>59</sup> and repeated them at a meeting of representatives of the signatory states on October 1–2, 2007, near Berlin. The most important demands were as follows:

- ▶ The Baltic states had to be included in the treaty.
- ▶ The totality of all the arms and military equipment of the Nato members had to be reduced to the level that existed before the accession of the new (former Warsaw Pact and Union republic) Alliance members in the two rounds of enlargement.
- ▶ The flank limitations imposed upon Russia had to be removed.<sup>60</sup>
- ▶ The term “substantial combat forces” had to be specified (with Russia apparently regarding one brigade as the upper limit).<sup>61</sup>

The essence of these demands is unambiguous: The CFE treaty contributed to changes in the balance of forces in favour of Nato. In line with this argument, Putin complained shortly before issuing the decree threatening to exit from the CFE treaty that, in execution of its adaptations, Russia had withdrawn all its heavy weaponry behind the Urals and reduced the strength of its armed forces by 300 000 men. However, “our partners are filling Eastern Europe with new weapons: a new basis in Bulgaria, another in Romania,

treaty. The Baltic states have declared that they would join the treaty once it were ratified.

<sup>59</sup> *Rossiiskaia gazeta* (online), June 6, 2007. The subsequent list of demands in essence corresponds too the “explanations” (*spravka*) to the Putin's decree (*ukaz*) of July 14, 2007; see <http://balancer.ru/society/2007/07/17/topic-56512-Vladimir-Putin-podpisal-Ukaz-O-priostano.1184650429.html>.

<sup>60</sup> The flank zones comprise the Russian military districts North (previously Leningrad) and Northern Caucasus as well as an area in the southwest of Ukraine. In the context of its war in Chechnya, Russia had already expressed its dissatisfaction with the flank limitations of the treaty. As a result, in May 1996, the parties to the treaty agreed to modify the flank provisions in favor of Russia.

<sup>61</sup> The other demands were as follows: Fifth, the adaptations to the CFE treaty had to be in force by July 1, 2008, at the latest. Sixth, the conditions under which other states could accede to the treaty should be specified. Concerning the meeting of October 2007, see Vladimir Socor, “Action for Action” on the CFE Treaty: Opportunity and Risks,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 196, No. 4 (October 9, 2007).

a missile launching area and new missiles in Poland, and a radar installation in the Czech Republic.”<sup>62</sup>

Such complaints about the CFE treaty and alleged changes in the balance of power in favour of Nato are rather artificial, however. In practice, none of the 30 signatory states has exceeded the limits in the five weapons categories.<sup>63</sup> In order to increase its conventional armed forces strength in Europe, if that is, indeed, what Moscow has in mind, it would be necessary to leave the treaty because Russia, too, has remained below the allocated weapons ceilings. It is also quite unclear why Moscow regards developments in the conventional military sphere as potentially threatening since all current members of Nato together have 33 per cent fewer CFE treaty limited equipment than the sixteen Alliance members in 1990. Furthermore, the process of *reductions* in the armed forces strength of Nato countries is continuing rather than being reversed. It is also difficult to comprehend why the new Nato member states should be regarded as a military problem. In essence, the Baltic military “threat” in the case of Latvia consists of three tanks of Soviet origin (T-55) and in Lithuania of four L-39 aircraft, which could only with some imaginary effort be classified as combat aircraft.

As for the flank limitations, these, too, can be argued to be to Moscow's advantage. Whereas they do, indeed, limit Russian deployments, they also prevent Nato armed forces concentrations at the Russian borders.<sup>64</sup> Regarding the stationing of foreign troops in the Baltic states and the flank zone, it is difficult to discover “substantial combat forces” there—unless one were to regard their definition as being met by four Nato combat aircraft which operate from the Zokniai air base in Lithuania on a rotational basis for surveillance purposes. About 5,000 US soldiers have been deployed to Romania and Bulgaria but also on a rotational basis and with light armaments. Evidently, these forces, too, are neither intended nor usable for

<sup>62</sup> Putin at a press conference on May 31, 2007, with visiting Greek president Karolos Papoulias, [www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/05/31/1812\\_type63377type63380\\_132271.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/05/31/1812_type63377type63380_132271.shtml).

<sup>63</sup> This criticism of the attitude of the Russian government on CFE and its adaptations follows the analysis by the military correspondent of RIA Novosti, Alexander Khrumchikhin, “Will Nato and Russia Once Again Count Tanks and Aircraft in Europe?,” April 30, 2007, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20070430/64680846.html>.

<sup>64</sup> In the framework of the flank provisions (Article V CFE treaty), the arms limitations for Russia in the Leningrad and Northern Caucasus Military Districts were: 700 battle tanks, 1280 artillery pieces, 580 armored combat vehicles.

a surprise attack against Russia but for anti-terrorist operations outside Europe.

If Russia is really interested in ratification of the CFE treaty and its adaptations by the Nato member states, as it professes to be, it would be easy to achieve this objective by meeting the obligations it has assumed in Istanbul. According to Nato assessments, with the possible exception of the air base in Gudauta, Abkhazia, most of these have been met in Georgia; and in Moldova, only one or two battalions and ammunition would need to be withdrawn. It appears, however, that the Kremlin values its military presence in Abkhazia and Transnistria more highly than Nato CFE ratification. Furthermore, Russia's demands for additional adaptations of an as yet unratified treaty in addition to its threats to exit from another arms control agreements do not inspire confidence as to the motives behind the CFE "moratorium." Similar ambiguity relates to its attitudes towards missile defence.

### U.S. Missile Defence in Europe

Russia has repeatedly criticized the plans by the United States for the deployment of a radar station in the Czech Republic and interceptors in Poland. The deployment, Russian officials and officers argue, are not directed against Iran, North Korea or other "problem states" as the Bush administration contends but against Russia. The Kremlin has correspondingly threatened "countermeasures." It has warned that the stationing locations could become targets of the strategic rocket troops of the Russian armed forces. Russia, moreover, would consider leaving the Washington INF treaty for the complete abolition of medium and shorter range ballistic missiles and deploy them in reach of the prospective deployments sites, including in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. It has also, as mentioned, threatened to station Iskander missiles in Belarus. The exit from CFE, too, has been put into the context of "asymmetrical" countermeasures to the planned stationing of US missile defence in Europe.

As the arguments about conventional arms and the balance of power, the threat scenarios constructed from the planned US missile defence systems in Europe are not very credible. This is warranted by the following considerations:

- ▶ The flight trajectories of most of the land and all of the sea-based intercontinental missiles to the United States would not take a course over Europe

but the polar caps. Interceptors, therefore, could not reach offensive ballistic missiles launched from bases in central Russia.<sup>65</sup>

- ▶ The planned US systems in Poland are defensive and not offensive weapons, which could be used for a first strike against Russian missiles. They are also not equipped with a nuclear warhead, not even a conventional one, but designed to destroy hostile missiles solely through the force of their impact. These design features and their relevance for Russia have been acknowledged by Russian generals. Thus, the commander-in-chief of the Russian air force, General Vladimir Mikhailov, has assessed the potential American systems in Europe as "not threatening" since they were "stationary" and "not offensive missiles."<sup>66</sup>
- ▶ Russia possesses redundant offensive capabilities, which would not significantly be threatened by US interceptors in Poland in the planned numerical range of less than a dozen. This, too, has been admitted by Russian generals. For instance, the commander for the strategic rocket forces, General Nikolay Solovtsov, has stated: "The stationing of elements of the American anti-missile system [in Poland and the Czech Republic] will not substantially affect our strategic components."<sup>67</sup>
- ▶ If Moscow were really worried about US missile defence plans, the Russian criticism would be more appropriately directed not against the projected systems in Europe but against the existing systems and planned completion in the United States, that is, in Fort Greely in Alaska and on Vandenberg air force base in California.

In addition to threats Putin has also provided some incentives. At the June 2007 G-8 summit in Heiligen-

<sup>65</sup> Theodore Postol of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has asserted that the Pentagon's Missile Defence Agency (MDA) was understating the speed of US interceptor missiles by 30 percent and overstating the velocity of Russian offensive missiles by 15 per cent. The agency rejected these claims, saying that "MDA stands by its figures which are real, not hypothetical and are derived from actual hardware and software performance data from actual flight tests"; Nick Semenkovich, "Postol Speaks against U.S. Characterization of Missile Defence Site," *The Tech online edition*, October 10, 2007, [www-tech.mit.edu/V127/N46/postol.html](http://www-tech.mit.edu/V127/N46/postol.html).

<sup>66</sup> "Rossii ne nuzhno boiat'sia ob'ektov amerikanskoi PRO v Evrope" [Russis Does not Need to Fear US Missile Defence in Europa], *Echo Moskvy*, April 19, 2007; see also "Vzor 'Russkikh' AVAKSov" [A Look at the "Russian AWACS"], *Voенно-promyshlennyi kur'er*, April 25, 2007.

<sup>67</sup> *Interfax* (Moscow, in Russian), March 16, 2007.

damm, Germany, he surprised the Bush administration by offering that Russia and the United States jointly use the Russian-leased radar installation in Gabala, Azerbaijan. Use of the station, he argued, would not only make it unnecessary to build the facilities in Europe but also to station missile defences in space.<sup>68</sup> At his meeting with president Bush in his summer residence in Kennebunkport, Maine, in July of the same year he proposed joint use of the radar station in Armavir, then still under construction, near the southern Russian region of Krasnodar. Moreover, defence minister Ivanov suggested that the radar installation could become part of a global system for the protection against ballistic missiles, open also to neutral countries such as Austria, Finland and Sweden.<sup>69</sup>

The chances of a solution of the anti-missile problem are lessened by the fact that four projects concerning the United States, Russia and Europe are currently being discussed. These are, as already mentioned, first—on the basis of Putin’s initiative of February 2001—the project for the deployment of an all-European mobile system for protection against non-strategic missiles and safeguarding peacekeeping operations; second, the Nato Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence Program (ALTBMD) for the protection of forces engaged in military operations; third, the Nato feasibility study concerning the creation of Multi-Layered Ballistic Defence System, which would protect Nato territory against both tactical and strategic missile threats; fourth, the national American anti-missile defence system with its already deployed radar installations and interceptors in Alaska and California to which elements are to be added in Europe to cover about three fourth of European territory.

Proceeding from the statements by former defence minister Ivanov and generals Solovtsov and Mikhailov quoted above, one can safely conclude that high-ranking Russian officials and officers do not discern a credible threat to Russia emanating from the planned stationing of elements of the American system in East-Central Europe. In the Russian perception, it would seem, the challenge posed by the US plans is much more basic. It consists in the build-up of any military infrastructure of the United States and Nato in former Warsaw Pact countries and Union republics. To stop such a process appears currently to be the central con-

cern and direction of Russian reactions to the US anti-missile plans.

If this interpretation is correct, it would cast a different light on Russia’s warning with “counter-measures.” This applies in particular to Moscow’s warnings to leave the INF treaty. The fact of the matter is that the Russian defence establishment takes potential threats arising at Russia’s southern and eastern borders more seriously than it may appear. Putin and his generals have sporadically acknowledged that countries such as China, North Korea, South Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan und Israel already possess medium-range ballistic missiles and that other countries are in the process of developing them. This, Russian officials and military officers have argued, constituted a serious threat that made deployment of equivalent Russian weapons necessary. Russia has, in fact, already modernized missiles of shorter range and begun with research and development of medium-range nuclear missiles. This is to say, if Russia were to leave the INF treaty and began deploying medium and intermediate-range nuclear missiles, this would hardly constitute a reaction to US anti-missile plans in Europe but rather implementation of concepts discussed in the Russian defence ministry and general staff for quite a number of years in the context of possible threats from the south—and not only among themselves but also with their US counterparts.

Similar considerations apply to the on-going modernization of the Russian nuclear strategic forces. This process, too, is not to be interpreted as a reaction to the US anti-ballistic missile plans in Europe but part of a long-term arms program that is to provide at least the semblance of equality with the United States in the strategic nuclear area. This conclusion can be supported by the fact that priority of the modernization has been given to the production and deployment of mobile, land and sea-based offensive missiles to be equipped with multiple warheads which would be capable of overcoming even a comprehensive American anti-ballistic missile defence.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> For details see Hannes Adomeit and Alexander Bitter, *Russland und die Raketenabwehr*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP-Aktuell, No. 23 (April 2007); Hannes Adomeit, “Putin und die amerikanische Raketenabwehr in Europa: Ist ein Wettüsten ‘unvermeidlich’?,” *Politische Studien*, Vol. 415, No. 58 (September–October 2007), pp. 41–55; and Alexander Bitter, *Die Nato und die Raketenabwehr: Implikationen für Deutschland vor dem Gipfel in Bukarest 2008*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin), SWP Research Paper, No. 29 (October 2007).

<sup>68</sup> RIA Novosti (Moskau, in Russian), June 7, 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Ivanov in an interview with the “Vesti nedeli” news program on the second channel of Russian television, July 7, 2007.



## Balance Sheet of the Relationship

Comparison of the areas of cooperation and conflict in Russia-Nato relations shows that the weight of latter is greater than that of the former, that the liabilities exceed the assets. Whereas the breadth of the issues dealt with and the results achieved at the working group and expert committee levels in Brussels and Mons deserve positive recognition, they are counteracted and limited by disagreements and controversies at higher levels of decision-making. Even where there is agreement in principle, differences concerning tactics and implementation tend to sour the relationship. An important example of this is Nato, American and Russian cooperation and conflict over Iran.

In principle, Washington, Brussels and Moscow agree that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery should be stopped and that *Iran* should not be allowed to become a nuclear power. Russian foreign policy and defence spokesmen have repeatedly acknowledged that a nuclear armed Iran would run counter to Russian interests. Like their Western counterparts, Moscow officials have demanded that Teheran stop the enrichment of uranium, and sporadically they show themselves concerned that Iranian tests with medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles could be part of a program for the development of delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons.<sup>71</sup> Putin, on the other hand, has professed to be “convinced” that Iran “does not intend to build a nuclear weapon”;<sup>72</sup> Russia had “no objective proof for corresponding plans.”<sup>73</sup> Moreover, it was unclear, foreign minister Lavrov claimed, whether Iran had ever worked on a nuclear program.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Thus, for instance, in February 2008 after the test of an Iranian missiles which, according to information provided by Teheran, in 2009 would launch the first research satellite of the country into space, Russian deputy foreign minister Alexander Losiukov expressed doubt about Iran’s assurances that its nuclear program only served peaceful purposes; *Interfax* (in Russian), February 6, 2008.

<sup>72</sup> “Vladimir Putin gotovitsia k vizitu v Iran” [Vladimir Putin is Getting Ready for a Visit to Iran], *Rossiiskaia gazeta* (online), February 19, 2005; *Interfax* (in Russian) February 118, 2005.

<sup>73</sup> Putin at a press conference with visiting French president Nicolas Sarkozy on October 10, 2007, [www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru).

<sup>74</sup> Lavrov in reaction to the US National Intelligence Estimate of the beginning of December 2007, according to which

The policies conducted by Russia on the Iranian problem correspond to its verbal stance. Unlike Washington, Moscow does not consider the Islamic Republic as one of the main sponsors of international terrorism, let alone as its most important agent; refuses to recognize the radical Islamic organizations Hesbollah and Hamas supported by Iran and operating in Lebanon as well as in the Palestinian areas as “terrorist”; and stays out of the discussion on the extent to which Iran supplies weapons to Shiite militias in Iraq.

Irrespective of wide-spread international criticism of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad rhetoric and policies, Putin has *de facto* upgraded the regime in Teheran by bilateral meetings at the highest level and jointly with the Iranian president has supported the idea, directed in essence against Western interests, of the formation of a “Gas-OPEC.” Russia, furthermore, maintains close trade relations with Iran; exports weapons, for instance, Tor-M1 missiles capable of protecting nuclear installations against air and missile attack; and has begun furnishing the Bushehr nuclear power plant with uranium fuel rods.<sup>75</sup>

Taking into account these attitudes and policies on Iran, it has to be concluded that Russia—notwithstanding all professions of common interests with the West and consent to some symbolic sanctions unlikely

Iran in 2003 had terminated work on a nuclear weapons program; his statement of December 5, 2007, as reported on the foreign ministry’s website, [www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru).

<sup>75</sup> The delivery of fuel rods began in December 2007.—Concerning the upgrading of the Ahmadinejad regime, the first meeting between Putin and Ahmadinejad took place in September 2005 on the occasion of the convocation of the annual UN general assembly in New York. In June 2006, the two leaders met at the SOC summit conference in Shanghai. In October 2007, Putin visited Teheran, which was the first visit of a Russian head of state in Iran for 30 years.—As for the “Gas-OPEC,” at the Shanghai summit Putin told Ahmadinejad that the creation of an “energy club based on the SOC” was “an urgent matter;” Aleksei Nikol’skii *et al.*, “Neftegazovoe edinstvo. Putin predlagaet stranam ShOS sozdat’ energeticheskii klub” [Unity in Oil and Gas. Putin Proposes to the SCOOC Countries to Create and Energy Club], *RBK.ru* (online), June 19, 2006. In February 2007, Putin called the foundation of a GAS-OPEC an “interesting idea which we will about;” for the quotation and details on this issue see Adomeit, *Russlands Iran-Politik unter Putin* [fn. 14].

to impress Teheran—is not prepared to embark on more substantive sanctions, let alone enforcement action even if incontrovertible evidence were to emerge that Iran’s nuclear program has a military application. It would then be left to the United States (and Israel) to prevent the Iranian atomic bomb with all the potentially damaging consequences which such a course of action would have for the Near and Middle East.

A second major example for the gap between agreement in principle but disagreement over its application are joint *peacekeeping* or, in Russian terminology, peace-creating (*mirotvorcheskie*) operations. In the NRC, as mentioned, efforts have been made to lay the basis for such operations by working out procedural mechanisms and establishing interoperability between Nato allies and Russia. In practice, however, such operations are difficult to imagine. That applies to the “frozen conflicts” in Europe as much as to Afghanistan, where Russia leaves it to ISAF to cope with the resurgence of Taliban attacks, and to the Balkans. Given the divergence of Nato and Russian policies on the independence of Kosovo, regrettably the positive experience accumulated in Nato-Russia cooperation in SFOR and KFOR is unlikely to be repeated. One of the reasons for this is that the Russian contingent there was ere for all practical purposes subordinated to Nato command.<sup>76</sup> Such arrangements clearly run counter to the current Russian quest for “great power” status and more international prestige. This was shown clearly in September 2006 when Moscow rejected the inclusion of Russian forces in the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon and instead dispatched a battalion of sappers of the Russian 13th peacekeeping brigade in Samara under its own flag and only for a short time.

A third example for discrepancies between agreed upon principles and programs, on the one hand, and practical results on the other, is Russian *military reform*. The common objective was to build trust, and Nato expected that the plethora of dialogues, seminars, courses and exchange programs (mostly in one direction, however) would make an impact on the Russian

officers’ corps and help to shape central tenets of military reform. Such expectations turned out to have been unwarranted. The result of Russian reform efforts, to the extent that they were undertaken, has been summarized as “eleven lost years.”<sup>77</sup> Although the overall strength of the Russian armed forces was substantially reduced in 1991–1998, few structural changes have taken place. With 1.1 million armed forces of the defence ministry and about 600,000 in other armed formations (*drugie voiska*), Russia’s military is still far too bloated to be well trained and equipped with modern weapons. Its structure is still geared to fight a large-scale conventional war. It is badly led not least because a well trained corps of sergeants is lacking; hazing (*dedovshchina*) is commonplace; and the pool of healthy and educated conscripts is shrinking. The military remains a closed system that features as little transparency as the political institutions of the “Putin system.”

Two other examples concern Nato-Russia *military cooperation*. From Nato’s perspective, Operation Active Endeavour is the “flagship” of joint military cooperation and the fight against international terrorism. Yet particularly measured against the previous Russian engagement in the Balkans, the scope of cooperation is modest. As mentioned, it took several years of “preparation” until the “Pytlivy” was able to join OAE for just one week of joint operation. A year later, the “Ladny” took part only for three weeks. The Russian role in OAE, in other words, is not part of a comprehensive, long-term engagement but a short-term participation of a single vessel.

The agreement on the legal status of armed forces (SOFA) also took several years of preparation and Nato pressure for it finally to be ratified by Russia. It was signed in April 2005 but ratified by the Duma only in May 2007. Since this body usually “ratifies” policy determined by the Kremlin, it is safe to assume that political considerations were responsible for the delay.

<sup>77</sup> This is the conclusion by Russian military expert Alexander Golts, *Armia Rossii. Odinnadtsat’ poteriannykh let* [The Russian Army. Eleven Lost Years] (Moscow: Sakharov, 2004). Concerning the failure of military reform, particularly in its dimension of harmonizing armed forces development with democratization and the creation of a civil society but also as measured against the objectives of Putin’s parameters of change formulated in fall 2000, see Hannes Adomeit, “Putins Militärpolitik,” *Österreichische militärische Zeitschrift*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (July–August 2004), pp. 395–408, und “Starting from Scratch: Military Expert Colonel Vitaly Shlykov Says That Military Reform Can Only Happen if Russia Forgets Plans Made for the Cold War,” [www.russiaprofile.org](http://www.russiaprofile.org), June 2, 2007.

<sup>76</sup> The Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) exerted operational control over the Russian SFOR contingent through a Russian general who simultaneously acted as his deputy but who was only empowered to “advise” his chief on matters concerning the employment of the Russian SFOR troops. In the area of operations, which had been allocated to the Russian brigade, the US commander had exclusive control. This arrangement essentially was replicated in KFOR.

Although SOFA has now entered into force, Moscow is keen to play down its significance. Thus, in the course of ratification, the chairman of the Duma committee for international relations Konstantin Kosachev, reported that Russia in 2008 intended to carry out a total of 200 joint exercises with SOFA signatories but not a single of them having a strictly military focus. The exercises were rather designed to deal with the consequences of natural catastrophes and accidents.<sup>78</sup>

The liability part of the balance sheet should also include the replacement of Lieutenant-General Konstantin Totsky as Russia's permanent representative at Nato by Dmitry Rogozin in January 2008. The profile of the new ambassador and the circumstances surrounding his appointment make it appear probable that "great power" rhetoric and nationalist tendencies in evidence today among the Moscow power elite will now be represented more fully in Brussels.<sup>79</sup> In his function as Putin's special envoy on Kaliningrad negotiating with the EU in 2003 special conditions for access to the Russian exclave, he had demonstrated that it is not easy to reach compromises with him.

The negative balance on military cooperation can also be demonstrated by reference to statistical data: In the period from the beginning of 2003 until the end of 2007, Nato's Military Liaison Mission in Moscow had supported approximately 760 activities, 500 of which in implementation of NRC work programs. More than 1800 Russian officers and 2700 of their Nato counterpart had taken part in them. In 2007, however, the Russian participation shrunk below the level which it had had in 2004.

In view of these developments, questions need to be asked as to what the determinants may be that have led to the stagnation and, at times, crisis phenomena in the relationship between Russia and Nato. Only when these questions can satisfactorily be answered is it possible to reflect on chances for the revitalization of relations.

<sup>78</sup> "Russian Duma Ratifies Nato SOFA Agreement," *RIA Novosti*, June 23, 2007.

<sup>79</sup> "Dmitrij Rogosin zu Russlands Vertreter bei der Nato ernannt," *RIA Novosti* (in German), January 1, 2008.

## Determinants and Motive Forces

The factors and forces that shape current Russia-Nato relations are both endogenous and exogenous, that is, they are to be found both in domestic political processes in Russia and in international developments.<sup>80</sup> Analysis of Russian foreign policy, notably the hardening of international security attitudes and approaches, has included the following *endogenous* factors:

- ▶ *Domestic Political Instrumentalization.* It would be mistaken to take the negative turn in Russian foreign policy at face value. What essentially is at issue in Russian external relations are domestic political concerns: For the period of transition, ranging from the preparations for the December 2007 parliamentary elections through the presidential elections of March 2008 and the inauguration of the new president, the Kremlin needed a broad basis of legitimacy and popular support. In order to create such conditions, the leadership found it useful to play on existing anti-Western and notably anti-Nato sentiment.
- ▶ *Linkage.* Close connections between domestic and foreign policy are common to every political system. As for the current hardening of Russian international security policies, the concepts and practices of internal order, i.e. authoritarian notions of law and order, and centralizing features of the “Putin system,” are extrapolated and projected to the post-Soviet geopolitical space with negative consequences also for Russia’s relations with the West.
- ▶ *International Status and Prestige.* One of the components of the Russian foreign and defence establishment’s mind-set is the complex of not being taken seriously (enough) by other countries and leaders. This concerns above all the United States whose leaders seem still to regard Russia as a weak state

<sup>80</sup> The factors are discussed in detail by Hannes Adomeit, “Putins Paukenschläge,” *Internationale Politik*, No. 2 (February 2008), pp. 53–62. The emphasis there is on endogenous determinants of Russian behavior. As for exogenous factors, see Hans-Joachim Spanger, *Zwischen Ground Zero und Square One. George W. Bush und die Folgen der Simulation amerikanischer Russlandpolitik*, Frankfurt a.M.: Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (HSFK), HSFK-Report No. 9 (2007).

and far from accepting it as an equal politically, let alone militarily. The adoption of an uncompromising stance and threat postures could back up demands that Washington should treat Moscow as an equal partner.

- ▶ *Modernization of the Strategic Nuclear Forces.* As an extension of the previous explanation, one of the major goals of Putin and his generals has not only been conveyance of the notion of military-strategic parity with the United States but achievement of its reality. Corresponding programs, therefore, had been set in motion after the improvement of economic performance and the windfall profits from the high oil and gas prices had made this possible. These programs, however, were for foreign and domestic political purposes portrayed not as part of the “great power” quest but as a reaction to challenges and threats emanating from the United States and Nato.
- ▶ *Restructuring of the European Security Architecture.* Russia’s threats and demands, its exit from CFE and the threat to leave the INF treaty, and its criticism not only of Nato policies but also that of the EU, OSCE and the Council of Europe, are all interconnected and part of an attempt to restructure European security.
- ▶ *Policies from Positions of Strength.* Again as a corollary of the previous point, the power elite is riding on a wave of enhanced self-confidence based on the view that presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin, in a period of weakness of the Soviet and the Russian state, had made a wide range of concessions damaging to Russian security. Now, in a period of strength, these concessions had to be rescinded.
- ▶ *Utilization of a “Window of Opportunity.”* This explanation consists in the idea that the self-confidence and “great power” rhetoric of the political and military leadership are artificial, more pretense than actual conviction. In reality, they were entirely conscious of many deeply rooted deficiencies and factors of instability and that it now were opportune to use a window of opportunity that had opened because of the high oil prices and Western, notably European, perceptions that the Western industrialized countries are dependent on Russian

supplies. In order to assert its interests, Moscow is using not only the oil and gas lever but reminding the world of its military capabilities.

Exogenous determinants that have been made responsible for current Russian attitudes and approaches in international security policy, including on Nato, are connected above all with US foreign policy—or, more appropriately, to the views of that policy held by the Russian leadership. The following such perceptions are relevant here:

- ▶ *American Quest for Dominance.* The Bush administration were convinced that there is and should be only one power center globally, namely Washington. The American leaders had exceeded the limits of acceptable behavior in virtually all dimensions of policy—political, economic, humanitarian and, most of all, military. They were intent on imposing its policies, and political and social system, on all other states. They ignored basic principles of international law and tended to use force practically without constraint.<sup>81</sup> Finally, they regarded Nato as a mere instrument for the realization of their global political ambitions. Counterweights had to be constructed in order to constrain these dangerous tendencies.
- ▶ *Encroachment of the USA and Nato into Post-Soviet Space.* The planned stationing of components of the US strategic anti-ballistic missile system in Poland and the Czech Republic, the build-up of a military presence in Bulgaria and Romania, and the intention to continue Nato expansion through the inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia into Nato were all part of Washington's grand strategy and that of selected European allies to eradicate the power and influence of Russia on post-Soviet space. One of the means used in that endeavour constituted the "promotion of democracy" in the CIS countries, including support for anti-Russian forces and so-called non-governmental organizations." Such attempted advances of the US and its "new European" allies had to be countered by proactive policies.<sup>82</sup>
- ▶ *Misguided Approaches towards the USA.* In reaction to the terror attacks on September 11 on New York and Washington, Putin overruled domestic political

<sup>81</sup> This reconstruction of Russian perceptions builds on—in part *verbatim*—phrases Putin's speech in Munich in February 2007 [fn. 28].

<sup>82</sup> The differentiation between "new" and "old" Europeans was introduced by the then US defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, at the 41st Munich International Security Conference in February 2005.

opposition and embarked upon a course of close cooperation with the United States. This, however, had not been rewarded by the Bush administration. American decision-makers only reacted to pressure, not to appeals. For this reason, too, a harder line vis-à-vis the US was not only advisable but inalienable. In future, Washington would have to pay a price for Russian concessions.

Any attempt to make sense of this plethora of explanations, some of which mutually reinforcing, others mutually contradictory, should proceed from the realization that Russian policy is far too complex to be reduced to one single factor. Bearing in mind this caveat, the most plausible explanation for the current turn towards greater assertiveness in Russian security policies, including towards Nato, lies in a combination of endogenous and exogenous factors. As argued above, notwithstanding all efforts by Nato and individual member states, notably Germany, a political system has been created in Russia that bears little resemblance to Western liberal democracy but incorporates yet again many features of the Soviet system of government minus Marxist-Leninist ideology. One of the most important features of that system is the strong influence of the *siloviki*, who project their views on law and order and mechanisms of power acquisition and maintenance to international relations, including to Nato. The projections, however, were able to gain strength also because of the unilateralist policies of the American neoconservatives in power in Washington.

What are the consequences, then, that can be drawn from this? What chances exist to influence Russian attitudes and policies towards Nato?

## Consequences and Recommendations

This examination has shown that the expectations about a “dramatic breakthrough” and “qualitative improvement” in Nato-Russia relations after the terror attacks of September 2002 and the creation of the Nato-Russia Council in May 2002 have turned out to be unfounded. After an almost euphoric phase in the relationship until about mid-2004, a sense of disappointment, frustration, at times even of crisis, characterizes the perceptions among Nato member states. The working groups and expert committees go about business as usual but with a more sober mind-set and without providing new initiatives and impulses to the overall relationship. The process of creation mutual understanding and trust has practically come to an end.

The existing tensions were enhanced by the speech Putin’s speech at the Munich international security conference in February 2007, and ever since Russia’s foreign and defence establishment has reiterated the assertive stance adopted towards the United States and Nato. Russian generals at times engage in rhetoric that is reminiscent of the Cold War. The deterioration of relations, however, is not simply a matter of atmospherics but it has an impact on foreign policy, affecting not only Moscow’s approaches towards the US, Nato and the “new Europeans” but also and most obviously towards its neighboring states in the CIS area and international Organizations such as the OSCE und the Council of Europe.

The agenda of common activities and cooperative ventures of Nato and Russia may look impressive, and it may indeed be true, as can be read on Nato’s home page, that hardly a day goes by without a meeting of the NRC at one or another level. However, on the balance sheet of assets and liabilities the latter outweigh the former. Conflict and controversies are more pronounced than cooperation. This assessment can be corroborated by the discrepancy that exists between the large number of conferences, meetings and seminars, on the one hand, and meager practical results on the other.

The balance sheet also shows that once again, as often in Soviet times, Western theories have erroneously been applied to the analysis of developments in Russia. The assumption, perhaps correct for the exami-

nation of European supranational integration in the economic area, that an increase in cooperation, contact and communication at the level of “low politics” produced spillover effects in “high politics,” including in the area of security policy, has not proven valid in Russian-Nato relations. The efforts made in the many working groups and expert committees of the NRC, exchange programs, training programs and joint military exercises, both by Nato and individual member countries, with the participation of hundreds of Russian officers and officials, have not led to changing the high-ranking representatives of power in Moscow from a difficult and lately increasingly assertive interlocutor to a “strategic partner.”

The *determinants and motive forces* which are responsible for this state of affairs, as the examination has demonstrated, are both of an endogenous and exogenous nature. Endogenous factors in the Russian case lie in the close interconnection between the turn away from liberal democracy, a law-based state, fair competition in the economy and civil society and foreign policy: During Putin’s second term in office, authoritarian and centralizing features of political management and social engineering in Russian domestic politics were projected to the foreign policy realm—at first to the post-Soviet space and subsequently towards the West, including Nato.

Another determinant emanating from Russian domestic politics lies in the rise of the *siloviki* in Russian politics but also in the struggle for influence among them in the controversies surrounding the (apparent) transfer of power from Putin to Medvedev. The Kremlin has tried to convey the notion that domestic political and social stability will not be affected by that transfer but actual developments have revealed that the distribution of power and control over resources at the top of the Russian hierarchy is still on-going. In these conditions, the incumbents of power often compete in showing themselves to be “tough” in domestic and foreign policy.

The most important exogenous determinants can be found in American foreign policy or, more appropriately, in Russian perceptions of that policy. From the perspective of the Russian foreign and defence establishment, the neoconservatives in power in

Washington relied excessively on the application of force in international affairs and attempted to use Nato as an instrument for the realization of their interests. In this view, the planned stationing of anti-ballistic missiles in Poland and the Czech Republic, the build-up of bases in Romania and Bulgaria and the strong American support for the enlargement of Nato to include Ukraine and Georgia are part of Washington's strategy with the help of its "new" European partners to limit Russian influence in the CIS area.

Given the fact that Russia-Nato relations are hostile to Russian domestic politics and Russian-American relations, the *options for German and European policy* are limited. This is also true because it is difficult to discern behind the plethora of threats building blocks for a new European security architecture. Putin and his generals are apparently more intent on reversing the allegedly damaging "concessions" that presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin had made in negotiations with the West (e.g. CFE and INF treaties, dissolution of Russian bases overseas, withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe, reductions in armed forces strength, acceptance of Nato enlargement) than laying out a workable concept for change in the security sphere. It is difficult to see how the new president in tandem with the previous one will be able or willing to alter this state of affairs.

However, neither the tandem Putin-Medvedev nor the *siloviki* can be interested in a significant and long-term deterioration of relations with the West, including Nato. One major reason for political conflicts at the top concerns access to and control over resources. Many top government officials and bureaucrats have substantial business interests at home and abroad but tensions and conflict with the West are bad for business. This offers German and European policy a favorable starting point from which to attempt a reinvigoration of Nato-Russia relations. Although the activities of the NRC working groups and committees, and the exchange programs and training courses, may not have a major impact on the leadership in Moscow, it is advisable to continue these activities. In the Nato-Russia relationship, assets *have* accumulated over time in the form of cooperative structures and conceptual consensus. These can be utilized once Russian domestic and international conditions change. That such assumptions may not be unfounded can be demonstrated by reference to the Soviet area: For many decades, it seemed as if the contacts and exchanges among academic specialists had not had and would not produce any impact on

policy-making but ultimately they did play a significant role in the emergence and practical application of the New Thinking in the Gorbachev era.

Finally, for Russia the presence and participation in Nato continues to be important. One of the problems with that country's leadership is that it does not want to be included in international organizations if that means limitation of its freedom of action and constraints on sovereignty but it also does not want to be excluded. This is a matter of international standing and prestige. To the extent that Russia is able to assert its viewpoint and interests in Nato and potentially influence Alliance decisions, it underlines its claim to be heard and not to be excluded from any international organization.

There are also some specific steps Nato can take in order to contribute to a reduction of tension with Russia and improve the chances for a revitalization of relations. Thus, for instance, it should adopt the position that membership of *Ukraine* in Nato and, prior to that, offering a Membership Action Plan to the country, were acceptable to Nato only if an appreciable majority of the population actually supported it. Nato should avoid the impression that what is at issue is enlargement for the sake of enlargement or "expansionist" designs to limit Russian influence. In the past, it was never Nato that actively sought to bring in new countries to the east but it reacted, at times reluctantly, to the requests of their leadership on the basis of strong popular support. These interconnections should also be observed in the case of *Ukraine*.

Contrary to *Ukraine*, popular support for Nato membership and for being offered the MAP does exist in *Georgia*. In this case, too, however, German and European interests would be better served by persuading the Georgian leadership and the population to be patient. The shooting down of the Georgian unmanned aerial vehicle by a Russian fighter jet that apparently had taken off from the Gudauta air base in Abkhazia makes it appear likely that this base, contrary to Russian assurances, has not been closed. This air incident as previous ones involving incursions by Russian aircraft into Georgian air space raises the question as to what would happen if Georgia were to become a member of Nato and be included in the Alliance's air defence system. The increase in the Russian military presence in the form of CIS authorized "peacekeepers" in Abkhazia and threats by high-ranking Russian officials to protect "Russian citizens"

there in case of a military conflict, have raised the stakes for any Nato involvement.

To Russia's exit from the *CFE treaty*, Nato member states and Nato should react with some equanimity. The continued observance of the adapted CFE treaty provisions, as argued above, is also in Moscow's best interest. If so, efforts should be made to defuse the conflicts over ratification of the treaty. One of the bases for compromise could be the four-stage proposal advanced by the United States with Russia, in a first step, withdrawing its troops from Georgia (dissolution of its military base in Gudauta with its verification by international observers) and Moldova (Transnistria, with Nato participating in a peacekeeping mission there). In the next two steps, the Nato member states would ratify the adapted CFE treaty, and the Baltic states would accede to it. Finally, Nato would meet the Russian demand for raising the ceilings for Treaty Limited Equipment in the flank zone.

The subject matter of missile defence should comprehensively be discussed among the Nato allies and in the Nato-Russia Council. Solutions should be found that include Russia. In the area of *theatre missile defence* cooperation between Moscow and Nato has advanced relatively far. In that context, efforts to increase interoperability, develop procedures for the protection of troops engaged in military operations against ballistic missiles and the testing of concepts by means of command post exercises and computer simulations. Moscow is obviously quite interested that Nato use Russian anti-missile systems (S-300 and S-400) which according to its own claims, are superior to the most advanced US system (Patriot PAC-3). To demonstrate the capabilities of the Russian systems is one of the reasons why Russia would like to conduct joint missile defence exercises. However, in view of the current domestic developments in Russia and their projection to foreign policy it is not advisable for Nato to become dependent on Russian components, let alone to opt for complete Russian systems.

European governments should support the American plans for the stationing of components of the *US anti-ballistic missile defence in Europe*, at least not complicate the position of the Polish and Czech governments by joining Russia in criticizing the American project. They should unambiguously reject Russian arguments that the stationing of the missiles constituted a "threat" to Russian security and a change in the "strategic balance" in favour of the United States. Conversely, they should look for ways to interlock

American and European projects of anti-ballistic missile defence.

Finally, Europeans would be well advised to develop a stronger profile in relation to Russia and bring into play more effectively the *European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)*. German and European policy admittedly face a dilemma: On the one hand, it is inappropriate invariably to follow every twist and turn of US policy that still continues to be influenced to a significant degree by neoconservatives. On the other hand, they should avoid being drawn into Russia's game of playing off European countries, that are more likely to support US policies (e.g. Poland and the Baltic states) against those who are less likely to do so (e.g. Germany, France and Italy). It is not unlikely that this will have an impact in Russia since its leadership cannot, without losing credibility, call the US military presence and Nato a security problem while at the same time engaging in polemics against European defence efforts.



## Abbreviations

ALTBMD	Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FSB	Federal'naiia sluzhba bezopasnosti (Federal Security Service)
G 7	Group of Seven (the seven Western leading industrialized countries)
G 8	Group of Eight (the seven leading industrialized countries and Russia)
GRU	Glavnoe razvedyvatel'noe upravlenie (Main Intelligence Administration, i.e. military intelligence)
HSFK	Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (Hessian Peace Research Institute, Frankfurt a.M.)
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
KFOR	Kosovo [Stabilization] Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MDA	Missile Defence Agency
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
Nato	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
NRC	Nato-Russia Council
OAE	Operation Active Endeavour
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPF	Partnership for Peace
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SFOR	Stabilization Force (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
UN	United Nations