

BACKGROUND REPORT

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NATO

NATO – Russia Relations



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Model NATO

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NATO and Russia have a very long and complicated relationship, which lately escalated to a new extent. To understand all that is happening at the moment it is good to know, what has happened in the past. That is perhaps the challenging part but also the very interesting one. In the next few pages the issue shall be introduced both from historic and current points of view.

1 History

NATO's creation has ever been linked, and what more, conditioned by the existence of Russia, or to be more concrete the USSR. Thereby to describe the long, complicated and slowly evolving NATO-Russia relationship, it is necessary to look back at the beginning.

When NATO was created in 1949, one of the main reasons for its creation was the increasing threat that the USSR posed to the Western Block. The Soviet Union was expanding enormously by that time and the powers of the Eastern Block were soon to be linked together even more in the Warsaw pact¹. NATO aimed both to protect its members and to counter the power of the USSR. As it can be also seen in the NATO's motto, as said by the first Secretary General Lord Ismay, NATO was created *"to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."* Even the quotation shows that one of the most important, and at that time, most strategic ally of NATO was the USA. Due to the ongoing Cold War NATO was very valuable partner to the United States. At that time the members of NATO were only Western European countries as they were all at the same area, or same block, as the US. Hence, for the time of the Cold War the USSR was the main enemy of NATO.

1.1 The new era:

In 1991, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, NATO and Russia started to develop first reluctant relations. Russian president Yeltsin even suggested, despite the general scepticism, that Russia might even one day become a member of NATO. Most of the members of his parliament protested, especially in 1993 when NATO wanted to enlarge and accept new members and by that expand its already enormous potential offensive powers. Russia eventually accepted the enlargement but conditioned it by demanding no deployment of nuclear weapons or allied combat forces on the territory of new member states. NATO agreed, in the end, even though the decision was marked as unsustainable by several experts.² After this settlement in 1994,

¹ Existing 1955 – 1991

² SMITH, Julianne. The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?. In: *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf>



there was the first significant progress concerning the relation as Russia joined the NATO's **Partnership for Peace Programme**.

Furthermore in 1997 a new cooperation was set with Russia over sustaining peace in the Euro-Atlantic Area and new council – **Permanent Joint Council** was set in order to regularly discuss the questions of security by signing the **Founding Act**³. This act was very important for shaping the future way of cooperation and for forming the positions of both NATO and Russia. Russia knew that very well so it has affirmed its 'respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security'. It also renounced 'spheres of influence'. Despite the efforts, negotiations were not going so smoothly as the long Cold War marked both sides with prejudice and large differences as well as lack of understanding. NATO expert James Sherr defined the relations as almost doomed to disappointment as even though steps were made, both sides felt that the cooperation lacked harmony. According to Sherr, NATO was always maybe too precautious towards Russia; hence Russia lacked equality which for them means "co-management."⁴ Nonetheless Russia was very valuable ally during solving the Kosovo conflict when Russian and NATO soldiers fought together in order to restore peace as well as in cooperating in Afghanistan.

1.2 NATO – Russian relationship in the 21th century

In 2002, the ties strengthened again with permanent establishment of **NATO-Russia Council**, which allowed Russia to be taken as an equal partner to the 27 members. Another significant change concerned the meetings, which took place more often (twice a year for ministers and monthly with ambassadors). The number of joint topics also broadened as well as expert groups and committees which now expanded up to 17. On the other hand, Russia did not receive any security guarantee (any variation similar to Article 5 was not mentioned). Another gap in the newly advanced partnership was the war in Iraq. Russia, together with Germany and France, opposed, and successfully limited via UN resolution, the use of military force against Saddam Hussein.

The relations nowadays continue to be very delicate and could be almost described as both better than ever and worse than ever. The current Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen,

³ The Founding Act: on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France. In: *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm>

⁴ SHERR. NATO and Russia: Doomed to Disappointment?. *North Atlantic Organisation Treaty* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2011/nato_russia/Disappointment/EN/index.htm>



said in his first major speech focused on Russia (September 2009) that "...of all of NATO's relationships with Partner countries, none holds greater potential than the NATO-Russia relationship.⁵" And he was right. NATO and Russia nowadays share common interests. Among those momentous topics, that are common to NATO and Russia are for example Afghanistan, Arms control, counter-terrorism, counter-piracy, counter-narcotics, cyber security, Iran, control of potential North Korean Missile Defence Programme, resolution of frozen conflicts, economic cooperation, energy security, relief and prevention of natural and man-made disasters and organised crime. On the other hand NATO and Russia still have many disputes and differences. Those are broadened by the scar of precaution and scepticism lasting since the Cold War. These could be seen during many of the disagreements such as the bygone conflict of Kosovo and Serbia, Georgia and of course Ukraine, which is the most current and most relevant right now. The dispute is so fatal that it caused NATO's **suspension of all practical cooperation with Russia**, which lasts till now. You could have also mentioned how the relationship between NATO and US was influenced by colour revolutions and Arab spring.

2 Cooperation and disagreements

One of the first significant collaborations of NATO and Russia was on the ground of **Bosnia**, around 1995. Although at first it seemed that this conflict would break the ties, the opposite happened. While the alliance operated with air-strikes, Russia responded by sending troops who participated in the Implementation Force (IFOR), which were the multinational peacekeeping forces implemented in Bosnia. By doing so, Russia proved to be a very valuable partner for the first time during the partnership.⁶

2.1 Yugoslavia

Not long afterwards the disputes between the partners continued over the civil war in the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**. During the first meeting of the Permanent Joint Council, Russia warned NATO against the use of force without authorisation of the UN. Nonetheless NATO took not as much attention as expected and, having in mind Russia's weakened position, the North Atlantic Council authorised "limited air-strikes" and "phased air campaign" in 1998.

⁵ "NATO and Russia: A New Beginning," Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Carnegie Endowment, Brussels, September 18, 2009, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_57640.htm>

⁶ SMITH, Julianne. The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?. In: *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf>



This act made Russia feel precarious and more sceptic voices were raised. Russia eventually suspended the ties with NATO. Despite the fact that according to the Founding Act, Russia had to be consulted and had the right of veto, although that right was often guaranteed only theoretically as shown during the council meetings where Russia was trying to counter the intervention in Yugoslavia but was not successful. Yeltsin proved to be right that a new diplomatic chess game was shaping and NATO started to dominate in many fields but the position of Russia was not what he would hope for. NATO itself kept sending this message to Russia even after the civil war. After Poland joined the NATO, the allies wanted to move one of its headquarters from Germany to Poland, which was something they explicitly promised to Russia not to do and eventually they didn't.⁷ Despite all these disputes, Yeltsin knew that the partnership is very valuable for his weakened country. Russia's bad situation was even worsened by the war in Chechnya, so, eventually, they returned to NATO again and even started to cooperate. In 1999, Russia sent its troops to Kosovo⁸ to join the KFOR forces.⁹ Moreover in the year 2000 a new president was appointed in Russia, Vladimir Putin, who was seen as even more pro-NATO oriented than Yeltsin.¹⁰

2.2 Afghanistan

September 11, was thought to be a possible turning point. President Bush and Putin met soon after the attacks and agreed that Russia will assist the USA in **Afghanistan**. Some of the key points of Russia's cooperation were: allowing the US to operate in the central Asian air space which Russia considered to be in its territory of influence, supporting the Afghan Armed Forces, co-training of Afghan counter-narcotics forces, offering to close espionage centres in Cuba, Louders and naval base in Vietnam. By this, Putin hoped to strengthen the relations with the West, counter the threat of terrorism, and benefit Russia by categorising the rebels in Chechnya as terrorists, which indeed soon happened and subsequently significantly helped Russia. Military bases of NATO in CA, NDN.

⁷ In the end the headquarters were moved to Brussels where they are until today.

⁸ Another part in Russia's decision making to act in Balkan might be the historical role that Russia has stylised itself to. That being the „pater“ and the protector of Slovenian people and thereby of Balkan states included.

⁹, to assist the situation and the new army.

¹⁰ SMITH, Julianne. The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?. In: *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf>



2.3 Georgia

Nonetheless another dispute appeared again, this time over the **Georgia Conflict**, also called the war of South Ossetia, in 2008. Despite the fact that the real “war” conflict lasted only about 5 days during August that year, the political consequences were more fatal and longer lasting. The conflict began with Ossetian separatists, who started bombing Georgian villages. Georgia launched military offensive in response. The role that Russia played in this conflict was sending army and air troops to support Ossetia. All sides, Russia, Georgia and South Ossetia were accused of war crimes by the Human Rights Watch. Russia was blamed for invading a sovereign state and threatening democracy. This reflected negatively on the relationship with NATO. In response, the Alliance suspended cooperation with Russia. As that happened, both sides started to accuse each other of returning to the Cold War tactics and added several new aggravating policies.¹¹ Whether or not Russia intervened before or after the bombardment is not clear, though the steps Russia had made towards a sovereign state were enough to invoke several reactions among the former USSR states. Among them being also Ukrainian president Yushchenko who stated that he wanted to increase the rent for the Russian naval base in Sevastopol in Crimea as a response.

3 Ballistic missile defence, a new beginning?

Not long afterwards, in 2010, Russia and NATO started to cooperate again, this time on the **Ballistic Missile Defence**, a problem which has been labelled as the game changer for NATO-Russia relations for it was considered to be either a bridge towards the past or towards the future.¹² “Every little cooperation is a small step towards the good relations but there is still the importance of the big breakthrough otherwise the risk of sliding back is very real” as said a Russian political analyst Dmitri Trenin in an interview in 2011 as a part for reviewing the last 20 years of cooperation. He also said that Russia has moved since the Cold War, but in order to have fully functioning relationship with one another NATO should move on as well. Add the recent articles which state that there is still double way of assessing the West and the East to this argument. There are suggestions that the West has made some similar steps as Russia which are now judged differently.¹³ Another article says that the steps Russia makes in

¹¹ SMITH, Julianne. The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?. In: *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf>

¹² NATO and Russia Today: Interview with Dmitri Trenin. *North Atlantic Treaty: NATO-Russian Relations: 20 years after the USSR* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2011/nato_russia/Trenin-interview/EN/index.htm>

¹³ ROBINSON, Eugene. With Ukraine the US has a credibility problem. *Washington Post* [online]. [cit.



Ukraine are a perfect example of a modern 21st century war, and that it is actually NATO who falls behind. Even though some analyst say the opposite and call the war a hybrid one. So who is the one causing the conflict and falling behind?

4 The Ukraine crises

Even though the relations and negotiations between Russia and the Allies became more integrated, NATO members kept its sceptical approach in their minds. This scepticism was fed and broadened especially by affairs such as Georgia. The Alliance has been pointing out especially Russia's politically questionable and hegemonic attitude towards its neighbours, particularly with Georgia, Baltic States, Ukraine and Eastern and Central Europe.¹⁴ Unfortunately, Russia's steps in Ukraine are unacceptable for NATO and for ongoing cooperation between them. According to NATO, Russia fails to respect "international commitments"¹⁵ hence **NATO currently suspended cooperation with Russia because of its undertaking in Ukraine**, "Clearly the Russians have declared NATO as an adversary, so we have to begin to view Russia no longer as a partner but as more of an adversary than a partner," said Alexander Vershbow, the deputy secretary-general of NATO and former US diplomat. He also stated that "In central Europe, clearly we have two different visions of what European security should be like, we still would defend the sovereignty and freedom of choice of Russia's neighbours, and Russia clearly is trying to re-impose hegemony and limit their sovereignty under the guise of a defence of the Russian world." The Secretary General Rasmussen added that "Russian actions in Ukraine threaten NATO" he also stated that it is Russia's fatal mistake that will only drive it into political isolation, which again almost suggests emergence of a new cold war. Rasmussen also expressed that cooperation would be considered again only if Russia withdraws its troops from Ukraine.¹⁶ Even though "cooperation would be considered" the future of the relationship is ever more unclear as the Allies are not united in their attitude. Clearly, some of the member states of the Alliance are stricter towards

2014-07-31]. Dostupné z: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-with-ukraine-crisis-the-us-has-a-credibility-problem/2014/03/03/f8f6a58a-a311-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.html>

¹⁴ SMITH, Julianne. The NATO-Russia Relationship: Defining Moment or Déjà vu?. In: *Centre for Strategic & International Studies* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/081110_smith_natorussia_web.pdf>

¹⁵ NATO: Russia fails to respect international commitments. *BBC News* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-31]. Dostupné z: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28012778>

¹⁶ TRAN, Pierre. Rasmussen: Russian Actions in Ukraine Threaten NATO Relations. *The Defence News* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140408/DEFREG01/304080013/Rasmussen-Russian-Actions-Ukraine-Threaten-NATO-Relations>>



Russia than others. Among them being the United States, Poland and Estonia. Others, like France or Germany, are more reluctant, protecting their business ties with Russia which they conserve carefully even as the financial crises is still not over and Russia with its resources is a potentially lucrative partner. Ergo there are currently more scenarios possible. Which direction will NATO eventually choose depends on several factors which should be considered during the negotiations. Some of them being president Putin's further attitude and his steps, the result of the Ukraine conflict and whether or not Russia will continue supporting the rebels. You have to add the direct intervention of Russian troops which is similar to the Russian invasion of Crimea.

5 Conclusion

NATO and Russia have a long history. And NATO also has experience with fighting against the Russian threat, for example on the ground of Estonia. Estonia has had many conflicts with Russia and still has today. Some of the problems that Estonia is currently facing are spies that Russia keeps sending as well as violation of Estonian air space. Due to these violations, NATO launched the mission in 2004 to guard the air space of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia which is still continuing today with several member states participating and providing the aircraft.¹⁷

After reviewing some of the most important milestones, we can see that the relationship is reflected in every step NATO has made over the 65 years of its existence. Nowadays, many experts and analyst are debating about the role of NATO in the 21st century. These debates escalated especially after NATO's soldiers started to leave Afghanistan.¹⁸ Some say NATO is now more conservative, pre cautious and is finding its role as there is no direct threat posed to the members¹⁹. Several claim that "to stay relevant, NATO must provide security beyond just Europe."²⁰ Whether or not it is true we might see very soon for the Ukraine crises.

Nonetheless there is one thing that most of the experts agree on; the Ukraine's crises has pushed NATO and Russia back to its beginning. Russian actions in Ukraine provided more

¹⁷ Baltic Air Policy. WIKIPEDIA. *Wikipedia, free encyklopedia* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-31]. Dostupné z: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Air_Policing>

¹⁸ LANA, Sara Miller. What role for NATO? Ukraine crisis may push it back to basics. *The CS Monitor* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0326/What-role-for-NATO-Ukraine-crisis-may-push-it-back-to-basics>>>

¹⁹ PITCARIN. Redefining NATO's Role for the 21st Century. *Next New Deal* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.nextnewdeal.net/defining-natos-role-21st-century>>

²⁰ POMORSKIE, Drawsko. Back to basics. *The Economist* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21589900-atlantic-alliance-wants-new-role-after-afghanistan-time-being-it-looking>> ,



arguments for those who wanted NATO to go back to its roots as a counter weight to Moscow.²¹ You have to mention the article five, collective defence and so on.

Both countries have gone a long way since the conflict began. But will that be enough to resolve their issues? Or will it only add to the old flames nurtured by both sceptic hope and disappointment?

Solid analysis, I would just use more academic sources to have more balanced perspective. I would also broaden and actualize the part concerning the Ukrainian crisis as it will change the relationship between Russia and NATO for once and for all.

²¹ POMORSKIE, Drawsko. Back to basics. *The Economist* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.economist.com/news/international/21589900-atlantic-alliance-wants-new-role-after-afghanistan-time-being-it-looking>>, LANA, Sara Miller. What role for NATO? Ukraine crisis may push it back to basics. *The CS Monitor* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2014/0326/What-role-for-NATO-Ukraine-crisis-may-push-it-back-to-basics>>



Timeline

1991 Russia joins North Atlantic Cooperation Council

1994 Russia joins Partnership for Peace

1996 Russian peacekeepers deploy to Bosnia and Herzegovina

1997 May 27, Paris, signature of Founding Act and creation of Permanent Joint Council (PJC)

1998 Russian mission to NATO established

1999 Russia suspends participation in PJC over Kosovo air campaign Russian peacekeepers deploy to Kosovo

2000 Vladimir Putin becomes President of Russia Broader cooperation in PJC resumes nuclear submarine Kursk sinks

2001 NATO Information Office opens in Moscow September 11, terrorist attacks on the United States

2002 NATO opens Military Liaison Mission in Moscow May 28, Rome, and signature of Rome Declaration and creation of NATO-Russia Council (NRC)

2003 May 13, NRC meets for first time in Moscow²²

2008 – Creation of NATO – Russian Council

2011 the New START treaty – reduction of strategic nuclear arms

2014 - NATO suspended cooperation with Russia over the Ukraine crisis²³

²² NATO - Russia: Forging Deeper Relations. *NATO: Scola NATO* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://scoalanato.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/nato-russia.pdf>>

²³ NATO. *NATO-Russia Council* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.nato-russia-council.info/en/>>, CROFT, Adrian a Sabine SIEBOLD. NATO suspends cooperation with Russia over Ukraine crisis. *The Reuters* [online]. [cit. 2014-07-22]. Dostupné z: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/01/us-ukraine-crisis-nato-idUSBREA2U1UF20140401>>



Recommended further reading

NATO-Russia fact sheet:

http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2014/20140411_140411-factsheet_russia_en.pdf

NATO-Russia Council (NRC): <http://www.nato-russia-council.info/en/>

Magazine Voice of Russia; NATO – Russia: http://voiceofrussia.com/tag_4120339/

Article – NATO Agrees Readiness Action Plan Counter Russia:

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140603/DEFREG01/306030034/NATO-Agrees-Readiness-Action-Plan-Counter-Russia>

Inside or Outside? Russia's Policies Towards NATO: http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/NATO_Oslo_ks.pdf

NATO-Russia relations: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB734.pdf>

NATO-Russia, Doomed to disappointment?

http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2011/nato_russia/Disappointment/EN/index.htm

NATO-Russia Relationship after the Georgian Conflict:

http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20090000_cscp_artikel_mhaas.pdf

Foreign Affairs: Estonian Spymasters:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141521/michael-weiss/the-estonian-spymasters>

US Credibility Problem – Washington Post:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/eugene-robinson-with-ukraine-crisis-the-us-has-a-credibility-problem/2014/03/03/f8f6a58a-a311-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.html

<http://inserbia.info/today/2014/07/ukraine-crisis-looks-like-iraq-wmds-lies/>

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Partner jednání



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