Friend *and* foe?

- *Russia in NATO's strategy 1991-2011*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

"We recognize that, in the new Europe, the security of every state is inseparably linked to the security of its neighbours. NATO must become an institution where Europeans, Canadians and Americans work together not only for the common defence, but to build new partnerships with all the nations of Europe. The Atlantic Community must reach out to the countries of the East which were our adversaries in the Cold War, and extend to them the hand of friendship" (NATO 1990: Art. 4).

1.1 Topic

This thesis investigates NATO's approach to Russia through words and actions during the 1991-2011 periods, and how this has affected relations. How has NATO managed its relationship with Russia in the post-Cold War world? How has NATO expressed its intentions towards Russia, and which role does the overall context play? Over the past 20 years NATO has published a number of strategic documents, and most importantly three Strategic Concepts, issued in 1991, 1999, and 2010. These are official documents that provide the framework for NATO's policy, expressing a superior plan as to how the Alliance relates to the international security context, including Russia[1].

The formal dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on December 25, 1991 marked the definite end of the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact, i.e. the military alliance of the Eastern Bloc, no longer existed. Following the dissolution of the USSR, the Russian Federation was recognized internationally as its legal successor. During the 1990s the country underwent extensive economic, social, and political transformations and emerged as the weakened successor of the Eastern Bloc. Russia is, however, still described by many observers – and most importantly it perceives itself – as a great power. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), i.e. the Western military alliance, has developed in the opposite direction. NATO has become involved in more activities in more parts of the world than its founding fathers could ever have envisioned in 1949. The Alliance has increased its scope from 16 states at the end of the Cold War to 28 members as of today, the 12 new states all being former members of the Warsaw Pact and/or former Soviet satellite states. Its portfolio has been expanded to include among other things out-of-area military operations, generating intense debates within and outside NATO.

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[1] The terms "NATO" and "Russia" are used throughout the thesis. They are understood as the organization NATO with its leadership and the Russian state with its administrative body.

1.2 NATO's "Russian dilemma": friend *and* foe?

At the end of the Cold War NATO was facing a major dilemma: how to simultaneously deal with the Soviet Union (and later Russia) as a potential partner and a potential threat on the European security arena? On the one hand, there was the realization that a certain degree of cooperation with and integration of Russia into the Euro-Atlantic security structure was both necessary and desirable. On the other hand, there was still a high level of mutual distrust and NATO was not willing to give the Russians real influence in decisions of great importance to the organization. A revision of the Alliance's strategy towards the Soviet Union and later Russia was necessary. The term strategy has a multitude of definitions. Heuser (2010) suggests that strategy is

> "…a comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of force, in a dialectic of wills – there have to be at least two sides to a conflict. These sides interact, and thus a Strategy will rarely be successful if it shows no adaptability" (Heuser 2010: 27).

Gray (2007) presents a somewhat simpler definition of strategy: "the use made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy. It is the bridge that connects policy with military power" (Gray 2007: 384). Aybet (2010) employs the term "grand strategy", defined as "the security and non-security goals of the state and the means that are employed, both military and non-military, to pursue these goals" (Aybet 2010: 36). Taking these definitions into account, strategy is simply a plan to achieve a goal. NATO's strategy is thus a plan on a superior level expressing certain ambitions or goals and a procedure to accomplish these goals. It provides the framework for NATO's policy some years ahead and is expressed in official NATO strategic documents. After 1991 these documents are no longer classified, but the post-Cold War Strategic Concepts are accompanied by classified military guidance documents.

During the Cold War NATO's rationale for existence was quite straightforward; to deter aggression and to defend the territory of the member states against aggression. This was aimed at the Warsaw Pact in general and the Soviet Union in particular. There was, however, a debate in the 1950s and 1960s between the "massive retaliation" and "flexible response" approaches, of which the latter emerged as the main strategy (Carr & Ifantis 1996: 60). The review of NATO's strategy at the end of the Cold War proved difficult because the security situation in Europe changed constantly. Significant developments were the fall of the Berlin

Wall on November 9, 1989; the German unification in October 1990; extensive troop reductions in Europe; the establishment of diplomatic relations between NATO and Eastern European countries; and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact sooner than expected (Wijk 1997: 20-21). These changes raised an essential question: Was there a legitimate reason for NATO's continued existence? On the one hand, it had, at least according to many Western leaders, "won" the Cold War. On the other hand, its main counterpart and the rationale for its existence ever since 1949, the Warsaw Pact, no longer existed (Collins 2011: 89).

NATO's strategic documents in 1990-91 are marked by the transformations in Europe. The Declaration agreed upon at the NATO Summit Meeting in London in July 1990 concluded that the Alliance would have to adapt to the fundamental changes that were taking place in Europe. At the Rome Summit in November 1991 a new Strategic Concept was agreed upon (Legge 1991; NATO 1991d). The 1991 Strategic Concept, published on November 7, reflected the uncertainty of the time, and implicitly sought to answer the question of why NATO should continue to exist. An essential feature expressed in the Concept was the fact that the Soviet Union was still considered a major threat to the security of European Allies. As a consequence, NATO was not ready to abandon nuclear weapons and its potential first-use philosophy (Collins 2011: 90-91). The document emphasized the fundamental principles of NATO dating back to the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, i.e. the defensive purpose of the Alliance, the importance of collectivity, the indivisibility of Alliance security, and the strong transatlantic link (NATO 1949). It sought, however, to adapt to the changing context and acknowledged a broad approach to security, suggesting that multiple means be employed to promote security. Moreover, the document outlined three main elements of Allied security policy (NATO 1991d: Art. 28-30). First, there was the opportunity for dialogue with the Soviet Union. Second, the Alliance wished to pursue cooperation with all states in Europe in order to build mutual understanding and confidence among European states. Third, despite the acknowledgement that the political approach to security would become increasingly important, the document concluded that the military dimension of security – collective defence – remained essential.

The 1991 Strategic Concept also envisaged some new risks to NATO. Most important were instabilities resulting from political, economic, and social difficulties in countries at the Southern and Eastern periphery of the Alliance. Crises in these countries could lead to a range of multi-faceted, unpredictable threats to Allied security. The document contained vague

references to the possibility to build closer ties to former Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe (Legge 1991; Collins 2011: 90-91). This way the Rome Summit represented a historic shift in NATO's mission as it evolved from an organization charged with the responsibility of defending the territory of its members to an organization assuring the security of the entire European space (Lindley-French 2007: 62). The 1991 Strategic Concept became outdated, particularly regarding one essential point, shortly after it was published. In December 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved, and NATO's traditional rationale for existence was no longer tenable. Now the

> "… maintenance of stability within NATO and the regions immediately surrounding it became the focal point of NATO's new raison d'être, practically replacing its paramount function of the provision of collective defence for its members" (Aybet 1999: 2).

NATO's security was now "… inseparably linked to the security of its neighbours" (NATO 1990: Art. 4). Aybet (1999) argues that NATO's post-Cold War role was formed through military support operations for collective security missions in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) (in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later in Kosovo).

By the mid-1990s the calls for a revised NATO strategy grew louder – here illustrated by a New York Times article published in December 1997, stating that NATO's Strategic Concept

> "… is outdated and does not fully reflect the profound changes that have transformed Europe's strategic landscape over the past six years: the collapse of the Soviet Union, the civil war in Bosnia and NATO's peacekeeping operations there, plans for NATO enlargement and a new NATO-Russia relationship" (Larrabee & Sokolsky 1997).

The 1999 Strategic Concept, published on April 24, reflected the deteriorated strategic environment in which NATO operated. Collective defence remained the essential objective of the Alliance, but conflict prevention, crisis management and the establishment of partnerships emerged as vital elements. The Concept emphasized the emergence of new threats such as ethnic conflicts, political and economic instability, and the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. A comprehensive approach to security and defence was thus needed, emphasizing the importance of the transatlantic link and the indivisibility of European and North American security; and the maintenance of effective military capabilities to conduct different types of operations (Lindley-French 2007: 84-85). In the 1999 document Russia was

no longer considered an adversary. However, NATO continued to rely on nuclear weapons as part of its protection strategy, and some of the Alliance's members were obviously still regarding Russia as a potential threat. In general, the issue was no longer to justify NATO's continued existence as in the 1991 document, but to define how it interacted on the European security arena with the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU) etc. The definition of security was stretched from the collective military defence of NATO member states' territory to the conduction of "out-of-area" combat operations.

The terrorist attacks on American soil on September 11, 2001 (9/11) caused a turning point in NATO-Russia relations. Unification in the imminent "war on terror" became essential, and establishing close cooperative relations with Russia was highest on the agenda (Simon 2008). On September 12, 2001 NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time ever. Article 5 is the foundation of the indivisibility of North-Atlantic security, stating that an armed attack against one Ally shall be considered an attack against all (NATO 1949). It was now clear that the role of the Alliance could not be limited to the Euro-Atlantic area because most of the threats to the interests of NATO member states arose beyond this area. In order to remain relevant NATO had to deal with these threats by expanding its activities beyond the Euro-Atlantic area (Simon 2008). Like the previous Strategic Concept the 1999 document became highly irrelevant shortly after it was issued. 9/11 made NATO's core function of collective defence its central focus again, making a revision of the 1999 document urgent. The 1999 Concept was no longer relevant to respond to the new non-state-centric threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and instability emanating from unstable states (Aybet 2010: 42-45). Finding a satisfactory way to address these issues was the primary concern ahead of NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept, and the Alliance emphasized its willingness to work with Russia to address these challenges (Collins 2011: 109).

1.2.1 Major pattern in NATO-Russia relations

The relationship between NATO and Russia over the past twenty years is characterized by a high level of ambiguity. A general reluctance and distrust towards the other exist on both sides, creating obstacles for the development of a genuine partnership. The development of relations during the 1991-2011 periods suggests a pattern of piecemeal adjustments resulting

in more or less unstable relations, which are eventually set back by a crisis. At the same time there is a wish and a need to cooperate. The result is a situation in which relations are restored shortly after every crisis, but not necessarily improved. This pattern is illustrated by two events in particular; the Kosovo and Georgia crises. On both these occasions the institutional frameworks existing at the time failed to function as early-warning mechanisms and to act as forums for crisis management consultations between NATO and Russia. However, as Smith (2010) argues, although there have been several ruptures in relations, at no point since 1991 have the leaders on either side wished to see it end irrevocably and permanently. There is a realization that serious challenges of European security would require significant cooperation in order to be tackled effectively. NATO and Russia are forced to relate to one another somehow (Smith 2010: 106). Yet, relations since 1991 have never become a norm-based partnership. Either side has proved willing to sufficiently compromise on their own interests (ibid: 122-123).

Three issues stand out as major points of contention in post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations. First, there is the problem of how to manage the institutional framework between NATO and Russia. There is an overall desire on the part of NATO to promote cooperation and somehow integrate Russia into the Euro-Atlantic security structure. This becomes apparent in strategic documents already from 1990-91. On the other hand, NATO is not eager to give Russia real influence in issues of great importance to the Alliance. As Russia becomes a more powerful and assertive actor from the end of the 1990s, one of the Alliance's main priorities is to not let Russia divide it. This is, however, complicated by disagreements within the Alliance regarding the extent to which Russia should be integrated into existing structures of the European security architecture and how this should be done. Second, there is NATO enlargement. From NATO's point of view the addition of Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) to the organization is a principal means to maintain peace and security in Europe. On the contrary, Russian leaders feel that NATO enlargement into their former sphere of influence is demeaning their national security. Issues of particular tension are the status of Kosovo as well as NATO's recent assistance to Ukraine and Georgia. Third, there is the issue of arms control, an initiative intended to reduce the level of conventional and nuclear weapons on the international arena. The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty and NATO's call for a missile defence system in Europe involve particular disagreement.

1.3 Research question

The end of the Cold War altered the European as well as the international security environment. The bipolar world order ended, yet NATO was obliged to somehow relate to the Soviet successor state. A whole new scope of opportunities arose, and in theory NATO-Russia relations could develop in any direction. NATO faced a great challenge: to navigate with Russia as a potential partner and a potential threat on the European security arena. The research question of this thesis is as follows:

How has NATO managed its relationship with Russia after the end of the Cold War?

This question implies two different levels of analysis. The first perspective treats the superior strategic level, and relates to what NATO's strategic documents express about the Alliance's thinking concerning Russia. Here the emphasis is on NATO's active role, based on the content and message(s) of the strategic documents. A major aim of NATO's strategic documents throughout the 1991-2011 periods is to indicate a will to include Russia in Euro-Atlantic security. Is NATO succeeding in this? Has NATO followed up the rhetoric through concrete action? The recurrent stagnation in relations throughout the next 20 years could be due to ambiguity from NATO's side. Has NATO been *sufficiently* clear and obliging towards Russia in its strategic documents? Or could more have been done to accommodate Russia, e.g. by adjusting the way of communicating?

The second perspective concerns the operative action level, and reflects how NATO's strategy towards Russia is affected by the overall context on the European security arena. This implies a more passive role for NATO, considering the need to adjust the content and rhetoric of its strategic documents in order to accommodate specific events taking place in the Euro-Atlantic area. Even though NATO's words and actions are intended to be inclusive towards Russia, they are not necessarily perceived this way by the Russians. Therefore, this perspective is helpful to explain why NATO has experienced difficulties when trying to follow up its 1990-91 goals towards Russia, and illuminates why relations have developed in the way they have. Why do the parties not surpass a certain level of cooperation?

1.4 Literature on the topic

A wide range of research has been conducted on the development of NATO-Russia relations after the end of the Cold War. A thorough account of NATO-Russia relations from 1991 onwards can be found in works by Smith (2006) and Braun (2008), among others. Publications by Ponsard (2007) and Pouliot (2010) explore the possibilities for reaching common ground and developing a genuine partnership between NATO and Russia. Pouliot's work is of particular interest. He uses elements from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology and Karl Deutsch's theory on security communities to investigate the grounds for a normative partnership between NATO and Russia, and finds that the development of a security community will remain limited in the future. Antonenko (2007), Averre (2009), and Latawski & Smith (2003), among others, provide valuable contributions on how the disagreement over Kosovo has had implications for subsequent NATO-Russia relations – particularly for the Georgia case.

Moreover, there are various studies on how NATO has tried to deal with Russia in the post-Cold War security environment in terms of strategy and ambitions for its future relationship with Russia. Two publications deserve to be mentioned: Collins' (2011) work reflects on the Alliance's rationale of continued existence considering the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and focuses on how NATO's role has changed over the past 20 years. Aybet (2010) points to the discrepancy between NATO's missions and its vision, and argues that the Alliance's Strategic Concepts are reactive in nature and contribute little to the development of a grand strategy within NATO. Aybet claims that this lack of a grand strategic vision is an obstacle to the Alliance's ability to deal with its neighbours – including Russia – in a satisfactory manner. By studying NATO's official strategic documents this thesis demonstrates the relationship between words and actions in the Alliance's management of its relations with Russia during the 1991-2011 periods.

1.5 Research design

The thesis makes use of a theoretical framework that combines elements from the Realist and Constructivist paradigms within International Relations (IR) theory. The major aim of this framework is to demonstrate (1) that NATO's management of its relations with Russia over the past 20 years is a continuous mix between cooperation and confrontation; and (2) that both words and actions matter. On the one hand, the message that NATO communicates to Russia

is vital to the relationship as it reflects the balance between an underlying distrust and a wish for cooperation. On the other hand, the constant stream of events on the European security arena affects how NATO deals with Russia. For Realists power and interests are essential, and the security dilemma remains a main feature of international politics (Jervis 1978). NATO is thus expected to be cautious and intent on preserving its own interests when managing its relations with Russia. For Constructivists ideas and identity formation are the main determinants of interaction in international politics. These can change, possibly transforming relationships between actors (Wendt 1992). The end of the Cold War represents an opportunity for a redefinition of NATO-Russia relations.

Official NATO strategic documents from the 1991-2011 periods constitute the principal data material for the analysis. The three Strategic Concepts give an impression of what the 28 NATO member states are able to agree on regarding the Alliance's relationship with Russia. They help structuring the thesis and demonstrate a development over a period of two decades in NATO's view on how to deal with Russia. NATO Declarations, Communiqués, Statements, speeches by different Secretary Generals, and official documents related to the institutional framework, enlargement and arms control elaborate the topic. The official NATO strategic documents are supplied by background sources illuminating the debates, such as newspaper articles. Bearing in mind that this thesis is an interpretative study of a particular relationship between two actors in international politics, the prospects of generalizing to other relationships between other international actors are poor.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter two gives a thorough presentation of the theoretical framework of the thesis. The third chapter presents the data material and methods, with emphasis on data collection and methodological challenges. Chapter four, five, and six analyse how NATO has managed its relations with Russia connected to the three contentious issues identified in part 1.2.1. Chapter four deals with the institutional framework of NATO-Russia relations. It focuses on how NATO balances between the wish to cooperate with and accommodate Russia and the reluctance to give Russia too much influence on issues vital to the Alliance. In chapter five NATO's enlargement policy and Russia's objections to it are treated. Debates about the three rounds of geographical enlargement as well as functional enlargement are discussed along with prospects for future enlargement. The status of Ukraine and Georgia is important in this

respect. The sixth chapter investigates the arms control issue, emphasizing the challenges in constructing a Euro-Atlantic arms control regime acceptable to both NATO and Russia. The CFE Treaty and missile defence in Europe cause much disagreement. In the concluding chapter NATO's management of its relations with Russia during the 1991-2011 periods is summarized.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how NATO has managed its relations with Russia throughout the 1991-2011 periods. How did NATO, in words and actions, respond to the opportunities that arose in the new post-Cold War world order? In this chapter elements from the Realist and Constructivist paradigms within International Relations (IR) theory are employed in order to explain the change in NATO's management of its relations with Russia. To Realists, power and interests are the main factors explaining interactions in international politics. NATO thus has reason to be cautious when dealing with Russia, and cannot risk allowing Russia decide on issues vital to the Alliance. Constructivists, on the other hand, are of the opinion that ideas and identity formation are the crucial elements. These can change, possibly leading to common understanding and cooperation. To achieve this NATO needs to engage Russia.

Looking back, NATO's management of its relations with Russia over the past 20 years has been characterized by both confrontation and cooperation. On the one hand, the balance between distrust and a wish for cooperation is illustrated through the rhetoric of the Strategic Concepts and other official NATO documents. The message that NATO communicates to Russia in these documents is essential to the relationship, most importantly as a means to build trust. On the other hand, specific events taking place on the European security arena have affected the evolvement of NATO-Russia relations over the past two decades. Therefore the actors' interests and actions need to be taken into consideration. The aim is to demonstrate how rhetoric and action are interrelated when explaining NATO-Russia relations. A combination of the Realist and Constructivist paradigms can contribute to assess how NATO has dealt with Russia in the post-Cold War era. These two paradigms are compatible because they share some key assumptions. The shared view that the international system in which states operate is anarchic and the divergent understandings of what this lead to is the theoretical basis of this thesis. For Realists like Robert Jervis anarchy leads to a security dilemma. By providing for its own security a state often makes itself more insecure because other states are alarmed. However, Jervis argues that the dilemma can be eased under certain conditions. For Constructivists like Alexander Wendt anarchy does not necessarily lead to a security dilemma because anarchy is what states make of it.

2.1 Realism's security dilemma and possibilities for cooperation (Jervis 1978)

Realism is a broad paradigm which encompasses several different strains, but some key assumptions are shared by most Realist scholars. First, states are regarded the key actors of international politics. They are rational and unitary actors driven by self-interest, and they possess certain military capabilities. Second, the basic motive of states is survival, i.e. to maintain the security of their inhabitants and the sovereignty of their territory. States cannot, however, be certain of the intentions of other states. Third, states operate in an international system which is anarchic, meaning that there is no central authority that can punish those actors who do not follow the rules of the game. In this state of relentless security competition each state needs to provide for its own security – it is a self-help world (Dunne & Schmidt 2008; Glaser 2010).

To Realist scholars, the anarchic nature of international politics leads to a security dilemma between actors on the international arena. With the absence of an international sovereign each state needs to produce its own efforts in order to ensure the security of its population and territory. Such efforts are perceived threatening by other states, which in turn will increase *their* efforts to be secure. This mechanism leads to the so-called security dilemma, in which the security of the first state is actually decreased even though its efforts were increased. By providing for its own security, the actor in question automatically increases the insecurity of other actors. This is a main paradox of international politics: the existence of armed states threatens the very security which they are expected to maintain (Dunne & Schmidt 2008: 102; Jackson & Sørensen 2007; Nau 2007: 23).

In connection with the security dilemma the distinction between offensive and defensive Realism is essential. Offensive Realists, of whom John Mearsheimer is a main representative, claim that the international structure indicates a strong tendency towards competitive politics. States should thus assume the worst about others' intentions. The nature of the system compels states to compete for power and maximize their relative power position to ensure their survival, most visibly manifested through territorial expansion (Glaser 2010: 22-23). Defensive Realists, on the other hand, believe that the anarchic state of the international system does not necessarily lead to conflict. Under certain conditions cooperation is a state's best strategy for achieving security. States are security seekers, whose primary objective is to

preserve the status quo and defend their present territory. The driving force for increasing security is threat based, not power based as believed by offensive Realists. Within the defensive school the security dilemma is an essential element, primarily represented by the theory of Robert Jervis. His 1978 article *Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma* discusses three essential questions related to the third main assumption of Realism: How to cooperate under international anarchy? How to avoid the security dilemma? How to avoid being fooled by others in international politics, considering that the consequences can be severe in security issues?

Defensive Realists believe that cooperation can be beneficial under certain conditions: it enables a state to signal its benign motives and increases its prospects for avoiding military disadvantages, and thereby increases its security. However, cooperation is not without risks. The other state(s) may cheat (Glaser 2010: 24-27). Jervis mentions certain conditions that ameliorate the impact of international anarchy and ease the security dilemma. First, the fear of being exploited is the variable that most strongly drives the security dilemma (Jervis 1978: 172). If the costs of being exploited are reduced or if the gains from exploiting others are low, security is easier to obtain. In this regard each state's level of subjective security requirements and threat perception matter. Second, the incentives for cooperation are strong if the potential gains from cooperation or the potential costs of a breakdown are high. Third, Jervis emphasizes the importance of a correct understanding of the security dilemma by states' leaders. If leaders do not understand that their arms, even though sought only to secure the status quo, may alarm others and that others may arm not because they plan aggression but out of fear of an attack from the first state, the security dilemma is increased. If the security dilemma is misunderstood states will overestimate the amount of security necessary for survival, and will regard military strength as the only means to obtain security. Jervis stresses that other means to increase security needs to be taken into consideration, and that beliefs do matter (ibid: 181-182).

In the article Jervis presents an offensive-defensive theory which helps decide the severity of the security dilemma (Jervis 1978: 186). The severity depends on two material variables. First, there is the balance between a state's offensive and defensive forces. When the offence has the advantage it is easier for the state in question to destroy the other's army and conquer its territory than it is to defend its own. Status quo powers must then act like aggressors, and the security dilemma is aggravated. When the defence has the advantage it is easier for a state

to preserve what it has than it is to destroy the assets of other states. Status quo states can thus increase their own security without gravely threatening others, and the security dilemma is eased. Second, there is the question of whether offensive and defensive forces can be distinguished from each other (ibid: 199). If there is a high level of differentiation, the security dilemma is less intense because much of the uncertainty about the other's intentions is removed. States are able to identify each other's intentions more easily and the foundations for cooperation are laid. In case of a total differentiation the security dilemma does not apply. This, however, is highly unlikely because a distinction between offensive and defensive forces is difficult. Nonetheless, Jervis provides a suggestion. Defensive forces are designed to keep others out of the home territory of the state in question, but are unable to launch an attack on the land of other states. In other words, they are not very mobile. Offensive forces, on the other hand, are characterized by a high level of mobility as well as the ability to penetrate the other's fortifications and barriers and conduct surprise attacks (ibid: 203-205).

2.2 The Constructivist alternative: anarchy is what states make of it (Wendt 1992)

Constructivist theory presents an alternative outcome of anarchy in international politics from the result depicted by Realists. Alexander Wendt (1992) argues that even though the international system is anarchic, this does not necessarily result in a security dilemma. However, Constructivism is not an IR theory on the same level as for instance Realism is. Most Constructivists emphasize that Constructivism is not a full-fledged theory of IR, but rather a model for understanding international politics. In the wording of John Ruggie Constructivism "… remains more of a philosophically and theoretically informed perspective on and approach to the empirical study of international relations" (Ruggie 1998: 856).

Most Constructivists, including Wendt, share some of the major Realist assumptions. As in Realism, states are considered the key actors of international politics. They attempt to behave rationally and often possess certain military capabilities. As in Realism, states are driven by a fundamental wish to survive, but achieving this goal is complicated because of uncertainty about the intentions of other states. Finally, most Constructivists share with Realists the view that states operate in an international system which is anarchic. However, the understanding of the implications of anarchy is distinct from the Realist view. Three essential features distinguish Constructivism from Realism. First, ideational structures are important and matter

as much as – if not more than – material structures. Second, identities matter. They determine the interests of actors, and the interests in turn explain the actions of these. Third, actors and the social world they inhabit are mutually constitutive (Barnett 2008: 162-168; Agius 2010: 50-60). Consequently, Constructivists have a different view on how anarchy affects international politics. For most Constructivist scholars, anarchy does not necessarily mean the presence of a security dilemma. This view is advocated by Wendt.

Wendt's 1992 article *Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics* provides the major criticism of the security dilemma as depicted by Realists. His main argument is that

> "… self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure […] Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. Anarchy is what states make of it" (Wendt 1992: 394-395).

The article poses two essential problems: *Does the absence of centralized political authority force states to play competitive power politics? Can international regimes overcome this logic, and under what conditions?* (Wendt 1992: 391) For Constructivists, conflict in international politics is partly due to the lack of collective identity and shared understandings among the actors in question. The fundamental structures of international politics, both ideas and material conditions, are socially constructed. Wendt argues that power and interests are neither more nor less important than ideas, but stresses that material conditions acquire meaning in virtue of the ideas in which they are embedded (Wendt 1999: 135). The implication is that changing the way actors think about international politics can lead to a change of the international system itself. Conflicts can be avoided. However, this is complicated by the fact that identities are not a constant (Baylis 2008: 234-235; Jackson & Sørensen 2007).

Consequently, Wendt (1992) argues that because the security dilemma is a social construct it is possible to avoid it. Basically, the security dilemma is a result of the practices of interaction on the international arena, and at the same time it is a product of these actors' thoughts. It exists as a result of inter-subjective understandings, leading states to be so distrustful that they make assumptions about each other's intentions. Consequently, they define their interests in self-help terms. Therefore, self-help and power politics are not necessarily consequences of

anarchy; they are merely institutions (Wendt 1992: 399). Thus, according to Wendt, security dilemmas and wars that arise in international politics can be seen in part as self-fulfilling prophecies. States acquire a shared knowledge about the meaning of power and act accordingly. This means that the anarchic, self-help system exists because states make it so (ibid: 407). Wendt emphasizes that because anarchy is merely an idea and a practice of international politics it can change. Stable identities make states less uncertain about each other's intentions, and thus ensure predictability and order in international politics. Consequently, the security dilemma is eased.

However, Wendt points out that changing a socially constructed practice is not necessarily easy. There are two reasons for this. First, once constituted, any social system meets its members as a mechanism that reinforces certain behaviours and discourages others. Self-help systems tend to reward competition and punish altruism. Second, systemic change may be inhibited by actors' interests in maintaining relatively stable role identities because that reduces the uncertainty about the intentions of others (Wendt 1992: 411). Because of this, inter-subjective understandings may have a self-perpetuating quality, hampering the emergence of new ideas. Yet, Wendt suggests that the conception of anarchy can be transformed if states pursue repeated policies of reassurance. This can help generate a structure of shared knowledge and eventually move states towards more peaceful security communities or security cooperation.

An important area in which the security dilemma is evaded – at least to some extent – is arms control. This is an example of cooperation between states through mutual restraint in order to obtain increased military security. Arms control is made possible through a shared understanding between the actors involved that weapons are a cause of insecurity rather than security. Weapons deepen tensions between states and make them more likely to resort to the use of force in times of conflict. The solution is to reduce armaments, and thereby reduce tensions (Sheehan 2010: 179).

2.3 Implications for post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations

In sum, Realists argue that power and interests are determining relations between actors on the international arena. In order to preserve their sovereignty states need to be cautious towards others and provide for their security. The security dilemma remains a main feature of

international politics, but according to Jervis cooperation under the dilemma is possible under certain conditions. Accordingly, NATO is expected to be primarily occupied with safeguarding its own interests when managing its relations with Russia. It is essential to avoid Russian influence on issues of great importance to the Alliance. However, cooperation is a possibility on less vital issues. On the contrary, Constructivists argue that ideas and identities matter because they determine the interests of actors. The security dilemma can be avoided through a change of ideas, pushing actors to alter their relationships and understandings – e.g. from antagonistic to cooperative. Shared ideas can eventually create security communities or security collaboration. Ruggie (1998) stresses that the possibility for transformation is especially high at times of discontinuity in history, for instance in the period following the end of the Cold War. In such periods states are obliged to redefine their interests and preferences vis-à-vis the international order. Thus, the end of the Cold War presents a great opportunity for a redefinition of international politics (Ruggie 1998: 877). Accordingly, a significant change in NATO's management of its relations with Russia is imaginable. In order to achieve this NATO must actively engage Russia, possibly leading to a mutual change in ideas about the other.

More than 20 years after the end of the Cold War the world is no longer divided between two superpowers. The imminent danger of a mutually destructive nuclear war is no longer present. NATO and Russia are cooperating in a range of practical areas, but have not yet succeeded in developing a fully stable relationship based on mutual understanding and shared values. Certain issues and events have provoked confrontation. As demonstrated later, NATO has with variable success made use of the opportunities for change in the management of its relations with Russia over the past two decades.

3.0 DATA AND METHODS

"The Strategic Concept is an official document that outlines NATO's enduring purpose and nature and its fundamental security tasks. It also identifies the central features of the new security environment, specifies the elements of the Alliance's approach to security and provides guidelines for the adaptation of its military forces […] In sum, it equips the Alliance for security challenges and guides its future political and military development" (www.nato.int).

In this thesis official NATO strategic documents, supplemented by other sources, are employed in order to investigate how NATO has managed its relationship with Russia in the post-Cold War world order. What was NATO's strategy at the end of the Cold War? Has it been pursued? NATO's Strategic Concepts stand out in this respect. These are documents which have been agreed upon in consensus by all member states of the Alliance, although often prepared through long and thorough negotiations. They constitute a central piece of NATO's acquis. Ever since its inception in 1949, NATO has regularly reviewed its tasks and objectives to reflect the evolution of the strategic environment in which the organization acts. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has issued three Strategic Concepts, published in 1991, 1999, and 2010. Contrary to the Strategic Concepts of the Cold War period, those of the post-Cold War era are issued as unclassified documents and released to the public.

3.1 Choice of sources and data collection

The angle of this thesis is to give an overall, official NATO view on Russia and NATO-Russia relations. This leads to challenges because NATO is a complex unit of analysis. There are, however, some clear expressions of the "official" NATO view. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the principal political decision-making body within NATO. Representatives of all NATO member states have a seat in the NAC. Decision-making in the NAC is based on the principle of consensus, meaning that voting never occurs. Consultations between the member states take place until a decision acceptable to all is reached. The negotiation process usually is rapid because members consult each other on a regular basis and often are familiar with each other's positions and preferences. This also means that decisions are supported by and are the expression of the collective will of all NATO member states (Lindley-French 2007; www.nato.int).

Meetings in the NAC are organized at different levels of representation. The Permanent Representatives (or Ambassadors) to the NAC, one from each member state, meet on a weekly basis. The Foreign and Defence Ministers of the member states meet two and three times a year, respectively. The highest level of representation in the NAC, called Summit Meetings, gathers the Heads of State and Government of the member states. The Summit Meetings are not held on a regular basis, but convened upon approval by the NAC at lower levels of representation in accordance with the evolving political and security situation. From NATO's inception in 1949 there have been in total 24 Summit Meetings, 14 of which have taken place after the end of the Cold War. The increased frequency since 1990 is a result of the need to address the changes brought on by emerging security challenges and the extensive alterations on the European security arena (ibid.).

The Summit Meetings are important junctures in NATO's decision-making process, and enable the Heads of State and Government to provide a strategic direction for the activities of the Alliance. Major decisions are made at these meetings, such as the introduction of new policy and the launch of major new initiatives, the invitation of new member states into the Alliance, and the establishments of new partnerships with third countries and other international organizations. Decisions reached at the Summit Meetings are typically issued in Declarations and Communiqués, documents which are released to the public shortly after. The Strategic Concepts are also a result from the Summit Meetings. These official documents explain the Alliance's decisions and reaffirm Allies' support for aspects of NATO policies.

In the process of locating and selecting sources expressing the official NATO view on its relationship with Russia it is thus natural to focus on documents issued after meetings in the NAC, and particularly those at the Summit level. The three Strategic Concepts issued during the post-Cold War period, in 1991, 1999 and 2010, constitute the main data material. These are supplemented with other official NATO documents that shed light upon the evolution of NATO's management of its relations with Russia. These are Declarations, Communiqués, and Statements issued at various Summit Meetings, speeches by different NATO Secretary Generals of the period in question, as well as documents treating the three major contentious issues in NATO-Russia relations – institutional framework, enlargement, and arms control. In order to obtain a deeper understanding of the processes leading to the Strategic Concepts and of important factors explaining NATO's understanding of Russia, the official NATO material is supplemented by background sources that illuminate and shade off these debates. They

contribute, to some extent at least, to remedy the somewhat biased impression of the overall NATO view in the official strategic documents. The background sources are contributions from NATO working groups, seminars, and preparatory conferences (e.g. the NATO 2020 report of the Expert Group) as well as a selection of articles from major international media houses and specialized agencies such as the Arms Control Association, BBC News, NATO Defence College, the New York Times, Project Syndicate, Radio Free Europe, Time Magazine, and World Politics Review[2].
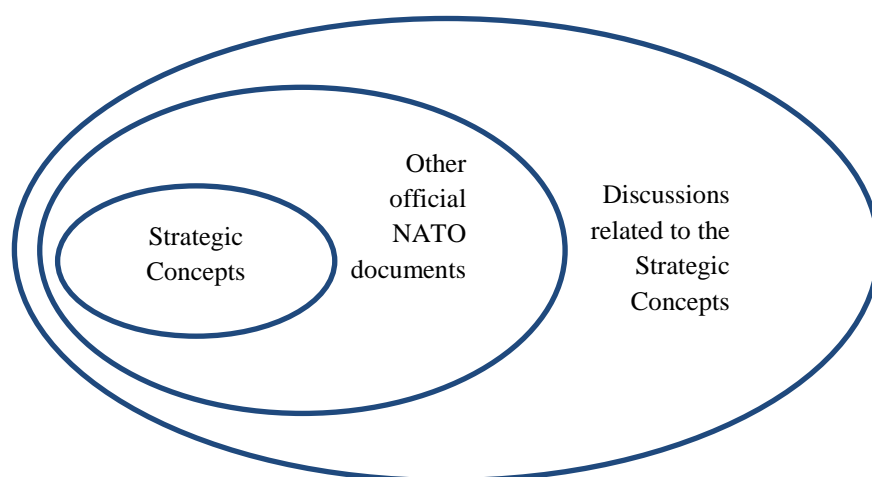
3.2 Strategy: a guiding element or guided by events?

There are both advantages and disadvantages in employing the official NATO angle to investigate post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations. A major challenge concerns how the Strategic Concepts and other official NATO documents should be interpreted. What do these documents really say about NATO-Russia relations? One possibility is to treat the documents "face value", presuming that NATO's real view equals the opinions that are expressed in the documents. The alternative is to presume that there are underlying tactical assessments and that NATO's view is not really what it appears to be in the documents. What determines NATO's management of its relations with Russia – a superior strategy or the constant stream of events on the European security arena?

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[2] All documents used in the thesis are publicly available from the Internet. The Strategic Concepts and the other official NATO documents can easily be downloaded from NATO's website (www.nato.int). The background sources are available from the online archives of the agencies mentioned above.

The major disadvantage in conducting an analysis based on the "official" NATO understanding of Russia is the inevitable problem of leaving out important nuances of the decision-making process. Official NATO documents express the collective will of all member states and do not mention divergent opinions or debates that have occurred prior to the finalization of the document in question. Even though decision-making in NATO is based on the principle of consensus, some member states exert significantly more influence than others. The United States (US) is in a class of its own, and there are several dividing lines among the member states of NATO. The Strategic Concepts and other official NATO documents thus give a somewhat biased impression of the overall NATO view. Moreover, these documents need to be written in a non-controversial and non-provocative manner in order to suit everybody.

On the other hand, it is favourable to employ official NATO documents. First, NATO is a complex organization, making it impossible to take all voices within the Alliance into consideration. Having this in mind, the Strategic Concepts are adequate expressions of an overall, official NATO view. They give an impression of what the member states of NATO are able to agree on. Three such documents have been issued since the end of the Cold War, in 1991, 1999, and 2010, providing a suitable framework for structuring an analysis of how NATO has handled its relationship with Russia during this period. They treat the Alliance's top priority issues, and regarding Russia the topics of institutional framework, enlargement, and arms control are highly present throughout the period. Second, the documents reveal NATO's priorities: which priorities remain throughout the 1991-2011 periods and which ones that are important at a specific point of time. The length of the period enables the investigation of continuity and breaks in NATO's strategy towards Russia. Another advantage is that NATO's official strategic documents show which parts of its opinions and strategy the Alliance wishes to communicate to Russia and the rest of the world. However, classified military documents are developed as a supplement to each Strategic Concept. It is thus difficult to reveal to what extent there exist on the part of NATO underlying tactical assessments that are hidden from the eyes of the public. Consequently, treating the official NATO strategic documents in a "face value" manner appears as the most fruitful way to interpret the documents.

4.0 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The new security environment that emerged after the transformations in Europe in 1989-1991 called for a different role for NATO. Its rationale for existence was no longer tightly attached to the Soviet threat (Aybet 1999). On the contrary

> "developing and maintaining at least a tolerably functioning relationship with Russia has come to be seen as an important element underpinning NATO's claims to legitimacy as a core component of the post-Cold War European security architecture" (Smith 2010: 99).

This chapter analyses the institutional framework for NATO-Russia relations in the 1991-2011 periods. During this period NATO has built different institutions in order to provide a structure for managing its relations with Russia. It started with Russian participation in the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme together with other former Warsaw Pact states, and developed into more specific structures with the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) and later the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Although there is a general agreement within NATO to not let Russia decide on issues vital to the Alliance, the Allies have realized that it is not an option to ignore or alienate Russia. Initially a weakened successor state of the Soviet Union, Russia soon began to regain its strength and to raise demands for a "special" institutional relationship with NATO.

NATO's main challenge has been to use institutions as means to accommodate certain Russian demands, while at the same time safeguarding its own interests. In general Russia has been given special treatment by NATO compared to other former Warsaw Pact members. Yet as of today the NRC suffers from the lack of an underlying shared understanding and is not a fully functional forum for consultation. Both Constructivism and Realism provide insight to the development of the institutional framework. NATO's use of institutions to manage its relationship with Russia has been complicated by the changing political climate within Russia. Also, divergent opinions within NATO have been enforced by the recent enlargements of the Alliance. It is vital for NATO to not let Russia divide it. Interrupted by a constant stream of events on the European security arena, NATO struggles to uphold an overall, consistent strategy. This context should not be underestimated.

4.1 The 1990s: Yeltsin's wish for a "special relationship", the PfP and the PJC

The period immediately following the end of the Cold War is characterized by fairly good relations between NATO and Russia. By Pouliot (2010) it is characterized as the "honeymoon" of NATO-Russia relations. According to (Remington 2010: 103) this is partly due to the entrance into power of Boris Yeltsin and his political priorities. Together with his Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrej Kozyrev he pursued a foreign policy based on maintaining good relations with the US and Western European countries. During the first years after the end of the Cold War Russia was clearly the subordinate partner of the relationship, and was happy to play that role (Pouliot 2010: 155). Shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin sent a letter to the NATO Heads of State and Government at their meeting in Brussels, raising the question of Russian membership in NATO as a long-term political goal (Smith 2006: 51).

However, from 1993-94 onwards an undercurrent of tension was emerging. The consistent demand from Russian leaders for some kind of "special" institutional arrangement with NATO was a key issue which dominated efforts to develop a stable and predictable relationship between the two during the 1990s. Yeltsin wanted a "special relationship" that elevated Russia above NATO's other Central and Eastern European interlocutors and thus recognized its (self-proclaimed) status as a great power. There was a general perception in Russia that the country had a unique position by virtue of its size and former status as an international super power (Smith 2010: 100; Tsygankov 2010). In January 1994 the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance met in Brussels. After this Summit a Declaration was issued, stating the Allied agreement "to launch a major initiative through a Partnership for Peace, in which we invite Partners to join us in new political and military efforts to work alongside the Alliance" (NATO 1994: Art. 1). The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between NATO and individual third countries located in the Euro-Atlantic area. It was open to all member states of the OSCE, and each PfP agreement would be signed on a separate basis between NATO and the individual partner country (Aybet 1999: 5; Simon 2008: 97). In the Brussels Summit Declaration there is an explicit reference to Russia. The political and economic transformation of Russia is welcomed by the Allies, and the commitment to democratic and market reform in Russia is linked to the

overall security and stability in Europe (NATO 1994: Art. 20). The document demonstrates a high level of goodwill towards Russia on the part of NATO.

Russia was quickly invited to join the PfP. The initial response from the Yeltsin government was positive, but in the minds of Russian leaders a future partnership should be agreed to on the condition that the PfP scheme was an alternative to NATO enlargement. Following a comprehensive internal debate in Russia, the proponents of the country joining the PfP were gaining the upper hand. However, first the threat and then the use of NATO airstrikes in Bosnia in April 1994 generated a hostile backlash and postponed Russia's accession to the PfP (Smith 2006: 65). These developments on the European security arena coincided with an enforced claim in Russia for a "special" institutional relationship with NATO.

Although the PfP agreements were to be concluded on a separate basis with each partner country, NATO was initially not willing to grant any special side deals above the PfP with an individual partner country. Despite this firm principle, an agreement between NATO and Russia was reached in May 1995. Russia agreed to complete its PfP Individual Partnership Programme. A compromise was reached resulting from a new formula for NATO-Russia relations launched by the US: the Russians were promised greater and more embedded consultation rights with NATO member states. Why did NATO eventually give in and thus violated its principle? Smith (2006) suggests that NATO officials became anxious that the legitimacy of the Alliance's new partnership scheme would be undermined in case of an indefinite Russian non-participation, and thus signalled a willingness to discuss special arrangements with Russia (Smith 2006: 65). Russian non-participation was therefore regarded too costly, and from the mid-1990s the tendency of mutual dependence and the necessity to relate to one another are reflected in NATO-Russia relations.

However, the PfP agreement was not satisfactory for the Russian leadership. On May 27, 1997 the "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation" was signed. The document ascertained that NATO and Russia did not consider each other as adversaries, and promised closer consultation and cooperation among former adversaries. It expressed an enduring commitment "to build a stable, peaceful and undivided Europe, whole and free, to the benefit of all its people" (NATO 1997a). A new institution, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), was created as a mechanism for consultation, cooperation, and possibly joint actions between NATO and Russia. But

consultations "…will not extend to internal matters of either NATO, NATO member States or Russia". The document thus safeguarded each party's right to independent decision-making and actions, as well as non-intervention in internal matters of the other parties. There existed no right of veto over the actions of the other (ibid.).

By mid-1998 the PJC was beginning to show promise as a venue for useful and substantive discussions, at least on occasion – climate became more optimistic. However, NATO's military intervention in Kosovo in March 1999 was met with fierce opposition in Russia and dealt to the PJC a blow from which it never fully recovered. In the critical weeks leading to the NATO intervention the PJC failed to function as the early warning mechanism it was meant to be (Smith 2006: 75). However, as Smith (2010) points out, the Kosovo crisis alone did not cause the breakdown of the PJC. By the beginning of 1999 the PJC was already floundering because of two main problems. First, both sides preferred to avoid pinning themselves down to agreed-on understandings during the negotiations in the first half of 1997. Second, no real sense of "partnership" or "community" had emerged. The text of the Founding Act simply presumed that these did exist (Smith 2010: 105).

According to Aybet (1999), among others, NATO's special treatment of Russia regarding the PfP and later the PJC indicates that the Alliance has put great effort into accommodating Russian demands during the 1990s. Kanet (2010), however, is of another opinion. He emphasizes that Western countries, led most visibly by the US, seemingly wrote off Russia as a major power during the first post-Cold War decade, both then and for the foreseeable future. The Russian government made concessions and introduced proposals intended to create a new European security architecture in which Russia would be an equal partner. Yet, Russia was treated as a second-class partner, whose voice was heard but whose influence was virtually non-existent. On those issues where Russia had major concerns, such as the wars in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and NATO eastward expansion, they were de facto ignored. As a consequence of this, then President Putin employed a different approach to foreign policy to restore Russia's great power status (Kanet 2010: 154). By the end of the decade, relations had deteriorated significantly compared to the euphoria of the immediate post-Cold War period.

4.2 The 2000s: Putin's vision of Russia as a "normal great power" and the NRC

On December 31, 1999 an emasculated Yeltsin handed over the power to Vladimir Putin, his designated successor (Remington 2010). Putin soon initiated a harsher foreign policy approach towards Western political leaders. During the 2000s Russia became more assertive and more demanding in its relationship with NATO (Tsygankov 2010). However, the beginning of the decade is characterized by a cautious rapprochement and incremental restoration of relations between the two parties, starting with the reactivation of the PJC in July 1999 after the end of NATO's intervention in Kosovo. A real breakthrough, however, did not occur until September 11, 2001.

The terrorist attacks on American soil on 9/11 provoked a sensation of emergency and changed the way by which both NATO and Russia seized new opportunities for cooperation with each other. The result was a general NATO-Russia rapprochement as well as reinforced cooperation between Russia and the US (Clément-Noguier 2005; Latawski & Smith 2003: 108). According to Lindley-French (2007), "big security" returned on the international arena after 9/11. In an NAC emergency session on September 12, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty was invoked for the first time ever. The Americans received genuine and heartfelt support from their European Allies. Russia as well offered both solidarity and support to the US (Lindley-French 2007: 8-9). On September 13, the PJC issued a statement condemning the attacks and expressing their deepest sympathies to the victims and their relatives (NATO 2001b). In the aftermath of 9/11 Putin saw the opportunity to take advantage of Western, and particularly American, interest in constructing the broadest possible international coalition for the imminent "war on terror" (Smith 2006: 93). According to Lindley-French (2007), several factors facilitated the Russian cause. First, 9/11 increased tensions between the West and much of the Middle East. Consequently it became necessary for Western countries to get their energy supplies elsewhere, which was beneficial for a big energy supplier like Russia. Second, Putin was consolidating his power in Russia and internationally by appearing as someone who wanted and was able to play the game of power politics. In President Bush he found a like-minded counterpart. Third, Russia was fighting its very own "war on terror" in Chechnya, and was on the lookout for allies (Lindley-French 2007: 11).

Significant measures were taken on the part of NATO to facilitate approximation with Russia in the post-9/11 climate. On November 21-23, 2001 Lord Robertson, who was NATO Secretary General at the time, visited Russia. In a speech given at the Diplomatic Academy in Moscow on November 22, Robertson stressed that in order to provide a meaningful response to the terrorist menace and other emerging threats a permanent qualitative change was needed in NATO-Russia relations. He gave the impression that the chances for a real breakthrough in relations had never been better (NATO 2001c). This message was repeated in another speech given at the State Polytechnic University in Volgograd the very same day. Moreover, Robertson emphasized that NATO and Russia needed to be united "… in a joint struggle against a common challenge" and drew a historical line back to the Second World War (NATO 2001d). Robertson carefully reiterated that although NATO and Russia had disagreements, e.g. the Kosovo conflict and enlargement, neither NATO nor any of its activities were a threat to Russia.

The NATO-Russia rapprochement seemed promising for the relationship, but there was a prize to pay for Russian participation in the global "war on terror". The Russian acceptance of the PJC was grudging, arguing that in the 19 + 1 format the Allies would bring "pre-cooked" positions to the table, effectively denying Russia a direct say in PJC deliberations. Russia sought a de facto veto over Alliance activities, a demand that NATO not surprisingly refused (Lindley-French 2007: 12; Sloan 2008: 75-76). This demand from Russia was a theme in two press conferences connected with Lord Robertson's visit to Russia on November 21-23, 2001, one in which then Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov also participated. The possibility for a new institutional format in NATO-Russia relations was indicated. The suggestion was to move from a 19 + 1 format to a format of 20 in certain areas of common interest (NATO 2001e; NATO 2001f). In the words of Robertson

> "That would involve Russia having an equality with the NATO countries in terms of the subject matter and would be part of the same compromising trade-offs, give and take, that is involved in a day-to-day NATO business" (NATO 2001e).

This suggestion became a reality at the 2002 NATO Summit in Rome, were the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established. The new threats demanding united responses which emerged after 9/11 were the rationale behind this qualitative improvement in relations. In the Declaration issued by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the

Russian Federation on May, 28 2002 the parties stated that in the new NRC framework they would "… work as equal partners in areas of common interest", and that the NRC would provide "… a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision, and joint action for the member states of NATO and Russia" (NATO 2002a).

Smith (2010) mentions two improvements with the NRC compared to previous institutional frameworks of NATO-Russia relations. First, the NRC includes a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) allowing the Russians to participate in the crucial agenda-setting and preparatory stages of the consultative process. Second, the number and range of cooperative activities have increased significantly, and they are clearly defined in the 2002 Declaration (Smith 2010: 111-112). There are also, however, severe weaknesses to the NRC. Equally with previous institutional frameworks, it seems like both the NATO side and Russia have avoided tying the other one down to agreed-on understandings and interpretations of key issues before the inauguration of the joint forum. The parties simply have different perceptions of reality. As a result of this, the many practical activities initiated and developed within the NRC have not demonstrably helped to simulate a broader strategic or political rapprochement between NATO and Russia. In some important incidents consultations within the NRC seem not to have taken place. Smith gives the example of the deployment of allied fighter aircraft to the Baltic countries in the spring of 2004, an event that caused a chill in NATO-Russia relations (ibid: 113).

Summing up, Russia was far more constructive and engaged with NATO in 2002-03 than in 1998-99. During the first couple of years after 9/11 NATO-Russia relations went into a "second honeymoon" stage comparable to the "first honeymoon" of the early 1990s (Pouliot 2010: 208-222). However, since the mid-2000s there has been little real progress in NATO-Russia relations. This is due to frustration at the failure to develop practical relationships, as well as a mutual lack of trust enhanced by divergent understandings of developments on the international security arena. Moreover, from 2004 onwards Russian "great power" notions resurfaced. Three NATO policies in particular have caused a high level of disagreement and contributed to alienate Russia. First, there was the Western support for the "Colour Revolutions" that took place in former Soviet Republics, such as the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and the 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan. Second, there was the NATO enlargement to include seven CEECs in 2004. Third, there was the 2007 proposal for a NATO missile defence system in Europe, followed

by the Russian suspension of the CFE Treaty. This high level of frustration reflects the strategic importance of Russia for the Euro-Atlantic community and vice versa, and thus the need for a functional relationship (Monaghan 2010; Pouliot 2010: 218).

At the Munich Conference on Security Policy, held on February 9-11, 2007 the assertiveness of Russian foreign policy became visible once and for all. The conference was overshadowed by President Putin, who in his speech on February 10 criticized the policy of the US and its allies in unusually harsh terms:

> "In a dramatic way, he vigorously warned the audience against the United States' global supremacy, declared the eastward expansion of NATO a provocation and threatened that Russia had weapons that could neutralize the anti-missile defence shield planned to be installed by the US in Eastern Europe" (Rolofs 2007a).

This rhetorical attack came as a shock to most Western delegates attending the conference, and eventually provoked a debate on a possible new Cold War (Rolofs 2007a; Rolofs 2007b). Putin's goal was to demonstrate the increasingly important role of Russia on the global stage and warn other states not to make unilateral approaches in international relations. Rolofs poses the question of whether people understood the seriousness in the warning given by Putin. Nevertheless, one year later words were turned into action. In February 2008 Sergey Ivanov, at the time First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, commented on the forthcoming independence of Kosovo: "A unilateral declaration of independence will open Pandora's box in the Caucasus" (Rolofs 2007a).

This is exactly what happened in August 2008, when NATO-Russia relations faced a second major breakdown with the outbreak of an armed conflict between Russia and Georgia. NATO's previous approximations towards Georgia together with the recognition by the majority of the international community of Kosovo's independence in February 2008 were underlying causes of the conflict. The Russian military intervention of Georgia can be seen at least partly as a warning to NATO's members against opening the way to Georgian accession, demonstrating a will to employ whatever instruments it has available to accomplish its objectives (Kanet 2010: 154). The crisis revealed the key limitations of the institutional relationship between NATO and Russia which had developed since the inception of the NRC in 2002. The Georgia case became crucial because it was the first significant crisis since then in which both sides perceived that they had high stakes. When confronted with the outbreak

of conflict in Georgia the NRC proved to be as deficient as the PJC had been at the time of the Kosovo crisis in 1999 (Smith 2010: 114).

4.3 2008 onwards: Medvedev's proposal for a new European Security Treaty (EST) and the restoration of relations

At the end of his second term as President Putin designated Dmitri Medvedev as his successor. Medvedev won the March 2008 presidential election as planned, and Putin himself took the position of Prime Minister. Medvedev amplified Putin's foreign policy vision, seeking to position Russia as a global player and a maker of new global rules (Remington 2010; Tsygankov 2010: 178). Motivated by the belief that existing international mechanisms and frameworks did not address current security challenges properly, Medvedev put forward a proposal for a new pan-European security treaty named the European Security Treaty (EST) in a speech in Berlin on June 5, 2008. The aims of this proposal were three fold. First, there was a wish to unite Russia, the European Union, and the US under a single collective framework in order to finally do away with the Cold War legacy. The main idea was to create a common undivided space "from Vancouver to Vladivostok". Russia envisioned a new role for itself – that of a sovereign state functioning as a European hub and role model for developing states. On the one hand, Russia advocated its common European heritage and its equality to the Euro-Atlantic community. At the same time, however, Russia wants to be unique and will not simply agree to Western terms. Second was a suggestion to embody in legal form core principles of international law, e.g. the indivisibility of security, which should be uniformly respected by all states. This was motivated by the view that international law was applied selectively. Third, negotiations should concentrate on political-military questions to be addressed at the pan-European level. In sum Russia sought agreement that "no state or international organization can have exclusive rights to maintaining peace and stability in Europe" (Klein 2009; Lomagin 2011; Lynch 2010: 27-29; Monaghan 2010).

The initial Western response to the Russian proposal was silence. It was even viewed with open distrust by several countries. An article published by Radio Free Europe on November 30, 2009 questions whether Medvedev's aim with the EST is to undermine NATO and the OSCE. According to the article, analysts say that Medvedev's proposal is unrealistic and not really aimed at improving relations. In that respect it is an empty proposal (Radio Free Europe 2009). Eventually however, Medvedev's initiative led to the so-called Corfu Process. The

process was kicked off by the French government, holding the EU presidency in the second half of 2008, which reacted quickly and positively. This was accompanied by a strong push from NATO in the meeting of the NAC on December 3, 2008, welcoming the beginning of a dialogue with the OSCE. NATO showed a strong willingness to work with Russia on this considering that the NRC was suspended at the time as a consequence of the August 2008 Russo-Georgian War (Lynch 2010: 32-35). The OSCE was thus regarded the only forum for engaging with Russia on matters of European security. At the meeting of OSCE foreign ministers on the island of Corfu on June 27-28, 2009 the more or less stalled discussion was transformed into a more targeted and politically-driven dialogue (ibid: 36). However, the Corfu Process did not seem to be sufficient for Russia regarding the EST proposal, and Russia has continued to call for separate non-OSCE discussions on the proposal for a legally-binding pan-European security treaty (ibid: 40).

The Russo-Georgian War in August 2008 generated a severe setback in NATO-Russia relations. Relations have, however, slowly started to improve since early 2009 (Johnson 2011). NATO's latest Strategic Concept issued in November 2010 puts great effort into expressing goodwill towards Russia. The document attempts to assuage lingering Russian distrust of NATO by stating that "NATO-Russian cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space for peace, stability and security. NATO poses no threat to Russia". It stresses the need for transparency, reciprocity, and mutual benefit and confidence in relations (NATO 2010d: Art. 33-34). Johnson (2011) argues that cooperation between NATO and Russia makes sense when one considers the broad array of common interests and security challenges. The key to a stronger and more constructive partnership is to emphasize the areas of common interest in order to exploit the possibilities for practical cooperation. It is impossible to ignore the areas of disagreement, such as missile defence and "frozen conflicts", but practical cooperation in areas of common interest is a good beginning for confidence building. Only then the remaining Cold War mentality will be surmounted once and for all (Johnson 2011: 3-5).

Rotfeld (2010) expresses a more critical view of Russia. He acknowledges that NATO and Russia are mutually dependent on each other, but places more blame on Russia for the uneasy nature of relations:

"The main problem in the NATO-Russia relationship is not the lack of institutions, documents, or procedures, but a lack of transparency, confidence, and mutual trust […] NATO's strategy towards Russia must be guided by inclusiveness. But such a strategy requires that Russia clearly demonstrate its political will to cooperate with NATO. Russia must make a choice" (Rotfeld 2010).

The view argued by Rotfeld is shared by many within NATO. They feel that efforts made by the Alliance to overcome differences and Cold War-mentality are not reciprocated by Russia. There is thus the need for a change in attitude on the part of Russia, which can be done for example by increasing transparency, i.e. letting Western policy makers gain more insight into Russian policy making processes. Wood (2010) suggests that the high level of resentment on the part of Russia might be explained by a state of disappointed love. Russia has gone through a cycle of hope, frustration and resentment as it has continuously measured its relationship with the outside world, and the West in particular, during its political, economic, and social transition in the post-Soviet period (Wood 2010: 91). Issues such as NATO enlargement, missile defence as well as the incidents in Kosovo and Georgia have reinforced this feeling.

4.4 Intra-NATO dynamics

Already in the mid-1990s divisions started to appear within NATO over how to relate to Russia. This was connected with NATO's post-Cold War role and the nature of its mandate. On the one hand, there was an emerging need for NATO to address threats to the member states located on the peripheries of NATO territory. In order to deal with these threats in a satisfactory manner NATO needed to expand its activities beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. On the other hand, there was an underlying concern that NATO involvement in its Eastern periphery would provoke Russia because this would mean the presence of Allied forces in Russia's neighbourhood (Sloan 2008).

In the prelude to the 1999 Strategic Concept this debate was particularly evident. The most pronounced dividing line was between the US supported by the United Kingdom (UK) on one side, and the Franco-German tandem on the other. American proposals for a new Strategic Concept included the provision that the Alliance should be able to intervene in regional crises even if it did not have explicit authority from the UN. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright argued that NATO should address the issue case by case, while France and Germany insisted that all NATO missions should have a UN Security Council (UNSC) approval. The American stance was to a great extent based on the fear of a Russian or Chinese veto in the

UNSC (Whitney 1998; Erlanger 1998). The main European concern was the alleged American intention to globalize NATO and thus push the Alliance out of its area of operation. The Europeans feared that the Americans would exaggerate possible threats to the Alliance in order to justify this (Cohen 1998). European NATO members also had more reason than the US to fear an enraged Russia because of their geographical proximity to Russia.

These intra-NATO divisions between the US and European members and between the UK and continental Europe were exposed during NATO's 2008 Bucharest Summit. There was strong disagreement over the balance between maintaining a cooperative relationship with Russia and the project of enlarging the Euro-Atlantic community. This division was manifested during the Summit when France and Germany, along with several other member states, refused to support the US bid to extend immediate invitations to Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP). The recent concern of European NATO members is largely based on the general perceptions of a US in decline and of a Russia that is "coming back", based on Russia's growing economic strength as a main energy exporter as well as the more assertive foreign policy emerging under President Putin's rule. This is a completely opposite view to the one prevailing during most of the 1990s, when the US was regarded as the world's unchallenged superpower and Russia was perceived as a weak and chaotic ex-superpower (Smith 2010: 99). This alteration requires NATO to deal with Russia in a different way. European NATO members do not wish to antagonize a Russia on which they have become increasingly energy dependent (Aybet & Moore 2010: 4). A stronger, more self-confident and more assertive Russia will most likely not let NATO be the agenda-setting part of the relationship. In this new context NATO's top priority is to not allow Russia to divide it.

Feifer (2010) argues that a new intra-NATO division on issues concerning Russia has been emerging in the wake of the Alliance's latest enlargements; between the "old" and the "new" Europe. A majority of the recent Central and Eastern European NATO members bear reluctance towards Russia because of their communist past. The main motivation of many of these countries to join NATO is Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. They rely on support from the US and Western European NATO members in case of a future Russian aggression. Moreover, the "new" NATO members fear that Russia is trying to undermine Western unity by developing closer bilateral relations with countries such as France and Germany. From their point of view some of the old Western European NATO members might be inclined to

downplay democratic values in Russia in favour of improving important economic ties and energy trade with Russia (Feifer 2010). The "new" members do have a point. In order to gain more weight when dealing with Russia, NATO needs to appear as a unified actor. It is vital to agree on common interests as well as the means to achieve them, and to avoid giving Russia the possibility to enter into bilateral agreements with individual NATO member states.

4.5 Summary

During the 1991-2011 periods NATO has sought to manage its relationship with Russia through different institutional frameworks. There has been a general agreement within the Alliance to not give Russia a voice on issues that are of vital interest to NATO. Consequently, Russia was first offered participation in the PfP on the same level as other former Warsaw Pact countries. However, Russia quickly made a demand for a "special" institutional relationship reflecting its elevated status compared to other CEECs. Looking back, NATO has to a great extent yielded to the Russian demand and thus broken its own principle of not granting any side deals above the PfP. This was demonstrated through the 1997 NATO-Russia Funding Act and the creation of the PJC, when Russia was promised more extensive consultation rights with NATO member states than other CEECs. The major turning point came with the establishment of the NRC in 2002. The institutional set-up changed from a 19 + 1 format to a format of 20. The individual NATO member states and Russia were now, at least on paper, regarded as equal partners.

NATO's compliance to Russian demands can be explained in different ways. First there is the realization that Russia is regaining its strength as a major player at the international field. If NATO proves unable to maintain a functional relationship with Russia its legitimacy as a key actor of European security is weakened. Moreover, NATO has realized that accommodating Russia with regard to the institutional set-up can facilitate the Russian approval of other NATO policies such as enlargement. NATO has actively tried to engage Russia, indicating that Constructivism cannot be discounted as an explanatory theory. However, as Smith (2010) points out, both the PJC and the NRC have failed to fulfil their functions as mechanisms for consultation at vital moments in NATO-Russia relations. This is due to a mutual lack of trust as well as divergent understandings and interpretations of key issues. Although practical cooperation between NATO and Russia is taking place in a number of areas, the mutual distrust hampers a broader political rapprochement in relations. Constructivism acknowledges

that although ideas can change, this is not an easy process. Rotfeld (2010) calls for more goodwill on the part of Russia.

Events on the European security arena as well as resurfacing "great power" notions in Russia have caught up with the institutional framework for NATO-Russia relations and necessitated a constant adjustment of NATO's strategy. 9/11 led to a rapprochement between NATO and Russia and accelerated Russo-American cooperation. (Offensive) Realists argue that real cooperation between actors in international politics will occur only as a result of a common, external enemy, e.g. terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. The Russian participation in the "war on terror" did not come without a cost for NATO. Russia's "reward" was a greater say in NATO affairs through its position as an equal partner in the NRC. This points towards the Realist argument that power and interests prevail in international politics. However, it cannot be ruled out that NATO's compliance to Russian demands had an ulterior motive. The Alliance showed a great amount of goodwill in order to soften Russia and thus pave the way for the NATO enlargements that were bound to come.

5.0 ENLARGEMENT

At the end of the Cold War many Realist observers predicted the death of NATO. In order to survive, they claimed, the members of any alliance needed a common, external threat. Among them was the Soviet analyst Georgy Arbatov, who stated that the Soviet Union had dealt NATO a deathblow by taking away its enemy (Shea 2010: 11). Looking back, Arbatov could not have been more mistaken. In the post-Cold War era NATO has expanded through three rounds of enlargement, in 1999, 2004, and 2009, increasing its membership from 16 states in 1991 to 28 as of today. Moreover, NATO's role has gradually been redefined. What started out as a pure collective defence alliance now also encompasses collective security operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area. These developments are more in line with Constructivist theory, arguing that identity approximation can make cooperation possible.

As early as in the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty – the founding document of NATO – it became clear that the Alliance did not rule out a future increase in the number of its members from the initial 12 member states:

> "The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty" (NATO 1949: Art. 10).

From 1990 onwards NATO has pursued an official strategy of "open door" towards former Warsaw Pact members, believing that the accession of these states into the Alliance is a principal means to maintain peace and stability in Europe. Russian leaders, on the other hand, feel that NATO enlargement is encroaching into the former Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and is demeaning Russia's national security (Sakwa 2008: 414-419). However, the level of Russian opposition has varied in accordance with the overall state of NATO-Russia relations and the international security context. Behind NATO's official "open door" policy disagreement within the Alliance over how to expand in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia has been seething, particularly in connection with the Kosovo and Georgia crises. There is, however, agreement to not give the Russians a veto over the Alliance's future expansion – a vital interest for NATO – indicating that Realism has explanatory value.

5.1 The rationale for NATO's enlargement policy in the post-Cold War security environment

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed by 10 Western European states as well as the US and Canada in 1949. During the Cold War period NATO underwent three rounds of enlargement. Greece and Turkey was admitted in 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1955, and Spain became a member in 1982 (Lindley-French 2007). At the end of the Cold War the Alliance thus comprised 16 member states. The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was included into the Alliance after the German unification in October 1990. This event raised the question of whether further expansion of NATO to the East was feasible.

The 1989-1991 periods are characterized by fundamental changes in the European security situation, of which the German unification, extensive troop reductions in Europe, and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union were the most significant (Wijk 1997: 20-21). In official documents from this period the Alliance expresses an overall goal: to work with all the countries of Europe in order to create enduring peace and stability on the continent. Consequently the support for political and economic transition following the rejection of totalitarian communist rule in these countries made great sense in the NATO logic. Moreover, Russia could not be ignored in the enlargement issue as this is a policy meant to stabilize Europe, and the goal of establishing true security in Europe cannot be achieved without Russia. Therefore NATO policies have been designed to engage Russia in constructive involvement in European and global security affairs (Lindley-French 2007: 78; Sloan 2008: 72). In the early post-Cold War period actually admitting new states into the Alliance was not mentioned explicitly, but the manoeuvres promoted by NATO during these first years laid the foundations for the subsequent enlargements.

A Declaration from the NAC Summit Meeting held in London in July 1990 stressed that "The Atlantic Community must reach out to the countries of the East which were our adversaries in the Cold War, and extend to them the hand of friendship" (NATO 1990: Art. 4). This document is the first formal initiative for the transformation of the Alliance. Among the most important issues agreed upon was the change of NATO's political role. Representatives from Warsaw Pact countries were invited to address the NAC in Brussels, and the Alliance wished to establish diplomatic relations with these countries (Wijk 1997: 17). The document devoted some space to emphasize this intention:

> "… to reflect the changing political role of the Alliance, we today invite President Gorbachev on behalf of the Soviet Union, and representatives of the other Central and Eastern European countries to come to Brussels and address the North Atlantic Council. We today also invite the governments of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Hungarian Republic, the Republic of Poland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to come to NATO, not just to visit, but to establish regular diplomatic liaison with NATO. This will make it possible for us to share with them our thinking and deliberations in this historic period of change" (NATO 1990: Art. 7).

The aim is primarily to establish regular diplomatic relations with the governments of CEECs and the Soviet Union. At a meeting of the NAC in Ministerial Session in June 1991 the "hand of friendship" that was extended to the CEECs at the London Summit one year earlier was concretized through the desire to

> "… build constructive partnerships with them in order further to promote security and stability in a free and undivided Europe which will recognize the political, economic, social and ecological elements of security, along with the indispensable defence dimension" (NATO 1991c: Art. 1).

A continuation of this view was expressed in the 1991 "Rome Declaration" issued at the NAC Summit of November that year, in which the Alliance articulated a strong desire for closer ties with the CEECs. The document declared an intention to develop a more institutionalized relationship with these countries, including among other things the regular attendance of these countries' representatives in meetings with the NAC at the different levels of representation (NATO 1991a: Art. 9-11). NATO's door was open. The broad approach to security implied in the June 1991 document was advanced in NATO's 1991 Strategic Concept (NATO 1991d). This document, issued in November 1991, stated that the changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe had radically improved the security environment in which NATO operated. The changes in the security situation did not eradicate all threats to Alliance security, but paved the way for achieving Alliance security objectives through the use of multiple means. More emphasis was put on the pursuit of dialogue and cooperation, which sought to "… build increased mutual understanding and confidence […] and to expand the opportunities for a genuine partnership among all European countries" (ibid: Art. 25). The NATO approach was incremental, starting with an expression of friendliness towards these countries, moving on to the articulation of a desire to establish diplomatic relations, and finally the proclamation to set up institutionalized relationships.

5.1.1 Exploring the grounds: the 1995 "Study on NATO Enlargement"

As a consequence of the dissolutions of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991, the security environment in Europe and the scope of opportunities for NATO activity were radically changed. Was it possible and desirable to welcome the newly independent CEECs as NATO members? In this regard the Declaration from the January 1994 NAC Summit Meeting in Brussels established three essential guiding elements for later NATO enlargement policy. First, the document reaffirmed the Alliance's "open door" policy. Second, it welcomed NATO expansion to the East:

> "… We […] wish to strengthen ties with the democratic states to our East. We reaffirm that the Alliance, as provided for in Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, remains open to membership of other European states in a position to further the principles of the Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. We expect and would welcome NATO expansion that would reach to democratic states to our East, as part of an evolutionary process, taking into account political and security developments in the whole of Europe" (NATO 1994: Art. 12).

Third, the PfP was launched at the Brussels Summit. The 1994 Declaration made it quite clear that NATO's intention with this initiative was to prepare partner countries for an eventual membership in the Alliance (NATO 1994: Art. 13). Despite of this clarity on the part of NATO, Russian leaders may not have realized this and later entered the PfP on the condition that it was an alternative to NATO enlargement (Smith 2006). The PfP received strong support from the CEECs shortly after its establishment. By the end of 1994 all CEECs and the majority of post-Soviet states in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus were official NATO partner countries (Sakwa 2008). This indicates these countries' eagerness for cooperation with NATO, and in the case of some for an eventual membership in the Alliance.

In 1995 NATO prepared a document called the "Study on NATO Enlargement" in order to make inquiries about the possibilities for further geographical expansion of the Alliance. The Study mainly considered the advantages of admitting new members into NATO and how these should be brought in. The main argument presented in the document was that enlargement would contribute to enhanced security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area by supporting democratic reforms; fostering patterns and habits of cooperation, consultation and consensus-building; and promoting good-neighbourly relations (NATO 1995: Art. 3; Sloan 2008). The document stated that enlargement of the Alliance would happen through accession of new states to the North Atlantic Treaty in accordance with Article 10 of that Treaty.

Enlargement remained open to all European countries, and would occur through a "gradual, deliberate, and transparent process". The Study did not present a fixed list of criteria for inviting new member states, but simply stated that enlargement would be decided on a case-by-case basis (NATO 1995: Art. 7). The PfP would play an important part in the accession process by strengthening relations, building confidence, and help prepare possible new members for NATO membership (ibid: Art. 32). For NATO the end of the Cold War provided a unique opportunity to build improved security in the entire Euro-Atlantic area. An enlarged Alliance would be more able to enhance European as well as international security.

In a 1995 article published in the *New York Review of Books* by Strobe Talbott, a foreign policy analyst and former US Deputy Secretary of State, some of the most commonly used arguments in support of NATO enlargement were expressed. First, the prospect of being admitted to NATO promotes desired behaviour in the CEECs, i.e. domestic reform processes such as the strengthening of democratic and legal institutions, economic liberalization, and the solution of internal ethnic disputes and conflicts with neighbouring states. Talbott emphasizes the progress made in Hungary and Poland. Second, NATO needs to adapt to the post-Cold War security environment in order to justify its continued existence. This must be done by promoting and consolidating democratic values and market economy in Europe (Talbott 1995). Although he strongly advocates NATO enlargement, Talbott also acknowledges that one of the major challenges connected with this policy is the effect it has on Russia. A deep scepticism is evident all over the Russian political spectrum. However, Talbott emphasizes that the fear of the possibility of resurgent Russian aggression is not the main reason for NATO to stay in business and should not be seen as the motive for NATO enlargement. Enlargement must not be "threat based" (ibid.).

In the 1995 Study NATO devotes little space to possible problems which might result from enlargement. Whitney (1995) explores this aspect in a *New York Times* article. He outlines several problems relating to enlargement. First, there is the Russian reaction. The claim by the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to join NATO has been countered by fierce Russian opposition. A reach by NATO to Russia's borders is regarded as a threat. Second, there are Article 5 considerations. NATO must be prepared to defend any new member of the Alliance – a serious commitment. This entails a financial dimension, which in turn may complicate the acquisition of public support in the member states. Third, dynamics within NATO need to be taken into consideration. Although most NATO members seem to think that expanding the

Alliance to Central Europe is a good idea, the most influential countries have different opinions as to how fast this should happen. Germany and the US hold the view that Central European Countries will qualify for NATO membership within five years, while French, Spanish and Italian leaders prefer a slower approach (Whitney 1995).

NATO's 1995 Study does, however, stress the importance to maintain cooperative relations with all European states, including those which do not join NATO. Russia is explicitly mentioned. NATO acknowledges the importance of maintaining constructive and cooperative relations with Russia in order to promote security and stability in Europe. The Study acknowledges Russian concerns regarding the enlargement process, and NATO emphasizes its intentions to address these concerns by further developing its relations with Russia based on dialogue and mutual confidence. The enlargement process, including the associated military arrangements, will threaten no-one (NATO 1995: Art. 23-28). This message was clear, but was not sufficient to calm Russian concerns.

5.2 NATO from policy to practice: new members and functions

NATO enlargement can be understood through two different aspects: the expansion of the number of member states and thus the overall territory, and the expansion of its role and range of activities.

The first aspect of enlargement concerns geography. It is the process of including new member states in NATO and thus widening the territory of the Alliance. Since the end of the Cold War there have been three rounds of geographical enlargement, in 1999, 2004, and 2009. The number of NATO members has been extended from 16 states at the end of the Cold War to 28 states at present. At the 1997 NAC Summit Meeting in Madrid the so far most significant step in the post-Cold War process of opening the Alliance was taken when the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were invited to begin accession talks with NATO (NATO 1997b: Art. 6). On March 12, 1999 a historic moment in the history of the Alliance took place when these three states became the first former Warsaw Pact countries to join NATO (Lindley-French 2007: 79; NATO 1999b). During this period the Alliance was careful to stress that its door remained open to new members and that it

"… expects to extend more invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the Alliance and that the inclusion would enhance overall European security and stability" (NATO 1997b: Art. 8).

The 1997 document emphasized that geographic location was not an essential criterion when considering which countries were applicable for future membership. The provisions set forth in 1997 were pursued at the 1999 NAC Summit in Washington, where the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was introduced. The MAP is a programme intended to help the countries aspiring for NATO membership in their preparations, and includes a set of conditions for prospective members. It was a visible manifestation of NATO's "open door" policy (Simon 2008: 98).

The prelude to the 2004 enlargement round began not long after the events of September 11, 2001. In several speeches given in 2001 by Lord Robertson, who was NATO Secretary General at the time, NATO enlargement is connected to the changed security environment after 9/11. Robertson confirmed NATO's intention to issue invitations to new members the following year, and justified the upcoming enlargement in two ways. First, enlargement should be seen in the broader context of the integration processes taking place in the Euro-Atlantic security community. Integration also encompassed the accession of new member states to the European Union (EU) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Second, Robertson tried to calm Russian leaders by acknowledging their concerns connected to NATO enlargement, but at the same time invalidating them. The stability, democracy, and growth of Russia's neighbours consolidated through enlargement would enhance Russia's national security. The Cold War zero-sum mentality was obsolete. On the contrary, NATO enlargement would benefit Russia. In these speeches Robertson strongly emphasized that NATO did not constitute a threat to Russia and that NATO enlargement would not create a "new dividing line" in Europe (NATO 2001a; NATO 2001c; NATO 2001d).

At the 2002 NAC Summit Meeting in Prague the NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to invite seven CEECs – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia – to begin accession talks to join the Alliance (NATO 2002c: Art. 2). The Prague Summit Declaration concluded that NATO would need to adapt to the emerging threats and challenges appearing as a consequence of 9/11, and stated that the seven future member states

would contribute to enhance NATO's ability to face this new security environment (ibid: Art. 5). The second round of enlargement was completed on March 29, 2004, and was the most comprehensive enlargement in NATO's history in terms of expanding both the Alliance's territory and the number of member states.

The second round of enlargement took place during a period in which NATO-Russia relations were generally good. The 2001-2003 periods is characterized by Pouliot (2010) as a "second honeymoon" (Pouliot 2010). Russian objections to the second enlargement round were moderate compared to those of the 1997-1999 rounds. According to Smith (2006), this was due to two interrelated things. On the one hand, Western attitudes towards Russia became more genuinely open and thus amendable to its participation in NATO institutions after 9/11. On the other hand, the Russian government was showing a new flexibility and willingness to cooperate (Smith 2006: 103; 124). From the mid-2000s the Russian foreign policy assertiveness resurfaced (cf. chapter 4.0), leading to a stronger opposition to NATO enlargement. The Russian stance was particularly manifested in a speech given by President Putin at the 2007 Munich Security Conference. In his speech Putin criticized several aspects of American and NATO security policy, one of which was NATO expansion eastward. In his opinion NATO enlargement to the East was a "provocation" against Russia. This would reduce the level of "mutual trust" between Russia and the West and create "new dividing lines and walls" on the European continent (Rolofs 2007a; Rolofs 2007b; Munich Security Conference 2007).

Despite Putin's resistance, the third round of post-Cold War NATO enlargement was initiated at the April 2008 NAC Bucharest Summit where the Alliance offered accession talks and thus prospective membership to Albania and Croatia. Moreover, preceded by an intense internal debate, the Summit agreed that Georgia and Ukraine would eventually become NATO members. However, MAPs were not offered to these countries at the time and no explicit time perspective was expressed. While the accession of Albania and Croatia did not seem to bother Russia much, NATO's approximation towards Georgia and Ukraine was met with fierce opposition by Russia. George W. Bush, who was US President at the time, was one of the strongest advocates of offering MAPs to Georgia and Ukraine. This would eventually lead to full membership for these countries (Berryman 2011; NATO 2008a). According to Kanet (2010), the goals behind the American stance were twofold. First, this move was said to be a response to the alleged desires of the peoples and governments of Georgia and Ukraine to

become integrated in Western security structures. Second, there was an underlying wish in the US to contain Russian influence in these areas (Kanet 2010: 165). The American proposal, however, proved to be difficult to complete. As a consequence of the August 2008 Russo-Georgian War eastern enlargement was effectively halted. Georgian and Ukrainian membership was taken off the agenda.

The second aspect of enlargement concerns NATO's functions. Over the past two decades NATO's role has gradually been redefined. Initially a pure collective defence alliance focused on the territorial defence of its member states, NATO now also encompasses collective security operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area (Aybet 2010). An important element in the debates connected with the preparation of the 1999 Strategic Concept was the scope of NATO's activity, both in terms of type of activity and the geographical area in which these would take place. The US sought a NATO mandate without artificial geographical limitations, while most European member states wished to prevent an open-ended role for the Alliance (Sloan 2008: 81; Cohen 1998). The strongest pro-enlargement argument throughout the 1990s, frequent in the conservative political environment in the US, was that the composition of possible future threats to Allied security necessitated the ability by NATO to conduct operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Accordingly, NATO was faced with a choice between "going out of area of out of business" (cf. chapter 4.0).

9/11 partly ended the debate between the US and European NATO members. The events of 9/11 resulted in the NAC decision the following day to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time ever. NATO chose to depart from its traditional mission of territorial defence once and for all by engaging in a military operation in Afghanistan. Out-of-area operations became necessary to justify NATO's continued existence. This resulted in a general agreement within the Alliance that NATO's activity must exceed its territory. However, the debate continues regarding what NATO's core function should be – collective defence or collective security?

5.2.1 Prospects for future enlargement

Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which has laid the foundation for all NATO enlargement policy since its creation, states that "… any other European State…" able to fulfil the requirements of the Treaty may be invited to accede to the Treaty (NATO 1949: Art. 10).

This rather loose definition leads to certain problems. What does "any other European state" mean? Where does Europe end? There are for example certain ideological currents within Russia arguing that the country primarily belongs to Europe (Tsygankov 2010). The limits of Europe can be based on cultural, historical, religious, or geographical criteria. So far it seems like NATO has not been consistent in the usage of such criteria, but has based its enlargement policy on a wide conception of the term Europe. This practice sets no clear limit for future enlargement.

During the two decades which have passed since the end of the Cold War, NATO has increased its members by 12 states through three rounds of enlargements. This is consistent with NATO's strategy of an "open door" policy frequently reiterated in different strategic documents from 1990 onwards. Official NATO documents from 2008 and 2009 confirm that the "open door" policy will be continued in the future (NATO 2008a; NATO 2009b; NATO 2009c).

> "NATO's ongoing enlargement process has been an historic success in advancing stability and cooperation and bringing us closer to our common goal of a Europe whole and free, united in peace, democracy and common values. NATO's door will remain open to European democracies willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. We reiterate that decisions on enlargement are for NATO itself to make" (NATO 2008a: Art. 18).

The 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration envisioned that the accession of Albania and Croatia "… marks the beginning for a new chapter for the Western Balkans…", and thus implies that enlargement in this area is not so far down the road (ibid: Art. 19). The 2009 Strasbourg/Kehl Summit reaffirmed that Georgia and Ukraine will become NATO members in the future, and welcomed the membership aspirations of three Balkan countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro – as well as enhanced cooperation with Serbia (NATO 2009b; NATO 2009c). The three first-mentioned countries are currently holding NATO MAPs, while Georgia and Ukraine are in the stage of Intensified Dialogues with the Alliance. Georgia is interested in receiving a MAP. Ukraine was interested until June 2010, when it announced that it no longer seeks NATO membership. In general, the Russian reaction to Balkan enlargement is mild compared to the possible accession of Georgia and Ukraine into the Alliance. The Balkans is less important to Russia in terms of both strategic, geopolitical considerations and cultural attachment (Sakwa 2008: 418).

5.3 Russian objections: does NATO understand Russia's concerns?

Despite NATO's numerous assurances that enlargement is not a threat to Russian interests, there has been a general tendency over the past 20 years of Russian resistance to NATO expansion. Enlargement is regarded a threat to the Russian national security. The Cold War mentality does not easily disappear, and the fact that former Warsaw Pact countries are queuing up to join the old enemy increases the Russian sense of humiliation. When the expansion of NATO to Central and Eastern Europe became a reality Russia made it clear that it did not want any Western NATO forces stationed on the territory of the new member states. This was an impossible demand to fulfil for sovereign states (Braun 2008: 57; Lindley-French 2007: 77-78). Although the level of Russian opposition to enlargement has varied according to the overall state of NATO-Russia relations and the international security context, altogether this issue has forged a unique consensus in the entire Russian political spectrum. It became a defining issue in Russian foreign policy and contributed to the shift in opinion away from the "westernization" of the early post-Cold War period (Sakwa 2008: 418-419).

The Russian threat perception is based on two major arguments. First, there is the feeling that NATO is encroaching on the former Soviet sphere of influence and upsets the post-Cold War security balance. Enlargement has undermined the role of universal organizations such as the UN and the OSCE, and has thus increased Russia's isolation and excluded it from decision-making in Europe. From the Russian point of view NATO enlargement to the East re-established lines of division within Europe and could only be directed against Russia. Second, a question fundamental to the Russians remained unanswered: If there is no longer a security threat from any European state, then why should NATO expand? Russian authorities find little justification for NATO's continued existence, and seem to ignore the fact that the initiative for Eastern enlargement in part came from the applicant post-Soviet states. The CEECs which became NATO members in 1999 and 2004 had expressed a strong wish to join the Alliance since the early 1990s (Sakwa 2008: 414-419; Skak 2011: 150).

After the end of the Cold War Russian leaders realized that the country was incapable of reconstructing an empire like the Soviet Union by means of reintegrating the Newly Independent States (NIS) within a "single military-strategic space". Instead, Yeltsin pursued an "enlightened post-imperial integrationist course" within the framework of the

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (Berryman 2011: 229). Faced with the resolute wish to join NATO by the CEECs, Yeltsin equivocated. During a visit to Warsaw in August 1993 he allegedly said "go ahead" when asked about Poland's prospects for NATO membership. This stance was however modified shortly after, and turned into a strong Russian opposition to the 1997-1999 enlargement rounds. Russia insisted that any NATO enlargement would have to meet though conditions, including a ban on the deployment of NATO military forces and equipment on the territory of the new member states. These objections were not accepted by NATO (Carr & Ifantis 1996: 135; Sakwa 2008: 415-416).

An element causing some confusion in NATO is the ambiguity expressed by the Russians. Facing a different security environment a pressing question in the minds of the Russian leadership was whether it would be possible for Russia to join NATO. At the end of 1991, Yeltsin sent a letter to NATO's Heads of State and Government in which he expressed a desire for future Russian membership in the Alliance. In an interview with the BBC on March 5, 2000 Putin reiterated this idea, but stressed that it could only happen on "equal terms" (Sakwa 2008: 415; Smith 2006: 51). Considering that these expressions of great willingness to cooperate with NATO has happened in between periods of strong reluctance against the Alliance, it is challenging for NATO to decide on what to believe and how to handle this ambiguity. Russia's push for membership provoked various reactions within NATO, ranging from outright rejection to a cautious welcome of the idea. Kupchan (2011) argues that the Euro-Atlantic security architecture should be constructed to incorporate Russia, i.e. adopting it as a member in NATO, in order to avoid it becoming an unstable outsider (Kupchan 2011).

According to Berryman (2011) Putin's first term as President (2000-2004) was characterized by the "politics of the possible". The idea was to avoid picking fights that Russia could only lose. Facing a new type of non-state centric, fluctuating threats in the aftermath of 9/11 pragmatic cooperation with the West was in the interest of Russia. This helps explain why Russian leaders were less strong in their opposition to NATO's second round of enlargement. During Putin's second term as President (2004-2008) Russian foreign policy assertiveness increased and the focus was on re-establishing Russia as a "normal great power" in the region. This resulted in heavy resistance towards the Colour Revolutions taking place in the post-Soviet space as well as towards NATO's third round of enlargement, particularly considering the future accession of Georgia and Ukraine (Berryman 2011; Tsygankov 2010). Constructivist scholars such as Tsygankov (2010) argue that in seeking to become a normal

great power Russia preferred to use "soft" power to assert its claims to be a regional hegemon. Russia has never sought to challenge the formal sovereignty of the NIS (Berryman 2011: 229-231). However, the Russo-Georgian War was an exception.

5.3.1 A legitimate threat perception?

An interesting aspect is whether the Russian threat perception can be justified, or whether it is solely based on remnants from the Cold War period? From NATO's point of view the Russian logic has one major flaw. In general Russia would profit from a stabilized border to the West, which is an underlying intention of NATO's enlargement policy (Lindley-French 2003: 189). The rational thing to do for Russia would be to accept eastward NATO expansion, leading to a stabilization of its western border. That would enable Russia to free some of its resources in order to deal more effectively with the many instable zones to its South and East. Lindley-French (2003) argues that the further East NATO expands the more dilute Article 5 will become. It is for instance highly unlikely that NATO would go to war for the Baltics in case of a Russian reinvasion (ibid.). Several influential Western European member states, led by France and Germany, wish to engage Russia rather than containing it. To these countries eastern enlargement was motivated mainly by the desire to expand the zone of democracy in Europe. Another motive for France and Germany was the wish for multipolarity in order to provide a counterweight to the US, as well as the desire to accommodate the vehement requests from CEECs for NATO membership (Braun 2008: 64-65). However, there are other Western European NATO members, like the UK, that prefer a stronger American presence in European security. Many Western European members are concerned about how Russia intends to use the leverage gained from its position as a major energy supplier, and some have been reluctant to criticize Russia too strongly in public (Sloan 2008: 78).

On the other hand, Russia's threat perception is not entirely groundless. First, the Russian view can be justified by the fact that there exists a split within the group of Central and Eastern European NATO member states. Although these countries have officially proclaimed that they no longer regard Russia as a threat, some of them are concerned about certain elements of Russian behaviour, such as the apparent democratic deficit in Russia (Sloan 2008: 78). By some of these countries enlargement is regarded as a means to contain Russia. To some extent NATO membership in the CEECs is motivated by hard security guarantees as stipulated in Article 5 (Kamp 2009). Poland is emphasized by Braun (2008) as an example of

a NATO member which has pushed for an Easternization of NATO's security policy. The Polish fear is to be squeezed between Russia and Germany, and the idea is that the accession of Ukraine into NATO will provide a valuable buffer zone against Russia. This view is not uncommon in the CEECs. The split between the "old" and "new" European NATO members regarding Russia thus becomes less clear because there is a division within the group of CEECs as well. Szabo (2009) provides the energy example. While Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, and Italy wish to cooperate with Russia on energy, the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, and the UK are deeply sceptical about a Russian entry into their energy sectors (Braun 2008: 62-63; Szabo 2009: 34).

Second, some justification for Russia's concerns can be found in the change of political leaders in certain major NATO member states, affecting Russia's relations with these countries. Although personal relations between political leaders alone are not a decisive factor for the relationship between two countries, this element should not be underestimated. According to Braun (2008) German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (1998-2005) and French President Jacques Chirac (1995-2007) were focused on maintaining favourable relations with Russia and pursued relatively good relations with President Putin. This was manifested through the attempts at forming an alliance between Russia, Germany, and France opposing the stance of the US before the 2003 Iraq War. The current German and French leaders, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy (until May 2012), are more pro-American than Schröder and Chirac, possibly increasing Russia's sense of alienation (ibid.).

5.4 Summary

Contrary to the Realist prediction NATO did not dissolve after the end of the Cold War. The Alliance introduced a broad approach to security that included enlargement. Already in 1990 NATO chose to open up for cooperation with former Warsaw Pact countries. The principal rationale for NATO's rapprochements to the CEECs was the belief that the security of NATO members was inseparably linked to that of all other European states. This included Russia. Russia therefore was the aim of numerous assurances that NATO expansion did not pose a threat to its security. In line with Constructivist theory NATO hoped that these assurances would convince Russia of the Alliance's good intentions and non-hostile identity, leading to a common understanding and cooperation with Russia.

On the one hand, it seems like NATO understood the scope of opportunities that emerged from the transformations in Europe in 1989-1991. The Alliance made important moves at an early stage in order to consolidate cooperation with the newly independent CEECs. This later resulted in three rounds of eastward enlargement in 1999, 2004, and 2009. A distinction can be drawn between NATO's enlargement policy in the 1991-2001 periods and from 2001 onwards. Until 2001 the goal was to provide security and stability on the European continent. NATO pursued a strategy of inclusion in order to create a Europe undivided. The Alliance engaged in stabilizing the East through partnership, enlargement, and out-of-area Article 4 defence deployments. During this period Article 5 remained credible because it provided an incentive for those countries that wanted to identify with and adhere to NATO (Simon 2008). This situation changed after 9/11. NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history, realizing that it needed to move beyond the Euro-Atlantic area in order to retain its relevance as a key actor of European security. The change in NATO's functions was justified by the need to adapt to the different type of security threats emerging on the European and international security arenas.

On the other hand, NATO has over the past 20 years conducted a policy which Russia strongly opposes. Enlargement has been a major contentious issue in NATO-Russia relations throughout the 1991-2011 periods, but to varying degrees affected by the general state of relations as well as the security context. NATO's first and third rounds of post-Cold War enlargement were met with fierce opposition from Russia. This can be partly explained by the fact that the completion of both of these rounds coincided with troublesome periods in NATO-Russia relations in connection with the conflicts in Kosovo and Georgia. NATO's second round of enlargement took place in the aftermath of 9/11 – a period of relatively strong NATO-Russia cooperation – and resulted in less opposition on the part of Russia.

Since the early 1990s NATO's overall policy towards Russia has been aimed to soften and to some extent satisfy Russia in order to pave the way for enlargement. NATO has sought to manage enlargement in a way that achieved its goal without alienating Russia (Sakwa 2008: 417). In the end, Russian security is a Western security issue. In order to prevent a security dilemma where Russia becomes a threat to NATO members, it is vital to provide Russia with a sense of security (Carr & Ifantis 1996: 132). NATO's efforts have only been partly successful. The 1994 PfP initiative was one way of managing and delaying enlargement without driving Russia into hostility. In order to avoid complying with Russia's attempts to

achieve a special relationship that might allow Russia to veto eastward expansion, the NATO-Russia Funding Act was launched in 1997. The PJC can be seen as a damage-limitation exercise, working to make enlargement more acceptable to Russia by mitigating its fears about the upcoming deployment of NATO troops on the territory of the new member states (Sakwa 2008). However, flattering words in Treaties and official NATO documents seem to be of little consolation to Russia because much of Russia's relationship with the West hinges on NATO enlargement. The Russian opposition remains strong, and although maintaining good relations with Russia is essential to all NATO members, they are not willing to give the Russians a veto over the future expansion of the Alliance (Lindley-French 2003: 188). The fact that NATO is sticking to a policy which is embittering the relationship with one of its most important security partners, and that the enlargement issue is affected principally by the European security context indicates that Realism's focus on interests has explanatory value. NATO is not willing to let Russia have a say on the Alliance's vital issue of enlargement.

6.0 ARMS CONTROL

> "As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance" (NATO 2010d: Art. 17)

Towards the end of the Cold War there was a general agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact to monitor and preferably reduce the accumulation of military forces and equipment on the European continent during four decades of hostility between East and West. The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty was negotiated in November 1990, but as the post-Cold War security order progressed, Russia called for a modified version of the Treaty. However, NATO's member states have not ratified the Adapted Treaty. Moreover, NATO has pursued a strategy of upholding a certain nuclear capacity. In the aftermath of 9/11 the global security environment changed, resulting in a US-led NATO proposition to set up a missile defence system in Central Europe. The proposition was justified by the alleged procurement of nuclear weapons by "rogue states", but faced fierce opposition by Russia (Sakwa 2008: 396-404). Disagreement over the CFE Treaty and missile defence in Europe has aggravated the overall relationship between NATO and Russia over the past two decades (BBC 2007).

This chapter analyses how NATO has struggled with the management of arms control in its relationship with Russia, rejecting most of the Russian demands and suggestions. The US has taken the lead in NATO's plan for a missile defence system in Central Europe, and most negotiations on missile defence are bilateral between the US and Russia. At the same time there are divergent views among NATO's members concerning missile defence, and hampered by disagreement NATO has failed to clearly define its threat perception. To Russia it remains unclear whether it is regarded a true threat by NATO. This, and the Alliance's choice to maintain a certain amount of its nuclear weapons from the Cold War era, have raised a general doubt in Russia about NATO's intentions. This indicates an aggravation of the security dilemma.

However, NATO has not completely spoilt the opportunity for arms control cooperation that emerged in the post-Cold War security environment. As part of the process of "resetting" relations from 2009 onwards, NATO and the US have put strong effort into emphasizing their intention to cooperate with Russia on missile defence. This suggests a turn towards a

Constructivist explanation. It is suggested that a solution to the missile defence issue has the potential to cause a permanent improvement of overall NATO-Russia relations.

6.1 The 1990s: the construction of an arms control regime in the Euro-Atlantic area

In the post-Cold War security environment the threat and the use of force became a more remote scenario on the European continent. However, NATO has chosen to maintain a certain level of nuclear capacity. In its 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts NATO admitted that the main purpose of its nuclear forces was political: to make any aggressor uncertain about the Alliance's response to a potential military offensive. Nuclear forces were maintained as a means of last resort and were NATO's ultimate guarantee of security (NATO 1991c: Art. 54; NATO 1999a: Art. 62). The situation in 1990-1991 was marked by a high level of uncertainty. Officially Russia was no longer regarded an adversary, yet the opposite was indirectly expressed in some strategic documents. To some extent the Cold War mentality remained. In the Declaration issued at the 1990 NAC London Summit it is stated:

> "To keep the peace, the Alliance must maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, based in Europe, and kept up to date where necessary […] we seek the lowest and most stable level of nuclear forces needed to secure the prevention of war" (NATO 1990: Art. 15).

The reliance on nuclear weapons was reduced, and NATO stressed that these weapons would never be used except in self-defence (NATO 1990). The Alliance emphasized its intention to uphold for the foreseeable future the minimum level of conventional and nuclear forces sufficient to preserve peace and stability in Europe (NATO 1991a; NATO 1991c).

Although armed confrontations became less likely during the last years of the Cold War, measures needed to be taken in order to control the high level of military forces and equipment that remained on the territory of European states at the time. On November 19, 1990 the CFE Treaty was signed in Paris by the then 16 NATO member states and the then six Warsaw Pact states. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991 as well as the splitting of Czechoslovakia the number of signatories later rose to 30. Briefly, the Treaty set equal limits for each bloc, i.e. NATO and the Warsaw Pact, on key categories of conventional military equipment that could be deployed between the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains. It placed restrictions on the number, type and deployment of

weapons and forces for all the States-Parties involved, in effect creating national limits. The main idea was to prevent either bloc from procuring the level of armament essential for conducting surprise attacks and initiating large-scale offensive operations, which could have triggered the use of nuclear weapons in response. To NATO, the underlying motivation was to eliminate the Soviet Union's great quantitative advantage in conventional weapons in Europe (Arms Control Association 2010; Carr & Ifantis 1996; Sakwa 2008: 396).

During the early 1990s there was a substantial level of cooperation between Western countries and Russia in order to help Russia dispose of old nuclear weapons. This was possible because NATO-Russia relations were in a cooperative phase at the time. However, the fact that the CFE Treaty was signed before the Cold War actually ended resulted in problems later on. With the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact the threat of a large-scale offensive vanished, and the Treaty lost part of its rationale. It did, however, retain value by virtue of its weapon limits and inspection regime, which provided essential transparency on military holdings (Arms Control Association 2010). To Russia, however, the Treaty was not perceived to be completely fair in this new security setting. Sakwa (2008) provides some support to this notion. He points to the fact that of all the signatories only Russia (together with Ukraine) faced restrictions on where weapons could be placed on their own territories, known as the "flank limits". Russia sought to revise the Treaty, on the grounds that what had been negotiated for the Soviet Union was not appropriate for an independent Russia facing different geostrategic and security challenges (Sakwa 2008: 396).

During the November 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit the 30 signatories of the CFE Treaty signed the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (Adapted CFE Treaty). This revision of the original Treaty took into account the changed geopolitical situation of the post-Cold War era. Most importantly the bloc-based limits on conventional military forces and equipment were replaced by a system of national and territorial ceilings. Russia was especially eager to obtain greater flexibility in the deployment of its forces on Russian territory in order to counter the conflicts in the North Caucasus (particularly in Chechnya). Along with the Adapted CFE Treaty two non-legally binding documents were concluded: the CFE Final Act and the Istanbul Declaration. These documents set out additional commitments by the Treaty States-Parties on new weapons limits, including pledges by Russia to withdraw its military troops and equipment stationed in Georgia and

Moldova. The Adapted CFE Treaty was ratified by only four of the 30 signatories – Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine. All NATO member states refused to ratify the Adapted Treaty as long as Russia did not comply with the provisions of the CFE Final Act and the Istanbul Declaration (Sakwa 2008: 396; Arms Control Association 2010).

6.1.1 Ambiguity in NATO's position

Although NATO's major message is clear – to maintain for the foreseeable future a certain level of military forces – the underlying causes of this decision are not expressed in a precise manner. A major problem relating to NATO's strategic documents is the lack of an identification of the threat which is supposed to justify the maintenance of nuclear weapons and later the construction of missile defence in Europe. NATO has emphasized on numerous occasions that Russia is no longer regarded an adversary or a threat to the Alliance. Nevertheless, the ambiguity evident from NATO's strategic documents raises concerns and doubt in Russia and elsewhere. According to Erlanger (2010), NATO's current Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has said that more than 30 countries throughout the world have missile technology, and some of them are able to hit targets on Allied territory. But where does this threat come from? Who exactly is the enemy? The two main threats that NATO has in mind, are perceived to come from Iran and Russia (Erlanger 2010). However, none of these countries are mentioned explicitly as threats in NATO's strategic documents.

The ambiguity indicated by the official NATO position is also a result of divergent views within the Alliance. Erlanger (2010) points to the fact that NATO has to find a balance between countries such as France, a nuclear armed state that insists on the primacy of nuclear deterrence, and Germany, which wants a nonnuclear world. With the entry of the CEECs into NATO the scepticism towards Russia was reinforced (Braun 2009). The US has been careful not to explicitly criticize Russia in public, but has created great doubt in the minds of Russian leaders through their actions.

6.2 The 2000s: new security threats and NATO missile defence in Central Europe

NATO's intention to uphold the minimal level of conventional and nuclear forces sufficient to preserve peace and stability in Europe was reiterated in different strategic documents issued by the Alliance later on, including in the post-9/11 period (NATO 1999a: Art. 46; NATO

2006; NATO 2010d: Art. 17, 26). In the aftermath of 9/11 the global threat picture changed significantly. Among the emerging threats were terrorism performed by non-state actors as well as the possibility that nuclear weapons might end up in the hands of Iran, North Korea and other "rough states" (Sakwa 2008: 402). In this harsher security environment many Western leaders, fronted by US' President George W. Bush, felt that merely possessing nuclear weapons was not sufficient to preserve security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Consequently, a proposition for a missile defence system in Europe was promoted. In 2004 the Bush administration began talks with Central European states to explore the potential use of their territory for deployment of US ground based missile interceptors and radar. By 2007 agreements were secured with the Czech Republic for hosting the radar and with Poland for hosting the missile interceptors (Mankoff 2012; Thielmann 2009; Sakwa 2008). Not surprisingly this proposition was not welcomed by Russia.

In 1972 the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty was negotiated between the Soviet Union and the US. This was part of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) framework intended to control the offensive arms race between the two Cold War superpowers. The rationale behind the ABM Treaty was that limiting the parties' defensive systems would reduce the need to construct more offensive weapons to overcome any defence that the other might deploy. Each superpower thus became more vulnerable to the other's nuclear weapons, deterring either side from launching a first strike because it faced a potential retaliation that would assure its own destruction (Arms Control Association 2003; Thielmann 2009). In the aftermath of 9/11 then US President George W. Bush seized the opportunity to accelerate the procurement and deployment of strategic missile defence (Thielmann 2009). On December 13, 2001 Bush announced that the US would withdraw from the ABM Treaty, despite strong opposition from Russia as well as certain European Allies. France, Germany and the Netherlands openly opposed US plans to abandon the ABM Treaty. Bush claimed that the Treaty prevented American development of defences against possible ballistic missile attacks from terrorist groups or "rogue states". The withdrawal took effect on June 13, 2002 and the Treaty no longer remains in force. The Treaty was initially agreed on for "unlimited duration", but permitted a State-Party to withdraw from it if "extraordinary events have jeopardized its supreme interests". Bush used this clause to justify American withdrawal (Arms Control Association 2003; Mankoff 2012).

The official US approach to missile defence was heavily based upon the perception that "rogue states", Iran and North Korea in particular, were developing nuclear weapons as well as means of delivering them. The US plans were supported by Poland, the Czech Republic and other former Warsaw Pact countries, as well as Spain, Italy and the UK. However, simultaneously with President Bush's efforts to deploy strategic missile defences a new consensus was forming in US intelligence circles. Intelligence officers argued that the most likely threats emerging from "rogue states" and non-state terrorist groups would not be in the form of strategic ballistic missiles, but rather the acquisition and usage by these actors of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) (Mankoff 2012; Thielmann 2009). In this context missile defence is not a suitable means to address the actual threat and the Bush administration's justification faced much scepticism. Thielmann (2009) suggests that the Western promotion of missile defence may defeat its own end. It has increased the overall threat by fostering Russian and Chinese offensive force enhancements and complicating the negotiation of different arms control treaties (ibid.).

It is a well-known fact to NATO member states that Russia has expressed a strong desire to avoid the deployment of Western armed forces and military facilities near the borders of former Soviet republics. Having this in mind, an essential question is how NATO has approached Russia in the missile defence case. Did NATO engage Russia sufficiently in this issue from the beginning? NATO has emphasized on numerous occasions, and this point was repeated prior to the 2010 Strategic Concept, that missile defences "… are not directed against Russia, nor would they threaten Russia's nuclear deterrent" (NATO 2010b: 44). In recent strategic documents NATO has expressed its willingness to cooperate with Russia on the missile defence issue (NATO 2008a; NATO 2009b; NATO 2009c). The Declaration issued at the April 2008 NAC Summit Meeting in Bucharest concluded:

> "Ballistic missile proliferation poses an increasing threat to Allies' forces, territory, and populations. Missile defence forms part of a broader response to counter this threat. We therefore recognize the substantial contribution to the protection of Allies from long-range ballistic missiles to be provided by the planned deployment of European-based United States missile defence assets […] We also commend the work already underway to strengthen NATO-Russia missile defence cooperation. We are committed to maximum transparency and reciprocal confidence building measures to allay any concerns. We encourage the Russian Federation to take advantage of United States missile defence cooperation proposals and we are ready to explore the potential for linking United States, NATO and Russian missile defence systems at an appropriate time" (NATO 2008a: Art. 37-38).

Despite repeated assurances on the part of NATO, the Russian reaction to the proposition for missile defence in Europe has been vehement.

6.2.1 Russia's response: suspension of the CFE Treaty

NATO's plan for a missile defence system in Central Europe was quickly condemned by then Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Russian attitude was strongly connected with the country's threat perception. From the Russian point of view the deployment of missile interceptors in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic could threaten its own defences. The Russians also worried that the relatively small deployments initially planned might evolve into a comprehensive system and that the radar located in the Czech Republic could be used to spy on Russia (BBC 2009: Zarakhovich 2007).

Throughout the 1991-2011 periods NATO has stated repeatedly that Russia is no longer regarded a threat to the Alliance, but Russian leaders are not convinced about this because NATO has chosen to uphold a moderate level of nuclear forces. Despite assurances on the part of NATO there is a widespread belief in Russia that the plans for a missile defence system in Europe are directed against it. Are Russian leaders paranoid or is this belief actually founded on facts? Lindley-French (2007) suggests that Bush withdrew the US from the ABM Treaty in order to pave the way for the development of a missile defence shield in Europe, using the post-9/11 security context as an excuse (Lindley-French 2007: 12). During his presidential campaign in 2000 Bush said that he would offer amendments on the ABM Treaty to Russia, but amendments were never proposed in Russo-American talks on the subject (Arms Control Association 2003).

In the spring of 2007 Russia called for an extraordinary conference intended to address its concerns regarding the CFE Treaty. Russia assured the other signatories about its commitment to conventional arms control in Europe, but argued that a modernization was needed because of NATO's 1999 and 2004 enlargements. The US considered Treaty revisions ahead of the conference, held in Vienna on June 12-15, but the meeting ended without agreement and no final Communiqué was issued. Consequently Russian authorities issued a statement on July 14 which announced the decision to suspend its participation in the CFE Treaty (BBC 2007; Kramer & Shanker 2007; Weitz 2007). Shortly after the Russian statement NATO expressed its reaction in a press release:

"NATO Allies place the highest value on the CFE regime […] The announcement by the Russian Federation issued on the 14th of July 2007 to suspend as of the 12th of December 2007 its participation in the work of this landmark Treaty, including its flank regime and associated documents is deeply disappointing. The Allies are very concerned by this unilateral decision" (NATO 2007b).

NATO had acknowledged the need to adapt the CFE Treaty to the post-Cold War security environment before the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Summit (NATO 1997a; Sakwa 2008: 396). Agreement on a revised Treaty was reached at this Summit, but due to disagreement regarding whether Russia had fulfilled its commitments concluded in the CFE Final Act and the Istanbul Declaration the Adapted Treaty was never ratified by NATO members. The original Treaty thus remained in force despite of Russia's displeasure. The realization that the Adapted Treaty had no future, together with the missile defence issue, was the catalyst for Russia's suspension of the CFE Treaty (Kramer & Shanker 2007).

Moreover, developments within Russia help explain the reaction of Russian authorities. Kramer & Shanker (2007) suggest that the Russian reaction partly was a result of increased suspicion towards the West in Russian domestic politics ahead of the March 2008 presidential elections. The aim was to strengthen the position of Kremlin's candidate Dmitry Medvedev in the election. The suspension of Russian CFE obligations was also an expression of a general bitterness among the Russian political elite about what is perceived as a series of broken promises from NATO as the Alliance has expanded into former Warsaw Pact countries after the end of the Cold War. The idea was to send a message to the world that Russia will not put up with the American bullying and NATO encirclement, believed to encroach into the Russian sphere of influence (Kramer & Shanker 2007; Zarakhovich 2007).

The direct effects of Russia's withdrawal from the CFE Treaty were the halt of inspections of Russian military sites by NATO member states and the cease in weapon limitation on the part of Russia, as well as the speculation that Russia would build up its forces in border areas (Zarakhovich 2007). Moreover, the event had other more widespread consequences. Shortly after Obama's inauguration as President in January 2009 the plans for a missile defence system in Europe were shelved. Following reports from US intelligence services, Obama argued that Iran had been focusing less on developing long-range ballistic missiles than previously expected. Assuming that Iran only possessed short-range missiles there was no need for missile defence deployment in Europe. This type of missiles can be deterred by ship

and land-based systems closer to Iranian territory (BBC 2009). Did Obama give in to the Russians? Domestic and other international critics accused the US of making unnecessary concessions which would lead to hard-line Russian positions in the future. According to the Obama administration the change in approach was simply a reaction to a change in threat perception and part of the policy of "resetting" Russo-American relations. To Russian authorities, however, this was perceived as a diplomatic and military victory (BBC 2009; Mankoff 2012).

However, missile defence itself was not abandoned. Putin had strongly condemned NATO's missile defence proposition, but with Medvedev in office NATO seized the opportunity to reach agreement. Medvedev agreed to come to the 2010 Lisbon Summit to discuss Russian participation in the missile defence system (Erlanger 2010). Yet, cooperation proved difficult because NATO and Russia had fundamentally different visions of what missile defence cooperation was designed to accomplish. At the Lisbon Summit Medvedev proposed a sectoral approach, meaning that NATO and Russia would fight off dangers appearing in their own geographical sphere of influence. In practice these sectors would overlap, essentially outsourcing the defence of some NATO territory to Russia. Consequently, NATO and the US rejected the Russian proposition. Instead they proposed the creation of two parallel, interoperable systems that could share data, but would leave defence of NATO members' territory solely in the hands of NATO. Realizing that there would be no unified system, Russia insisted to impose legally binding constraints in order to ensure that the NATO system would not undermine Russian capabilities. Specifically, Russia wanted commitments from the US and NATO that the planned missile defence system would not target Russia's strategic nuclear forces. Russian authorities did not rule out the possibility of future cooperation with NATO in missile defence, but they did make stern demands. In his November 2010 state of the nation address President Medvedev warned that if talks on missile defence fail within a decade, a new round of arms race will start, and Russia will have to adopt decisions on the deployment of new strategic weapons. This was later repeated by Prime Minister Putin (Mankoff 2012: 340-341; Saradzhyan 2011).

According to Skak (2011) it makes sense to view Russia's intervention in Georgia as a proxy war against NATO in general and the US in particular. Russian leaders felt that the country had been treated in a wrongful manner because of the perceived rush by NATO member states – led by the US – to make Georgia a member of the organization. The rush for deploying a

missile defence system in Central Europe culminated the Russian notion of injustice, and Russia thus resorted to military force in order to demonstrate its capacity and willingness to act (Skak 2011: 139). Through the intervention in Georgia Russia had the opportunity to demonstrate its regained strength and tell the international community that any attempts to boss it around were not accepted! Russia's act was a reaction to both NATO enlargement and missile defence in Central Europe.

Can Russia's reaction to NATO's missile defence plans somehow be justified? Ever since the end of the Cold War and the first plans for NATO enlargement Russia has expressed a strong desire to avoid any deployment of Western armed forces and military facilities near the borders of former Soviet republics. NATO has argued that as it expands, Russia cannot influence this because sovereign states have the right to control their territory (Braun 2008: 57; Lindley-French 2007: 77-78). The official reason for the US deployment of a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic was to defend European NATO members from Iranian missiles, but the fact is that Iran only possesses missiles that can reach the corners of Europe. This fact was indirectly acknowledged by the US when Obama called off the plans in early 2009 (BBC 2009). Thielmann (2009) claims that the real reason for the missile defence program was to defend the US. Another possible reason is the wish to contain Russia based on uncertainty associated with the actions of Russian authorities. Russia's reaction might have been exaggerated in the eyes of NATO, but it was not completely groundless.

6.3 Missile defence cooperation as a "game changer"?

NATO-Russia relations were restored to the "normal level" not long after their last major crisis – the August 2008 Russo-Georgian War. The challenge is, however, to find a way to create a durable, qualitative improvement of relations. There is strong agreement that in order to make this happen, NATO and Russia need to locate the areas of mutual interests in which they can cooperate and partly ignore the issues that are sources of irritation. In this regard missile defence is emphasized as an area with great potential for NATO-Russia cooperation (Johnson 2011; NATO 2010a; NATO 2011; Rasmussen 2010; Rasmussen 2011; Saradzhyan 2011). Saradzhyan (2011) claims that "… an agreement on a cooperative missile system would transform the Moscow-NATO relationship from that of a military stand-off to substantive, sustainable partnership". He argues that a solution to the missile defence issue

can be a key element eventually leading to an enduring, qualitative change in NATO-Russia relations (Saradzhyan 2011).

Johnson (2011) emphasizes that the relations between the US and Russia and those between NATO and Russia have steadily improved over the past years. At the beginning of 2009 the Obama administration began its "reset" policy by locating areas of common interest in which the US and Russia could work together. A tangible result of this process was the signing of the New START Treaty, a nuclear arms reduction treaty, at the beginning of 2011. In its 2010 Strategic Concept NATO called for a "true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia" (Johnson 2011; NATO 2010d: Art. 33). This document also tried to assuage lingering Russian distrust by emphasizing that cooperation with Russia is of strategic importance to the Alliance and that NATO poses no threat to Russia (NATO 2010d).

According to Johnson (2011), there are two ways to make better relations between NATO and Russia. First, there is the need to build mutual trust in order to overcome the remnants of Cold War mentality. This can be done by increasing transparency. Second, there is the need to locate areas of common interests and then reach agreement on these issues. These issues include failed states (e.g. Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea), terrorism, arms control, proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, drug trafficking, piracy, cyber security, and missile defence. A cooperative NATO-Russian missile defence will advance transition from a military stand-off, institutionalized by decades of nuclear deterrence, to a security and defence partnership based on convergence of the parties' long-term common interests in combatting hard security threats. Areas with a high level of contention should be left aside for the near future. These constitute most importantly the frozen conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the independence of Kosovo, NATO's "open door" policy towards Georgia and Ukraine, the CFE Treaty, and the nature of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture (Johnson 2011; Erlanger 2010; NATO 2007a; Saradzhyan 2011).

6.3.1 NATO's current strategy on Russia

The view argued by Johnson and Saradzhyan resembles the official NATO view. The Alliance's current Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen argues that NATO and Russia are best served finding areas of mutual security interest and then acting together on those. In a speech given at the Aspen Institute in Rome in September 2010 Rasmussen emphasized the

need to improve relations between NATO and Russia. He outlined three tracks essential to make progress within Europe; missile defence, conventional arms control (i.e. get the CFE Treaty back on track), and reducing the number of short range nuclear weapons in Europe (NATO 2010c).

Rasmussen's view is that missile defence is an opportunity – actually it is *the* opportunity – to bring NATO and Russia together. It is the key to move the partnership forward. The political foundations for partnership are already in place, as principles stated in the 1997 NATO-Russia Funding Act and the 2002 Declaration which created the NRC (Rasmussen 2010; NATO 2011). When constructing a missile defence system in Europe it is vital to include Russia. In a speech at the Brussels Forum in March 2010 the Secretary General said:

> "We need a missile defence system that includes not just all countries of NATO, but Russia too. One security roof, that we build together, that we support together, and that we operate together. One security roof that protects us all" (NATO 2010a).

In the same speech Rasmussen also stressed that in order to make this happen Russia needs to see missile defence as an opportunity and not a threat. On different occasions he has stressed that NATO's missile defence is not threatening Russia. It is "… not directed at Russia. It is designed to protect European nations in NATO against threats from outside Europe; it is a defensive system" (Rasmussen 2011). He concluded that both NATO and Russia face the possible threat of ballistic missiles (although the exact origin of the threat is not specified). It thus makes sense to cooperate in defending against these missiles, "practically, militarily and politically" (NATO 2011; Rasmussen 2011). Rasmussen has implied that Russia has misunderstood the very essence of the proposed missile defence system. The legal guarantees demanded by Russia already exist in the 1997 NATO-Russia Funding Act, which stated that the Parties would abstain from the threat of or the actual use of force against each other (ibid; NATO 1997a). This might suggest that Russia is stuck in the Cold War mentality and thus is unwilling to realize the facts of reality.

6.4 Summary

Despite the fact that the Cold War ended more than 20 years ago, there is an enduring need for arms control in the Euro-Atlantic area. The use of force has become a more remote scenario, but not obsolete. However, NATO and Russia envisage different designs for the

arms control regime. During the 1990s this was demonstrated through disagreement about the CFE Treaty. Russia called for revisions because it felt that the provisions negotiated for the Soviet Union in 1990, and especially the "flanks limits", were no longer appropriate for the different security challenges that Russia was facing. An Adapted CFE Treaty was negotiated in 1999, but has never been ratified by NATO member states because Russia has failed to comply with its commitments to withdraw military forces from Georgia and Moldova. During the 2000s NATO's management of arms control was marked by the transformation of the global security environment after 9/11. Arguing that "rogue states" such as Iran and North Korea were developing nuclear weapons, a US-led NATO proposition for a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic was presented in 2007. The Bush administration had "prepared" for this by withdrawing the US from the ABM Treaty in December 2001, claiming that this Treaty prevented the American development of defences against ballistic missile attacks from terrorist groups and "rogue states". Russia strongly opposed NATO's plans for missile defence in Central Europe, and this issue triggered Russia's suspension of the CFE Treaty. This was "just" an act of diplomacy, but sent a strong signal of discontent regarding NATO's way of managing Euro-Atlantic security. Skak (2011) argues that the Russian invasion of Georgia in in August 2008 was a reaction to both NATO enlargement and missile defence.

The overall development of the arms control issue in NATO-Russia relations points towards a Realist explanation. During the 1990s a major problem was that NATO was not able to clearly define the threats it was facing. In NATO's strategic documents Russia was no longer depicted as an adversary, yet NATO deemed it necessary to maintain a substantial level of conventional and nuclear forces in order to counter a military aggression. The fact that NATO's threat perception appeared as ambiguous and that the identification of a specific enemy was absent raised doubt about NATO's intentions in Russia. This resulted in increased tensions between NATO and Russia and aggravated the security dilemma. During the 2000s Russian leaders were reluctant to accept the justification for missile defence presented by the US and NATO, arguing that the Iranian threat was not legitimate. NATO's missile defence plans were perceived as a provocation and an attempt to diminish Russia's influence in its "neighbourhood".

Certain political circles within NATO member states and in Russia have maintained a Cold War mentality with regard to arms control throughout the 1991-2011 periods. This has

resulted in low willingness by both NATO and Russia to cooperate on the other part's terms, making it more difficult to reach an agreement. Consequently, Constructivism is weakened as an explanatory theory. Russia's suggestions have mostly been rejected by NATO because NATO's primary occupation has been to preserve its vital interests. An example is the Russian proposition for sectoral missile defence that was refused by NATO: the Alliance feared that the defence of some of its territory would be outsourced to Russia. Moreover, NATO's management of arms control in dealings with Russia has been complicated by divergent positions among the member states, resulting in the US taking the lead in the missile defence issue.

However, Constructivism cannot be entirely abandoned as an explanatory theory. Although arms control has been a challenging issue in relations between NATO and Russia over the past 20 years, recent developments suggest that NATO has not spoilt the opportunity for a cooperative arms control regime in the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO has strategic interests in maintaining cooperation with Russia. As part of the policy of "resetting" Russo-American relations, the plan for a NATO missile defence system in Central Europe was shelved by Obama shortly after his inauguration as President in January 2009. Missile defence is emphasized as an area where future cooperation may lead to an enduring, qualitative improvement of overall NATO-Russia relations. In its 2010 Strategic Concept NATO expressed a strong desire to cooperate with Russia on this matter, and emphasized the need to get the CFE Treaty back on track.

7.0 CONCLUSION

"Today, the place and role of Russia in European security is once again uncertain and unsure. It is difficult to know whether Russia is part of the Euro-Atlantic community or a problem for it" (Lindley-French 2007: 108).

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate NATO's management of its relations with Russia during the 1991-2011 periods. The analysis is on two levels – the strategic level and the operative action level – to demonstrate that both words and actions matter. The messages that NATO communicates to Russia in official strategic documents are analysed in light of the context, i.e. events on the European security arena as well as developments in Russia. Elements from the Realist and Constructivist paradigms within IR theory are combined to illustrate that NATO's management of its relations with Russia is a mixture of cooperation and confrontation. Three particularly contentious issues in NATO-Russia relations – the institutional framework, enlargement, and arms control – are analysed to provide examples of NATO's interaction (or the lack of it) with Russia. The thesis is an interpretative study of a particular relationship between two particular actors in international politics. The prospects of generalizing to other relationships between other international actors are poor, and neither is it the aim of the thesis.

Throughout the 1991-2011 periods NATO has faced a "Russian dilemma": how to simultaneously deal with Russia as a potential partner and a potential threat on the European security arena? NATO is drawn between the realization that cooperation with Russia is both necessary and desirable, and a lingering distrust and reluctance towards Russia and Russian initiatives. In strategic documents from 1990 and 1991 NATO expressed a wish to include Russia in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. However, this initial ambition has only partly been fulfilled. Regarding the institutional framework there has been a general agreement among NATO member states to not give Russia a voice on issues that are of vital interest to the Alliance. However, the realization that a functional relationship with Russia increases NATO's legitimacy as a key actor on the European security arena has made the Alliance yield to the Russian demand for a "special" relationship. To a great extent, the institutional framework has been used as a means to soften and satisfy Russia to pave the way for enlargement and other NATO policies in Europe. The enlargement and arms control issues have been characterised by a higher level of disagreement about how the Alliance should deal

with Russia. In the enlargement issue NATO has pursued an "open door" policy. The Alliance has sought to include the CEECs in the organization, believing that the security of NATO members is inseparably linked to that of all other European states. Russia continues to oppose expansion despite numerous assurances on the part of NATO that enlargement is not a threat to Russia's security. Considering the level of expansion, both in terms of the number of member states and territory, NATO has succeeded with its enlargement strategy. In the arms control issue NATO's strategy has been to construct a functioning arms control regime through the CFE Treaty and later through missile defence in Europe. At the moment, a functioning regime is not in place. Russia has suspended the CFE Treaty and there is currently no missile defence cooperation between NATO and Russia. This is partly because NATO has failed to specify its threat perception, raising doubt in Russia about NATO's intentions.

The investigation of NATO's management of its relations with Russia in light of the institutional framework, enlargement, and arms control illustrates the development of NATO-Russia relations. In general, the analysis reveals that events on the European security arena, as well as developments in Russia, are interruptive elements which necessitate a continuous adjustment of NATO's strategy towards Russia. This indicates that the context matters more than a superior strategy for NATO's management of its relations with Russia. The context has changed the definition of security. Consequently, NATO has distanced itself from its traditional role as a collective defence alliance. During the 1990s it became an organization that also performed collective security operations. The impact of strategy is also weakened because of divergent views within NATO. With the entrance of former communist states the overall attitude of the Alliance towards Russia has become more negative. These countries are marked by their past experiences with Russia, and to some extent Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty has been a motive for their membership in NATO.

9/11 is the single event which has had greatest impact on post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations. 9/11 has affected NATO-Russia relations in three important ways. First, the unification in the "war on terror" led to a rapprochement between NATO and Russia and an acceleration of Russo-American cooperation. Russia was made, at least on paper, an equal partner with NATO through the NRC framework. Second, 9/11 changed NATO's role. On September 12, 2001 Article 5 was invoked for the first time ever. NATO needed to move beyond the Euro-Atlantic area to remain a key actor of European security. Third, the global security environment changed after 9/11. A different type of multi-faceted, unpredictable

threats emerged. A US-led NATO argued that a missile defence system in Central Europe was necessary to defend against ballistic missile attacks from terrorist groups and "rogue states". This led to vehement Russian opposition and increased tensions between NATO and Russia.

The analysis of the three contentious issues demonstrates that NATO's words have been important in the management of its relations with Russia, but that NATO's actions have been more important. Realism has explanatory value because the security dilemma is still present in NATO-Russia relations. By providing for their own security, both NATO and Russia increase the insecurity of the other. Neither NATO nor Russia is willing to compromise on their vital interests and let the other have a say on issues of high importance. For example will NATO never give Russia a veto over the future expansion of the Alliance, and Russia refuses to let the Allies place military forces and equipment on territory close to Russia's Western border.

However, Constructivism cannot be discounted when evaluating NATO's management of its relations with Russia in the 1991-2011 periods. Action is not only about what is done, but also about how it is done. Communication matters, and is most importantly a means to build trust. The Strategic Concepts and other official strategic documents are means by which NATO can communicate messages to Russia and indicate the Alliance's intentions. The Strategic Concepts are agreed upon by consensus between all NATO member states, and provide the framework for NATO's policy some years ahead. Official NATO documents are, however, sometimes vague to satisfy everybody, both inside and outside the Alliance. The overall debate has been more nuanced. To ensure a functioning relationship, Russia needs to be consulted and have a say in matters of great importance to it. It is vital that the NRC is a forum for 29 states, and not a 28 + 1 format in which Russia feel marginalized. The security dilemma is still present because of a mutual lack of trust. At some points NATO has not been sufficiently clear towards Russia. NATO has failed to express its threat perception in a precise manner, and has not been able to identify a specific enemy. This, together with the Alliance's maintenance of nuclear forces as weapons of last resort, has raised doubt in Russia about NATO's intentions. The Russians have also been reluctant to accept NATO's justification for the deployment of a missile defence system in Central Europe. In sum, the mutual lack of trust hampers a broader rapprochement in relations. Tensions between NATO and Russia have increased and the security dilemma has been aggravated. At vital moments in NATO-

Russia relations, most importantly the Kosovo and Georgia conflicts, the institutional framework has failed to fulfil its function as a mechanism for consultation.

Currently, Russia is not fully integrated into the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. A major paradox of post-Cold War NATO-Russia relations is the frequent employment of the terms "partnership" and "common values" to describe a relationship that has never been a partnership based on common values in any real sense. The general tendency in NATO is the assumption that "common values" are Western ones. The value of the relationship has been measured in terms of Russia's acquiescence to Western understandings of core concepts like democracy and security. In reality, however, NATO-Russia relations are characterized by an enduring lack of a genuine normative rapprochement and a mutual lack of trust (Antonenko & Giegerich 2009; Feifer 2010; Klein & Richter 2012; Smith 2010). Without a doubt, NATO and Russia will continue to exist as each other's most significant interlocutors on key security issues in the future. They are simply forced to somehow deal with each other because challenges of European security require significant cooperation to be tackled effectively. On the one hand, NATO cannot treat Russia too strictly. A consequence of this is that Russia will give up on the Alliance for security cooperation in Europe and try to pursue bilateral efforts outside the NATO framework (Lomagin 2011). In some key security areas – like counterterrorism and arms control – NATO is dependent on managing a functioning relationship with Russia. On the other hand, NATO wishes to draw certain "red lines" to prevent Russia from playing one Ally against the other. States need to be able to pursue their own interests as long as they do not threaten others, and Russia cannot be permitted to hold veto power over vital NATO matters (Aybet & Moore 2010: 246).

In order to overcome the distrust and the remaining Cold War mentality in relations, NATO and Russia need to find areas of common interests where they can cooperate. Although words matter, they need to be accompanied by action to inspire confidence. NATO and Russia also need to manage their expectations. Cooperation has proved to be easier on specific projects – like peacekeeping in Afghanistan, drug trafficking, and counter piracy – than on more diffuse activities. Missile defence cooperation is suggested as a key to ensure an enduring, qualitative improvement of relations. The situation in Afghanistan and missile defence are two major issues that will be discussed at the May 20-21, 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago. However, the fact that Russia has been reluctant to accept an invitation to join the Summit illustrates the Russian sensation that it is not an equal partner in Euro-Atlantic security.

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