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- EUROPEAN SECURITY AND VALUES

## The Change of Security Paradigm

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# IS IT ALL ABOUT VALUES?

## DIVERGING PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY AS REASON FOR NATO-RUSSIA CRISIS

*Yulia Nikitina, MGIMO University, Russia*

*The Ukrainian crisis demonstrated that lack of trust between major regional security players like NATO and Russia overshadows most regional disputes and conflicts. The article's main argument is that problems in the two parties' relations stem from NATO's and Russia's existential search for a new role after the end of the Cold War, when their roles and sets of strategies used to be clearly defined. The clash between NATO's liberal logic and Russia's realist logic shows that the two players are acting in different systems of coordinates and the minimal common denominator is still to be found.*

### Introduction

Many experts refer to the Ukrainian crisis as at least a three-level crisis: 1) Ukraine's internal crisis; 2) the crisis in relations between Ukraine and Russia; and 3) the crisis in relations between Russia and the West, or even as the crisis of the existing European security architecture. Although NATO, unlike the EU and the OSCE, is not an active player in settlement of the current conflict, Russia-NATO relations overshadow the ongoing crisis, as many commentators would suggest that Ukraine's neutral status is viewed by Russia as a prerequisite for a peaceful solution<sup>1</sup>. Besides, the famous

US neorealist scholar John J. Mearsheimer claims that the NATO enlargement strategy was the key reason of the Ukrainian crisis and Russia's reaction to it<sup>2</sup>.


Almost absent from the Russian official discourse on the conflicts in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine since 2014, NATO's possible enlargement to Georgia and Ukraine is perceived by Tbilisi and Kyiv as a major rationale for Russia's recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and annexation/reintegration of Crimea (the choice of the term depends on the source of discourse). One of the reasons is because any territorial disputes

<sup>1</sup> For instance, this argument is used in the report published by the Russian International Affairs Council "Ukrainian Challenge for Russia": one of the goals of the Russian foreign policy in relation to the Ukrainian crisis should be "to assure a neutral or a non-block status of Ukraine (maximal goal) and freezing of its Euro-Atlantic integration (minimal goal)". See in: Украинский вызов для России: рабочая тетра. No 24/2015 / [гл. ред. И.С. Иванов]; Российский совет по международным делам (РСМД). – М.: Спецкнига, 2015. – С. 8. (Ukrainian Challenge for Russia: Working Paper No 24/2015, ed. by Igor Ivanov. Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). – Moscow: Spetskniga, 2015. – P. 8) [<http://russiancouncil.ru/common/upload/WP-Ukraine-Russia-24-rus.pdf> access 16 August 2015]

<sup>2</sup> John J. Mearsheimer. Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault. "Foreign Affairs", September/October 2014 [<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault> access 5 August 2015]. I build my argument in this article on Mearsheimer's idea that Putin's Russia and the West are operating by different playbooks: realist and liberal. I demonstrate how NATO switched from realist to liberal logic and in what way these different logics of NATO and Russia conceptually clash.

impede future NATO membership. Nevertheless, Tbilisi refers to the case of the German reunification as a precedent that gives hope.

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***the Western countries  
were satisfied with the  
European security system  
until the Ukrainian crisis***

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It seems that the Ukrainian crisis made the discussion of NATO-Russia security cooperation not relevant, because the parties are habitually trying on the status of potential adversaries again. The current relations between the West and Russia are often described as the new Cold War, which, on the one hand, allows experts to once again fall back to the well-known and many times tested analytical patterns of the Cold War to describe the current crisis and make predictions, but, on the other hand, undermines the future of the security architecture on the European continent. However, according to the Russian political elite, after the end of the Cold War, the European security system has never been a system of indivisible all-European security. Here lies the main contradiction: the Western countries were satisfied with the European security system until the Ukrainian crisis (even the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 was perceived rather as a problem of bilateral relations at the regional, and not continental level), while Russia has been talking about the systemic crisis since as early as 1999 (Kosovo crisis)<sup>3</sup>.

This article analyzes contradictions in relations between Russia and NATO at the level of values and interests. Different interpretations of the same events and high mutual expectations created two sets of interrelated problems in NATO-Russia relations: 1) problems of mutual relations (internal vector), and 2) problems related to the search for a role in the international relations after the end of the Cold War (external vector). Moreover, it is not always easy to distinguish, whether a specific problem belongs to the internal or external vector of relations.

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***while Russia has been talking  
about the systemic crisis  
since as early as 1999***

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Both NATO and Russia have a set menu of mutual political accusations.

Russia has the following list of claims<sup>4</sup>:

- NATO gave a political promise not to enlarge eastwards in exchange for the German Democratic Republic joining NATO as part of the unified Germany.
- NATO does not cooperate with Russia as with an equal partner.
- NATO assumes functions of a global security organization, thus usurping the UN's role.
- NATO continues to consider Russia a threat, reanimates the containment strategy but refuses to admit it openly.

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<sup>3</sup> Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе дискуссии на 51-й Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, Мюнхен, 7 февраля 2015 года (Speech and Q&A of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at the 51st Munich Security Conference, Munich, 7 February 2015) [[http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/5E26BDE162FEC0E643257DE5004B5FE0](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/5E26BDE162FEC0E643257DE5004B5FE0) access 5 August 2015]

<sup>4</sup> Thus, almost all of these points have been enumerated in Vladimir Putin's electoral article "Russia and the Changing World", *Moskovskie Novosti*, 27 February 2012. [<http://www.mn.ru/politics/20120227/312306749.html> (access: 05.08.2015)]

- NATO build up its own security at the sake of security of other actors, thus breaking the principle of building a single and indivisible security system in Europe.

The Alliance, in its turn, articulates the following issues in its relations with Russia:

- Russia's criticism of NATO enlargement signifies that Moscow has neo-imperial ambitions and wants to retain control over not only the post-Soviet, but also the post-Socialist space in general. To do that, Russia is putting pressure on some post-Soviet states and even interfering in their domestic affairs to prevent these states from potentially becoming the Alliance members.
- Russia groundlessly wants to have a veto right on NATO's decision-making.
- Russia is not a democracy, thus it is difficult for the Alliance to trust Russia<sup>5</sup>.

Experts and politicians from both Russian and NATO countries mention lack of trust as one of the major reasons of difficulties in NATO-Russia relations<sup>6</sup>. To address lack of trust as the result of the security dilemma, the realist logic suggests the only solution of trust-building measures and transparency. Liberal logic would suggest that common values might help to overcome mistrust. Did the liberal approach work after the end

of the Cold War? Have Russia and NATO had a chance to assume that, after the end of bipolarity, they finally share common values, or do we have to return to the realist logic of a security dilemma?

### External Vector: Search for a Role in the Post-Cold War World

After the end of the Cold War, the Alliance faced a necessity to find a rationale for its existence, which demanded to adapt its worldview accordingly. NATO's transformation was accompanied by a search of factors that would present the history of the Alliance as a logical and uninterrupted process of development. These factors should have been present from the bloc's very launching for it not to be confined to an external ideological and military threat. As a result, NATO's history was re-conceptualized as a history not of a military bloc, but of a security community with a common identity on the basis of civilizational proximity, rooted in its members' democratic regimes<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the seemingly outdated realist logic of the Cold War balance of power was transformed into a liberal logic of a democratic community of states, which had to live through a historic period of the Cold War and take upon itself the responsibility to contain the USSR.

<sup>5</sup> On the veto right, see, for instance, the official note on NATO enlargement from the NATO Review Magazine: "The fundamental contradiction of all NATO-Russia bodies – that Russia was at the table and could co-decide, but could not veto, on key issues – could not be overcome". NATO enlargement and Russia: myths and realities, "NATO Review Magazine", 2014 [<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/russia-ukraine-nato-crisis/nato-enlargement-russia/en/index.htm> access 16 August 2015]. For arguments on a non-democratic regime in Russia and Russian imperialism as an attempt to stop NATO enlargement see: Speech by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the 'Brussels Forum', "A strong NATO in a changed world", 21 March 2014 [[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions\\_108215.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_108215.htm?selectedLocale=en) access 16 August 2015]

<sup>6</sup> For example, see the press release from the 2006 seminar organized by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation: NATO-Russia cooperation still hindered by misperceptions and lack of trust, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 26 June 2006 [<http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=969> access 16 August 2015]

<sup>7</sup> See: Michael C. Williams and Iver B. Neumann, From alliance to security community: NATO, Russia and the power of identity. "Millennium: Journal of International Studies", 2000, 29 (2). pp. 357-387. Analysis of NATO as a security community also can be found in: Дмитрий Тренин. Мир безусловный: Евро-Атлантика XXI века как сообщество безопасности / Моск. Центр Карнеги. — М.: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН), 2013. — 247 с. (Dmitry Trenin. Unconditional Peace: The 21st Century Euro-Atlantic as a Security / Moscow Carnegie Center. – Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2013. – 247 p.) [[http://carnegeendowment.org/files/Trenin\\_Book\\_euro2013.pdf](http://carnegeendowment.org/files/Trenin_Book_euro2013.pdf), access: 5 August 2015]

Instead, Russia's understanding of the NATO transformation is that bureaucratic inertia kept the Alliance together more than any other factor. Bureaucratic inertia would have had no negative connotation for Moscow, if NATO admitted the existence of such inertia. In this case, it would mean that, at least partially, NATO continues to function according to the Cold War thinking<sup>8</sup>. NATO was reluctant to acknowledge that after the end of the Cold War, it kept the 'balance of power' logic, thus, the term "security" had to be re-conceptualized.

Since the 1990 London Declaration, NATO started to link security with the cultural and civilizational functions of the transformed Alliance. The new understanding was that stability was based on a democratic regime, thus lack of democracy was perceived as a potential threat to stability. Non-democratic states can spread instability because they lack the prerequisites for stability<sup>9</sup>. Thus, threats to NATO come not from foes with the realist logic of balance of power, but from non-democratic regimes, which lack democratic institutions as the basis for stability.

This logic means that traditional realist conflicts of interests were substituted with contradictions related to the level of democratic development of domestic institutions and societies. A regime type is now the key divisive line for NATO. Formally, after the end of the Cold War NATO proclaimed that the Alliance did not have any adversaries, because all NATO neighbours were striving to become true democracies, thus there was no difference between NATO members and non-members<sup>10</sup>. In this logic, NATO enlargement did not equal accepting new military allies but was perceived as an enlargement of a democratic stability area over those countries, which share the democratic values.

Russia does not understand this logic and differentiates between security and regime type, which is not always clear for Western counterparts. Thus, one of the problems of the Draft European Security Treaty proposed by Dmitry Medvedev in 2008 was that this treaty includes only more general norms of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-use of force, but does not mention human rights, civil society or democracy<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Putin called NATO a "vestige of the Cold War". «Путин: НАТО – рудимент «холодной войны». Голос Америки, 6 февраля 2012 (Putin: NATO is a vestige of the Cold War, Voice of America, 6 February, 2012) [<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/putin-novo-ogarevo-2012-02-06-138782814/250583.html> access 16 August 2016]. The argument that NATO was not dissolved because of bureaucratic inertia is developed in: Игорь Максимычев. НАТО и Россия в начале третьего тысячелетия. «Обозреватель-Observer», 2006, № 9, сс. 78-87 (Igor Maksimych. NATO and Russia in the beginning of the Third Millennium. Obozrevatel-Observer, 2006, №9, pp. 78-87) [[http://observer.materik.ru/observer/N9\\_2006/78\\_87.pdf](http://observer.materik.ru/observer/N9_2006/78_87.pdf) access 16 August 2015]

<sup>9</sup> Williams, Michael C. and Neumann, Iver B. From alliance to security community: NATO, Russia and the power of identity. "Millennium: Journal of International Studies", 2000, 29 (2). pp. 369-370.

<sup>10</sup> In the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation of November 1991, the following is proclaimed about the Alliance' democratic role: "The world has changed dramatically. The Alliance has made an essential contribution. The peoples of North America and the whole of Europe can now join in a community of shared values based on freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As an agent of change, a source of stability and the indispensable guarantor of its members' security, our Alliance will continue to play a key role in building a new, lasting order of peace in Europe: a Europe of cooperation and prosperity." Provision 9 of the Declaration states that "We have consistently encouraged the development of democracy in the Soviet Union and the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. We therefore applaud the commitment of these countries to political and economic reform following the rejection of totalitarian communist rule by their peoples. We salute the newly recovered independence of the Baltic States. We will support all steps in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe towards reform and will give practical assistance to help them succeed in this difficult transition." The Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation, 8 November 1991 [<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911108a.htm> access 16 August 2015]

<sup>11</sup> See in: Arthur R. Rachwald. A 'reset' of NATO–Russia relations: real or imaginary? "European Security", 2011, 20:1, pp. 124-125.

## NATO Enlargement: Internal or External Vector Problem?

If we analyse NATO expansion as a problem of bilateral relations (internal vector) for Brussels and Moscow, solutions are limited, because one of the players obviously cannot veto the other one's decisions. However, if we approach the enlargement issue as an external vector problem of searching for identity, the toolkit of solutions expands.

In the first half of the 1990s, in expert discussions and discussions within NATO about possible enlargement an opinion was popular that inviting new members would bring more negative consequences by setting new dividing lines in Europe and that this process could eventually frustrate Russia. These predictions have come true, so Russia believes that NATO consciously allowed for all the negative consequences and still decided to enlarge, despite discontent from Moscow<sup>12</sup>. The fact that NATO officials were aware about Russia's inevitable frustration in reaction to enlargement, created in Moscow an impression that the NATO expansion's main goal was isolation of Russia<sup>13</sup>, while the Alliance' logic was somewhat different.

The former Socialist states' desire to join NATO after the collapse of the Socialist bloc was an existential gift to the Alliance and acknowledgement of its significance at the moment of crisis and search for a new role in the world. In the context of lack of an external military threat, candidates for membership added new meanings to the Alliance, which otherwise would have been considered only as an outdated

military bloc. At the same time, for Central and Eastern European states and the Baltic states, NATO membership was more an external acknowledgement of the minimum level of democratic development than a question of security guarantees. An external assessment is needed, when there are not enough grounds or clear internal criteria for independent self-assessment. Thus, both for "old" and "new" NATO members, enlargement was more a process of external assessment and recognition than a matter of military security.

In the 1995, the NATO official study on enlargement, clause 13, indicated that the Alliance "should underline that there can be no question of «spheres of influence» in the contemporary Europe"<sup>14</sup>, thus, NATO itself did not view its enlargement as an expansion of its sphere of influence. NATO's approach is that enlargement, including the military agreements with new members, does not threaten anyone, but, on the contrary, will contribute to the broad inclusive system of the all-European cooperative security based on the principles of democracy. The logic is that if NATO left Central and Eastern European countries out of this cooperative security system, they could have become sources of instability. Thus, in its own perception, NATO is a source of domestic stability, democracy, and well-being.

In the process of NATO transformation, what remained unclear for Russia was how a military bloc managed to transform itself without abandoning its military functions. It is not clear for Russia how a military organization of collective defence can be a source of domestic stability and democracy,

<sup>12</sup> Detailed analysis of Russia's reaction to the first wave of NATO enlargement see in: Vladimir Baranovsky. NATO Enlargement: Russia's Attitudes in: NATO Enlargement. ESF Working Paper No 3, July 2001. – PP. 15-21. [<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=22221>, access: 5 August 2015]

<sup>13</sup> About perception of NATO enlargement as a process of isolating Russia see in; Alexey Pushkov. Don't Isolate Us: A Russian View of NATO Expansion. "National Interest", No 47, Spring 1997. – PP. 58-63.

<sup>14</sup> Study on NATO Enlargement, 3 September 1995. [[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_24733.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24733.htm), access: 5 August 2015]



and not just a defence system against external threats, regardless of the regime type of its members. According to the North Atlantic Treaty's preamble, democracy is a prerequisite for NATO membership, and not a consequence of cooperation within the Alliance<sup>15</sup>.

Russia still perceives NATO as a military bloc and not a political organization, because, to Russia's opinion, despite the transformation, Article 5 remains at the centre of cooperation<sup>16</sup>. In Vladimir Putin's words, if NATO was thinking that someone would attack post-Socialist or post-Soviet countries, it was enough to sign a bilateral treaty on friendship and mutual assistance, including military assistance, which would assure security of these states<sup>17</sup>. What is interesting is that early in the 1990s, NATO's ideas about enlargement were closer to the mentioned Russian approach. In the first half of the 1990s, the Alliance was going to expand stability to the former Socialist bloc in a format of political association and not in the Article 5 collective defence format and deployment of military infrastructure. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) program was conceived as a means to avoid

creating new dividing lines in Europe and manoeuvre between membership-seeking countries and Russia dissatisfied with possible enlargement<sup>18</sup>. But for many of the PfP countries, this program eventually turned into preparation for membership, and, in general, PfP was more oriented towards practical military cooperation and not political dialogue fostering creation of a security community. NATO created an instrument of cooperation in the field, where it had more expertise, which is military cooperation. This fact once again reinforces Russia's perception that NATO is still mainly a military bloc that just wants to disguise itself as a political organization.

In reaction to NATO enlargement and deployment of military infrastructure on the territory of its new members, Russia's efforts to assure its own security from NATO's potential attack became more visible<sup>19</sup> which, in its turn, irritated NATO that viewed enlargement as a peaceful process<sup>20</sup>. Here again we witness the clash of Russia's realist logic of balance of power, where military infrastructure in a neighbouring country is a threat per se, and a Western liberal logic of a "peaceful" political expansion.

<sup>15</sup> NATO members are "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area". The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April, 1949  
[[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm), access: 5 August 2015]

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the comment by Vladimir Putin during his press conference in April, 2014: "In general I believe that the block system outlived itself. NATO was created some time ago to counterweigh the Soviet Union and the so-called Soviet policy in the Eastern Europe. In response to it, the Warsaw Treaty was created. Afterwards, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, while NATO remained. We are told that NATO is transforming and becoming a more political organization. But no one cancelled Article 5, and this article is about mutual military assistance. Against who are NATO actions directed, where does it enlarge closer to our borders, why?". Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным, 17 апреля 2014 (Vladimir Putin's direct line, April 17, 2014).  
[<http://www.kremlin.ru/news/20796>, access: 5 August 2015]

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> K.M.Fierke. Dialogues of Manoeuvre and Entanglement: NATO, Russia and the CEECs. "Millennium: Journal of International Studies", 1999, 28 (1), pp. 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Vladimir Putin's explanation of why Russia reacts to the NATO enlargement so nervously can be found here: Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным, 17 апреля 2014 (Vladimir Putin's direct line, April 17, 2014).  
[<http://www.kremlin.ru/news/20796>, access: 5 August 2015]

<sup>20</sup> It is interesting that such Russian reaction was generally predicted by Western experts. For instance, Bruce Russett and Allan C. Stam in their 1998 article write that in reaction to NATO enlargement Russia could form an alliance with China, and it would be the development that the US. should fear most. As a solution, the authors suggest to include Russia in NATO. See: Bruce Russett and Allan C. Stam. Courting Disaster: An Expanded NATO vs. Russia and China. "Political Science Quarterly", 1998, Vol. 113, No. 3, pp. 361-382.



***NATO's liberal logic made criticism of the enlargement from the point of view of the military strategy barely impossible, because such criticism would imply that Russia is against democracy in general.***

The clash of two logics narrows a choice of Russia's possible reactions to NATO enlargement. In NATO's view based on interrelation of democracy and stability, Russia can either welcome enlargement and, thus, present itself as a progressive pro-Western state, ready to democratize, or it can criticize NATO's expansion, and present itself as a neo-imperialist state with anti-Western values, which wants to safeguard its sphere of influence<sup>21</sup>. NATO's liberal logic made criticism of the enlargement from the point of view of the military strategy barely impossible, because such criticism would imply that Russia is against democracy in general. Interconnection of security and democracy in NATO rhetoric leads to a premise that only democracies need collective defence against external threats, because democracies themselves are peaceful by their nature and do not threaten anyone. NATO positioning itself as a defensive alliance leads Russia to perceive it as if there must be some external threats for NATO, and, probably, Russia is one of these threats.

Hence, in NATO's own logic, the democratic regime type of its members is an obvious and sufficient guarantee of non-aggression against other states. That is why all Russian requests of written guarantees that the US anti-ballistic missile system in Europe (Euro-ABM system) is not deployed against Russia are perceived in Brussels as doubts in the peaceful character of democracies<sup>22</sup>. However, as the international practice of the last two decades demonstrated, the democratic peace theory does not prove the peaceful character of democracies; the theory just claims that democracies do not fight each other. Democracies do not hesitate to use force against non-democracies or regimes that they consider to be a threat, moreover, democracies are the first to resort to the use of force (Kosovo, Iraq and Libya are the cases most often cited in the Russian official rhetoric)<sup>23</sup>. Thereby, NATO's stance that an organization consisting of democracies is a peaceful and purely defensive organization does not work, especially, if due to Russia's criticism of its enlargement, NATO views Russia as a non-democratic state. Thus, in Russia's logic, if NATO considers Russia to be not a real democracy, it poses a clear threat to Russia's security.

### **Values versus Interests and the Problem of Trust**

For NATO, the problem of trust is related to the regime type: the democratic peace

<sup>21</sup> A similar idea was put forward by Williams and Neumann, but they claim that in the early 1990s Russia's pro-Western orientation did not allow to criticize NATO enlargement, because officially Russia declared a political course of building democracy. See in: Michael C. Williams, and Iver B. Neumann, From alliance to security community: NATO, Russia and the power of identity. "Millennium: Journal of International Studies", 2000, 29 (2), p. 361. The current Russian elite proclaim that Russia builds "sovereign democracy", which allow not to be caught in this logic trap.


<sup>22</sup> For more detail about problems of NATO-Russia relations in the sphere of the ABM system, see: Richard Weitz. Illusive Visions and Practical Realities: Russia, NATO and Missile Defence, "Survival: Global Politics and Strategy", 2010, 52:4, pp. 99-120.

<sup>23</sup> About the democratic peace theory in the post-bipolar period see in: Russett, Bruce. Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. Critical assessment of the democratic peace theory and its possible usage for regime change see in: Haas, Michael. "Deconstructing the Democratic Peace", [in:] Deconstructing International Relations Theory, ed. Michael Haas, New York: Norton, 2007. - PP. 127-148.

theory has been used in the US foreign policy rhetoric since President Clinton, and, later on, was included in the NATO official discourse. In practice, it means that only democratic states can be considered as reliable partners, and relations based on interests without taking values into account are not considered as an optimal means of interaction<sup>24</sup>. In its turn, by the mid-1990s, Russia came to the opposite conclusion: relations with the West based on Western values create many constraints for Russia, in contrast to relations based solely on common interests<sup>25</sup>.

A methodological question here is what basis for relations between democratic (NATO) and non-democratic (Russia in the Western approach) states could exist. In Russia's perspective, the same question could be paraphrased as following: is it possible to find common grounds between Russia's interests-based foreign policy and the West's values-based foreign policy? Analysis of NATO-Russia cooperation shows that interaction in the field of fight against common external threats and military cooperation are more efficient than political dialogue. However, each time a political problem occurs in relations between Russia and NATO, it is practical cooperation that is usually frozen until the political conflict is settled (cases of Kosovo, Georgia, Ukraine). It seems that both Russia and NATO use practical cooperation as a tool of the manipulative strategy, when freezing of practical interactions is used to punish the other side for deviating behaviour.

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***relations with the West based on Western values create many constraints for Russia, in contrast to relations based solely on common interests***

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NATO is not the only possible format of security cooperation for Russia; other security arrangements allow for bilateral and multilateral interactions, too. However, Russia values the political track of cooperation with NATO, simultaneously criticizing it for inefficiency. Russia blames NATO for not recognizing Moscow as an equal partner, whose opinion is important in the regional security system<sup>26</sup>. An equal partner does not have to be a good friend, but an equal partner should be respected because of its status of a great power. Thus, the status of an equal partner in relations with NATO is important for Russia because it entails acknowledgement of Russia's status as a great (or at least regional) power.

Why is Russia looking for external acknowledgement from NATO? After all, Russia has a higher and internationally recognized status of the permanent member of the UN Security Council. The problem is that while the US, France and Great Britain as permanent UN Security Council members recognize Russia as an equal partner, in the framework of NATO these very states seem to question Russia's regional and global influence. Thus, for Russia it is unclear whether these three

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<sup>24</sup> Eugene Rumer and Angela Stent. Russia and the West, "Survival: Global Politics and Strategy", 2009, 51:2, p. 92.

<sup>25</sup> See in more detail about Russian position in: Алексей Богатуров. Три поколения внешнеполитических доктрин России. «Международные процессы», май-август 2007, том 5, номер 1(13) (Alexey Bogaturov. Three generations of foreign policy doctrines of Russia. "Mezhdunarodnye processy", May-August 2007, Volume 5, Issue 1(13) [<http://www.intertrends.ru/thirteen/005.htm>, access; 5 August 2015]

<sup>26</sup> The arguments about political cooperation of Russia with NATO and Russian willingness to be treated as an equal partner are presented by Dmitry Danilov in his article: Дмитрий Данилов. «Россия-НАТО: дилеммы стратегического партнерства», РСМД, 28 июня 2013 (Dmitry Danilov. "Russia-NATO: dilemmas of strategic partnership", RIAC, 28 June 2013) [[http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id\\_4=2032#top-content](http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=2032#top-content) access 16 August 2015]

powers are hypocritical in the framework of the UN or in the framework of the Alliance. Russia wants to have unequivocal answers by requesting NATO to treat Russia on an equal footing. Otherwise, Russia would feel that its UN Security Council status is defective because of powers that have ambivalent positions on this issue. The NATO-Russia Council was an attempt to find a solution to this problem of Russian perceptions, but Russia considers this structure not efficient enough.

## Conclusion

Most problems in Russia-NATO relations are analysed as problems of bilateral relations, while the idea of this article was to show that political problems in the relations of two parties could be better explained by looking at the search of NATO and Russia for a new place in the world after the end of the Cold War. Misunderstanding between NATO and Russia occurs because they base their strategies on different grounds:

NATO's liberal logic is based on values, while Russia's realist logic is based on interests. After the end of bipolarity, both Russia and NATO wanted to look better in their own eyes and in the eyes of the international community by establishing and supporting a political dialogue, but it has not helped to build trust between the two players. Lack of mutual trust is a usual excuse for not making efforts to develop cooperation. At the same time, lack of trust can be used as a resource and an additional motivation to find mutually acceptable solutions without searching for external recognition and trying to please the other side.

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