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L'ÉLARGISSEMENT DE L'OTAN ET L'ENCERCLEMENT DE LA RUSSIE : UNE
DEUXIÈME GUERRE FROIDE?

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Table of Contents

Summary	p	V
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Introduction

<i>Problematic</i>	p	4
<i>Methodology</i>	p	5
<i>Organization of Contents</i>	p	9

Chapter I: Which theory is best suited for this case study?

1.1	<i>Neoclassical Realism</i>	p	12
1.2	<i>Neorealism</i>	p	15
1.3	<i>Constructivism</i>	p	19
1.4	<i>Two schools of thought: Neorealism and Constructivism (overview)</i>	p	23

Chapter II: Historical overview

2.1	<i>North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)</i>	p	25
2.2	<i>Partnership for Peace (PfP)</i>	p	26
2.3	<i>Permanent Joint Council (PJC)</i>	p	26
2.4	<i>G8</i>	p	27
2.5	<i>Kosovo Crisis</i>	p	28
2.6	<i>911</i>	p	29
2.7	<i>Crisis in Georgia</i>	p	29

Chapter III: Russia's alliances

3.1	<i>Military Capabilities</i>	p	32
3.2	<i>Economic Capabilities</i>	p	35
3.3	<i>Iran as an ally</i>	p	39
3.4	<i>Forging ties with China</i>	p	43
3.5	<i>Cementing ties with India</i>	p	49

Chapter IV: Russia's behavior: the neorealist and constructivist views

4.1	<i>Critiques of the neorealist explanation</i>	p	55
4.2	<i>Russia's behavior: the constructivist perspective</i>	p	64
4.3	<i>The role of international variables</i>	p	67

4.4	<i>The importance of discourse</i>	p 70
4.5	<i>Role of population</i>	p 73
4.6	<i>Russian National Security Concept and the Foreign Policy Concept</i>	p 77
4.7	<i>Critiques of the constructivist explanation</i>	p 82

Conclusion

5.1	<i>Alternative solutions</i>	p 88
-----	------------------------------------	------

Bibliography	p 95
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Résumé

En 1994, le président Russe, Boris Eltsine, avançait que l'élargissement de l'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN) pourrait faire sombrer l'Europe « dans une Paix Froide¹ ». Aujourd'hui encore, ces paroles résonnent lorsque l'on constate l'entêtement avec lequel la Russie s'oppose à l'élargissement de l'OTAN, qui s'étend de plus en plus près de son territoire. En effet, la croissance de l'OTAN vers ce qui a constitué pendant au moins cinquante ans la sphère d'influence de l'URSS, et même une partie de celle-ci, ne semble toujours pas terminée. Aux yeux de la Russie, cette expansion semble souvent guidée par les ambitions des États-Unis.

Cette courte mise en contexte soulève la question suivante : comment expliquer la réaction de la Russie face à l'élargissement de l'OTAN sous l'influence de l'hégémonie américaine? En analysant cette relation plutôt complexe, nous argumenterons que cet élargissement de l'OTAN, sous influence américaine, est le principal facteur qui a motivé la Russie à promouvoir la multipolarité du système international et à multiplier ces alliances dans le but de contrer l'hégémonie américaine, et par le fait même contrer l'expansion de l'OTAN qui se rapporte de plus en plus du territoire russe. Tant que la question de l'élargissement de l'OTAN n'est pas réglée, il y a de fortes chances que la prédiction de Boris Eltsine se concrétise.

Le cadre théorique utilisé dans cette thèse nous permettra d'avoir une meilleure idée quant aux perspectives d'avenir du comportement russe. Dans un premier temps, nous utiliserons le néoréalisme de Waltz, selon qui la Russie peut être considérée comme une grande puissance au sein du système international, étant donné ses intérêts et les enjeux sécuritaires auxquels elle fait face. Dans un second temps, nous utiliserons une approche constructiviste qui explique les actions de la Russie sur la base de l'identité nationale véhiculée au sein de la société par l'élite dirigeante, et non pas en termes de puissance relative. L'application de ces deux théories des relations internationales nous permettra ainsi d'identifier des tendances plus générales en ce qui concerne différents aspects de la relation entre la Russie et les États-Unis par rapport à l'OTAN.

¹ Traduit de l'anglais. Cité de Sciolino Elaine, "Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again", *New York Times*, December 6th, 1994, p.A.10

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, Boris Yeltsin declared that the expansion of NATO could potentially bring “a cold peace” to Europe.¹ Today, his comment is reflected towards NATO expansion and the consequent insecurities of Russia. Although another Cold War is unlikely in the near future, the potential for one, however small, cannot be discounted. The expansion of NATO into what was formerly part of the USSR’s sphere of influence has led Russia to seek potential alliances of its own in order to check American power, potential allies that include Iran, China, and India. This paper applies two theoretical approaches to an examination of Russia’s response to NATO’s expansion. First, using Waltz’s neorealism, Russia’s security and economic interests are considered in light of its role as a great power in the international system. The second approach, constructivism, explains Russia’s actions on the basis of an *identity enacted*, rather than in terms of relative power. A rich understanding of Russia’s response to the expansion of NATO requires insights derivative of each of these approaches.

From a Russian perspective, NATO’s expansion is undoubtedly guided by American ambitions. NATO enlargement benefits the U.S because any additions to the NATO alliance are likely be pro American in their outlook. Furthermore, keeping an active NATO preserves America’s political and military leverage in Europe and underscores its hegemonic position in transatlantic relations. This Russian view of America’s influence on, and leveraging of, NATO -- present since the inception of the organization after WWII -- calcified after the end of the Cold War ushered in a wave of

¹ Quoted in Sciolino Elaine, “Yeltsin Says NATO Is Trying to Split Continent Again”, *New York Times*, December 6th, 1994, p.A.10

eastern expansion and American actions in Russia's sphere of influence. Indeed, contrary to expectations of a 'peace dividend' after the fall of the USSR in 1991, the US Congress began looking into the question of modernizing its own armed forces to defend against terrorism and rogue states. The American system for Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (GPALS),² could be used not only to defend the US, but also to defend members of NATO; perhaps more significantly, it could also be used to defend members located near the Russian border. To Russia, this signifies that the Americans are attempting to expand their empire and to close in gradually on Russian borders. Of course, Washington has rejected allegations that NATO's expansion is invasive.

The process of NATO expansion in central and Eastern Europe started with the integration of three new members in 1999: Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, all former members of the Warsaw Pact. These countries decided to join NATO, and were accepted, despite Russian objections. For Russia, their decision to join NATO was taken as a betrayal as the Red army had liberated them from Nazi rule. For Russia, the enlargement of NATO's sphere of influence was interpreted as establishing a new buffer zone excluding Russia from Europe.³ During the same year, NATO bombardments of Serbia seemed to confirm the Russian hypothesis that the US was, indeed, looking to extend its power on the international scene into regions which would have been previously within the U.S.S.R's sphere. American reaction to the war in Kosovo made clear the attitude adopted by the sole remaining super power: Americans would not only

² In his 1991 State of the Union Address, George H. W. Bush shifted the focus of SDI from defense of North America against large scale strikes to a system focusing on theater missile defense called Global Protection Against Limited Air Strikes (GPALS). See Hildreth A. Steven, Ballistic Missile Defense: Historical Overview, *CRS Report for Congress*, January 5th 2007, available at : <http://www.cdi.org/PDFs/RS22120.pdf>

³ Fitchett Joseph, "3 Members Added From Former Soviet Bloc: NATO Moves Eastward", *New York Times*, March 13th 1999. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/13/news/13iht-nato.2.t_7.html

ignore the United Nations, but also NATO, act under their own auspices and grant themselves the right to intervene. From Russia's standpoint, this was an usurpation of the right to intervene, which might eventually be seen as justifying any actions taken by NATO anywhere in the world: including Russia. For Russia, military action in support of humanitarian objectives was simply a cover for aggressive action against a sovereign territory; as Boris Yeltsin declared: "This is in fact NATO's attempt to enter the Twenty-First Century as global policeman."⁴

Apparently Russian concerns were justified, to some extent, as, in 2004, NATO witnessed its largest expansion in history, integrating seven new members: Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. This latest expansion profoundly troubled Russia. In particular, the integration of the Baltic States constituted, according to the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov, proof of NATO encroachment into Russia's sphere of influence: "The alliance is gaining greater ability to control and monitor Russian territory. We cannot turn a blind eye as NATO's air and military bases get much closer to cities and defence complexes in European Russia."⁵

For Russia is greatly concerned that NATO is still expanding, but still more troublesome is that the US seems to be expanding its own power through NATO. One might note that the new system of aerial defense, BALNET, created by the American company Lockheed Martin for the Baltic States,⁶ is another way in which Americans are

⁴ Quoted in Barton Gellman, "U.S., Allies Launch Air Attack on Yugoslav Military Targets," *Washington Post*, March 25, 1999, p.A1.

⁵ Ivanov Sergei, "As NATO Grows, So Do Russia's Worries", *New York Times*, April 7th 2004, p A.19

⁶ General information about BALNET and Lockheed Martin available at: http://www.lockheedmartin.com/news/press_releases/2003/LatviaAcceptsLockheedMartinRadarFor.html

using NATO to their own advantages.⁷ NATO also has a hand in the regional organization, Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, GUAM, wherein all members are challenging Russian policies towards the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and wherein all members have been supportive of NATO enlargement and have received significant support from the United States.⁸ With NATO now considering expanding to include Ukraine and Georgia – states that have good relations with the US— the alliance is moving closer to the Russian border. Furthermore, US installations of ABM systems in Poland and the Czech Republic, and of military installations on Bulgarian and Romanian soil, is clearly intended to reinforce their strategic importance within NATO and to reinforce pro American stance and influence.⁹

Problematic

Within this context, one is led to seek answers to the following question: how will Russia react to the expansion of NATO being carried out under the influence of greater American hegemony? By analyzing this rather complex relation, I argue that the expansion of NATO, under American auspices, is the principal factor leading Russia to promote a multipolar international system, and that its new alliances aim to counter American hegemony and the expansion of NATO. As long as the question of NATO expansion is not settled, there is every reason to fear that the new Cold War predicted by Boris Yeltsin might come to pass.

⁷ Ibid. The majority of Lockheed Martin's business is with the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. federal government agencies. Lockheed Martin is the largest provider of IT services, systems integration, and training to the U.S. Government.

⁸ Kuzio Taras, "Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: The Emergence of GUUAM", *European Security*, Vol9, No2, Frank Cass, London:(Summer 2000), p81-114

⁹ Hervouet Gerard, Fortmann & Legault, Ed, Les Conflits dans le Monde : Rapport annuel sur les conflits internationaux, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007, p72-73

Methodology

The goal of this project is twofold: to analyze Russia's responses to NATO expansion – operating under American auspices – and to argue the explanatory value of neorealist and constructivist theories in analyzing those responses. This research will concentrate mainly on Russia during the presidency of Vladimir Putin because it reflects the remarks made in 1994 by then president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, who affirmed that the widening of NATO could sink Europe into another Cold War¹⁰ This period is also interesting because, upon his arrival in power, Vladimir Putin identified this “file” as one of his top priorities.¹¹ Moreover, since Putin recently finished two presidential terms, this period in Russian history is important in analyzing the policy of Russia vis-a-vis the expansion of NATO, orchestrated by American hegemony, and thus to determine if his policies were the same throughout his presidency.

To collect the data on which this analysis rests, I will research newspaper articles, on-line sources, various written reports published by the Russian government, as well as several specialized articles and reviews. Among the local Russian newspapers of interest, *Moskovskiye Novosti*, *Vremya MN*, *Moscow Times*, *Novaya Gazeta* and the *St Petersburg Times* will be of particular interest. The research will also make use of newspapers available on the Internet, such as CNews online, Eurasian Home, Pravda, and Ria Novosti. The majority of these sources are available in English. With regards to information available only in Russian, basic language training has enabled me to read some of these articles, however, as stated above, most information can already be found

¹⁰ Sciolino, op.cit, p A.10

¹¹ Kassianova Alla, “Russia: Still Open to the West? Evolution of the State Identity in the Foreign Policy and Security Discourse”, *Europe Asia Studies*, Vol. 53, No.6 (Sep. 2001), p821-839

in French or English. These above sources are essential to the research as they provide for a better understanding of Russian public opinion in spite of obstacles arising due to issues associated with constraints on the freedom of the press in Russia (where most sources of information are under government control). In addition to the articles mentioned above, reports and other official documents will be utilized. The principal documents of foreign politics that will be drawn on are the *National Security Concept* and *Foreign Policy Concept*, which were government official texts under the Putin regime. These texts are significant in so far as they enable us to recognize the various principles guiding decisions made by the Russian government on certain questions, as well as the various objectives that it contains. These texts also reflect the ideas and opinions stated by Russian leaders. Through this reading, it will be possible to identify what Russia regards as threatening its national security, and to better understand the consequences resulting from this.

This paper contends that to comprehend fully the behavior of Russia towards the United States and NATO, it is essential to analyze not only the official texts, but also speeches made by its leaders, and to consider the reaction of its population. This research will consider several speeches, in particular those by president Putin. The use of these speeches will enable us to highlight the dynamics animating the Russian population and, thus, to better understand its reactions and motivations with regard to Russian expansion.

Not all of the sources used in our work are primary sources. Secondary sources will be especially important, in particular the newspaper articles and various books by authors specializing in the subject area. These sources will be useful in interpreting and analyzing these problems and questions, and will also provide us with more extensive

knowledge on how experts differ in their considerations of the effects on Russia of the widening of NATO, under American influence.

Lastly, the specialized articles to which we will have recourse can be divided into two categories: articles relating to the theories of international relations – like those written by Kenneth Waltz, Gideon Rose, Randy Schweller or Stephen Walt – and articles concentrating more specifically on Russian policies regarding NATO and the United States – most notably those written by Al Stam, Sherman Garnett and Thomas Ambrosio to name a few.

For the drafting of this thesis, I chose to concentrate on a documentary analysis. However, the goal is not to make a complete inventory, nor a simple compilation, of the results of this research within the framework of “mega analysis”. It is therefore preferable to pay careful attention to the detailed theoretical aspects of our questions and to concentrate on research already published. In the end, the objective consists of identifying the merits and the weaknesses of the various methods and approaches employed by various authors, while trying to show objectivity in our evaluation of the credibility of the sources used.

To carry out our analysis, one will also have recourse to surveys from existing sources. Since this study relates to Russia, the expenses connected to transport and lodging would have been exorbitant and obtaining samples representative of the Russian population would have been excessively difficult. Moreover, it would have been necessary also to have recourse to a professional translator, which would have further complicated the task. Thus, the use of existent surveys and sources proves much more advantageous.

While analyzing Russia's responses to NATO, this paper will demonstrate how relevant the approaches of neorealism and constructivism remain in the domain of international relations in spite of new approaches or theories that seem to disregard or "embellish" old ones. The value of using a neorealist method rests on transformations of the international system since the end of the Cold War. In that context, while Russia strove to survive economic and political upheaval, the United States was enjoying its position as the sole super power. According to neorealist theory, systemic changes in the international system will drive Russia to seek to restore the previous, more favorable balance by countering American moves. Does this prediction prove true? And why is this still relevant? In this thesis, I will try to show that neorealism remains relevant in explaining Russian actions with respect to the expansion of NATO under the auspice of American hegemony.

Another theory differently illuminating Russia's predicament, constructivism, assumes that the "self" or identity of a state is a dependent variable determined by historical, cultural, social and political context, in contrast to neo-realism, which assumes that states act in terms of an unvarying and universal self-interest—understood as enhancing their power and security in the context of an anarchic political setting.¹² State action flows from a *particular* "state actor" identity shared by a governmental elite and an understanding of international context, both of which are viewed as socially constructed and historically contingent.¹³ These two theories thus offer two distinct views of the current situation.

¹² Hopf Ted, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security*, Vol. 23, No.1, Summer 1998, p173

¹³ Ibid

To demonstrate the usefulness for these two approaches, this paper will briefly explain why these theories (via neoclassical realism or other theories) are best suited to this analysis. This section will demonstrate that neorealism and constructivism, in spite of their weaknesses, seems to be the most productive theoretical approaches to analyze Russian reactions.

Organization of contents

The purpose of the first chapter will be to identify the appropriate theory of international relations to describe the behavior of Russia towards NATO expansion. This section will provide a short, comparative overview of the principal theoretical approaches of international relations which could be used also to interpret Russian reaction, notably neorealism, neoclassical realism, and constructivism. Given that the theory of neoclassical realism offer different strengths and weaknesses than those of neorealist and constructivist theorists, this chapter will demonstrate the comparative value of realist and constructivist approaches in order to elucidate Russia's actions.

The second chapter will examine the development of relations between Russia and the United States since the end of the Cold War, as they are mediated through and exacerbated by NATO. Analyzing the influence of the United States on the decisions of NATO, with particular attention paid to Russia, proves to be crucial to understand Russia's behavior. This historical background informs an empirical analysis and concentrates on the major events marking this still fraught relationship: the inauguration of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), the creation of Partnership for Peace (PfP) and of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), the G8, and the crisis of

Kosovo. This section provides a short historical overview of key moments in the evolution of these relations before the Putin presidency and the decisions made by Putin once in power.

The impact of the terrorist attacks on US soil on September 11, 2001 (9/11) and Russian policy will also be analyzed. These attacks, according to several experts, marked a positive turning point in Russo-American relations. However, in light of the research carried out, the United States is still not ready to consolidate this “new” relation and is unable to find with Russia a “compromise” on the expansion of NATO regardless of Russia’s commitment to the US to capture these terrorists. Indeed, NATO seems to share the American perspective, wanting to exclude Moscow from important decisions, again leaving it on the outside looking in. Finally, this paper addresses the situation in South Ossetia, Georgia, arguing that the crisis between Georgia and Russia is in part a reflection of tensions arising out of the expansion of NATO and the will power of the United States to include Georgia in NATO.

Chapter 3 will look at the importance of military and economic capabilities both to Russia and NATO members. This chapter will also analyze Russia’s search for new allies, the turn to Iran, India and China, as well as the way in which these partnerships have affected Russia’s relationship with NATO. Russia’s objectives are to increase its influence within the international community, to put forward its interests with regards to its security, and to possibly achieve greater influence over NATO’s decisions and expansion. Thus, the Russian behavior becomes clearer and more logical: it seeks to

renew its influence and power as an international actor, but is especially interested in trying to stop the process of NATO expansion.

In Chapter 4, we will be looking at our pair of theoretical approaches, introduced in Chapter 1, and evaluate their value in our interpretation of Russia's behavior regarding NATO's expansion. One will look at the pros and cons of each theory and observe whether or not both theories might lead us to arrive at the same conclusions.

The final chapter will focus on the potential assumptions, questions and interrogations for the future. The paper will look briefly at plausible resolutions to the disagreements between Russia and the United States vis-à-vis NATO. Is it possible for Russia to achieve a high degree of security vis-à-vis the expansion of NATO into its former satellites? There exists, according to experts, various solutions, but are these realizable? Should Russia be granted a veto over NATO's composition insofar as its safety is concerned? There are several alternatives, and by working through these complex questions will offer to the readers various tracks for future exploration.

Chapter I

Which theory is best suited for this case study?

Among the explanatory theories available in International Relations, certain realist approaches are more effective than liberal approaches in analyzing specific situations. This paper contends that both a realist and constructivist approach are both well suited to the analysis of Russian behavior towards NATO expansion. Both approaches used in this paper should not be interpreted as an attempt to circumvent or neglect the contributions of other theories and approaches. However, in order for this analysis to remain within reasonable parameters, this paper will only focus on the two above mentioned approaches.

Before analyzing the neorealist approach, it is important to make note of two categories of realism. The most popular is Waltz's neorealism, but neorealism has come under much scrutiny, especially for its lack of a domestic variable. The neoclassical realism of Gideon Rose has emerged with a solution to this lack, bringing together both internal and external variables for examining and explaining state behaviors (a mishmash of neorealism and constructivism). However, it will be shown that despite the advantages offered by this "fuller" theory, neorealism is still better suited to explain Russia's reactions to NATO expansion and the constructivist approach cannot be easily factored into our equations and needs be dealt with separately.

1.1 Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realists postulate that states not only seek to ensure their safety, but also to influence and control their external environment. The goal of this theory is to combine the neorealism of Waltz — which sees the structure of the international system

as most important — with internal variables, with the overall aim of providing a better explanation of the behavior of states which, at certain points in their history, move away from the apparent logic of maintaining a balance of power. As noted by Gideon Rose, neoclassical realists were inspired by neorealists, since they give particular attention to the positioning of states within the international system just as with their material capacities and their relative power.¹⁴ On the other hand, the neoclassical realist model differs from the neorealist model in that the impact of the distribution of power on foreign politics is, according to Rose, *indirect and complex* because the pressures of the international system must be examined and interpreted through intervening variables operating at the domestic level.¹⁵ Thus, the capacity of the head of state to mobilize the human and material resources of the nation behind political initiatives dealing with security will heavily influence its response to any redistribution of power within the international system; that is to say, by limiting or by increasing its capacity to react.¹⁶ For neoclassical realists, structural factors remain essential to the process of developing a foreign policy, but they also recognize that the way in which a state responds to changes in the system is ultimately affected by the decision of its leadership to mobilize resources and by its perception of the situation.

Neoclassical realists believe that it is impossible to formulate a theory of foreign policy. They cite Waltz, the founder of neorealism, that the “theory of international politics is not a theory of foreign policy”.¹⁷ For example, two classical realists argue

¹⁴ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy”, *World Politics* Vol.51. #1, John Hopkins University Press, Oct. 1998, p146

¹⁵ Ibid, p157

¹⁶ Ibid, p161

¹⁷ Waltz, Kenneth, « International Politics is Not Foreign Policy », *Security Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1996), p. 54-57

against Fareed Zakaria and his assertion that a theory of foreign politics must “explain why different states or the same state at different historical moments, have different intentions, goals, and preferences toward the outside world.”¹⁸ By saying that it is a “theory of peculiar circumstances, and of constant exceptions, and as such it represents a considerable challenge to scholars, since it confounds their ability to construct a model applicable to all cases of individual states.”¹⁹ Neorealists refuse to even ponder the idea of including internal variables because they believe it is impossible for internal variables to outweigh external variables: “the system will have the last word in determining the foreign policy of a state, regardless of any other intervening factors.”²⁰ Haglund and Onea, two neorealists, see neoclassic realists as often using exceptional case studies, but ones which always end up having a logical, traditional, realistic explanation. The two authors take as an example the book by Zakaria, From Wealth to Power, and say that even if internal factors prevented the United States from expanding at the end of the 19th Century, expansion occurred anyway at the beginning of 20th Century. Consequently, they complete their reasoning by saying that systemic pressures take priority over the internal pressures. They conclude that “an anomaly [such as the United States from 1865-1898] presupposes an eventual return to normality; otherwise it cannot be considered an anomaly.”²¹

Waltz said it best when he wrote: “One cannot infer the condition of international politics from the internal composition of states, nor can one arrive at an understanding of international politics by summing the foreign policies and the external behavior of

¹⁸ Fareed Zakaria, From Wealth to Power, Princeton University Press, July 26th 1999, p. 14

¹⁹ Haglund, David G. & Tudor Onea, « Sympathy for the Devil: Myth of Neoclassical realism in Canadian Foreign Policy », *Canadian Foreign Policy*, vol. 14, no. 2, Fall 2008, p. 58

²⁰ Ibid., p. 59

²¹ Ibid.

states."²² Waltz is not the only one sharing his beliefs. Several authors would argue that neoclassical realism lacks theoretical the predictive power because it avoids a “mono-causal focus” on either domestic or systemic variables.²³ These are only some of the reasons why this paper will concentrate on the neorealist approach instead of its newer version neoclassical realism. Furthermore, although this paper will later argue the advantages of analyzing internal variables, it does not mean that the neorealist and constructivist approach should be combined into one theory. This task is far more complex than what the neoclassical neorealists would argue.

1.2 Neorealism

The foremost scholar on neorealism, Waltz, sees the international system as one in which states pursue their interests in the midst of anarchy, and explains state behavior as a matter of responding to conditions generated by the system; the structure of that system is said to be determined by the arrangement of military power. Coercion, or the threat of it, is the driving force behind state calculation and security is the prime concern. States determine their security status by evaluating their capabilities against those of other states— unfavorable balances are therefore a cause for concern. Because the system is deemed anarchic within this framework, there is nothing to prevent states that possess superior capabilities from exploiting those with less. This situation encourages less powerful states to redress imbalances so as to lessen hegemonic influence, thereby

²² Waltz Kenneth, *Theory of International Politics*, New York McGraw Hill, 1979, p64.

²³ Walt Stephen M, "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition," in *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 211; and Jeffrey Legro & Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?" *International Security*, President & Fellow of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Vol.24, No.2 (Fall 1999), p5-55

preventing a dominant power from reconfiguring the international system to its own benefit. The ideal arrangement, according to Waltz, is a bipolar system—such as existed during the Cold War—so that the efforts of both poles to gain an advantage may be checked by the other with little disruption. By extension, successful campaigns to expand a sphere of influence are unlikely to upset the system as a whole. Thus, for Waltz, a bipolar system provides a great degree of stability. In a unipolar system, lesser states will try to counteract the power of a dominant or rising state, but, if successful, such efforts may very well have significant collateral effects and thereby disrupt the entire system.

Looking at the international structure, unipolarity appears to be the least durable of international configurations, for as Waltz nicely describes the situation: “As nature abhors a vacuum, so international politics abhors unbalanced power.”²⁴ As the international system is currently shaped by the hegemonic power of the United States, it is only natural that other states in the international system, seeking to promote or increase their own interests, should form alliances with the aim of restraining the reach of the current hegemon. For example, the collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the fall of the Iron Curtain left NATO—initially established to discourage an attack by the Soviet Union on the non-communist nations of Western Europe—with no obvious mission. According to Russia, the United States, having become an unopposed hegemon, crafted NATO and other international institutions to promote its own interests at the expense of other states, including Russia.

²⁴Waltz Kenneth N, “Structural Realism after the Cold War”, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000)no.84., p. 28.

Neorealists argue that although the initial purpose for NATO is no longer relevant, the organization does, nonetheless, serve the particular ends of the United States. According to Waltz, NATO provides a means of maintaining and broadening America's influence over the military and the foreign policies of European states.²⁵ This may be illustrated in the words of the US Senior Deputy to the Undersecretary of State for European affairs, John Kornblum, who states the current purpose of NATO, thus: "The alliance provides a vehicle for the application of American power and vision to the security order in Europe."²⁶ For a neorealist, the main role of institutions is to serve the interests of the most powerful states; currently, the United States. The neorealist scholar Robert Art has argued that the presence of American troops in Europe is also beneficial to other states, for without them "European states will lapse into a security competition."²⁷ From this perspective, it is to the benefit of all that the US maintains its powerful position in the international system. Given such views, it is understandable that Russia should feel threatened and seek to balance the power of this unipolar actor. This is comprehensible as NATO's eastward expansion, along with its revised mission, may commit it to undertaking military action in unstable "peripheral areas" that could extend the alliance's area of operation in the direction of what was previously deemed Russian territory. One Russian analyst terms NATO's "eastward and south-eastward expansion" into Eurasia's "heartland" as a new round of US expansion.²⁸ Thus, NATO cannot be used to counter or to check American power since America is the greatest contributor to

²⁵ Waltz, op.cit, p. 20

²⁶ Kornblum John, "NATO's second Half Century-Tasks for an Alliance", NATO on Track for the 21st Century, *Conference Report* (The Hague:Netherlands Atlantic Commission, 1994), p14

²⁷ Art Robert J, "Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No.1, Spring 1996, p1-39

²⁸Maximenko Vlademir, "The Battle Against Eurasia: One Century of the US Geo-Strategy in the Old World", *Transcaspian Project*, 24 April 2001, p1. Mr. Maximenko is identified as senior scientific officer of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

European security and the greatest force in the organization; meanwhile, the US can use NATO as it wishes, or act alone, or form convenient “coalitions of the willing” if it pleases. In this context, safeguarding Russia’s sphere of influence and its material concerns requires that it counter American efforts to dominate the system. In Russian eyes, the country risks its very survival if it fails to curb American hegemony before it becomes too firmly established. As a consequence of the imbalance of power, neorealists expect relatively weaker states—such as Russia—to pool their resources together in order to check the growth of an aspiring hegemon.

Facing American encroachment and its influence over NATO, Russia needs to act swiftly, and yet carefully, as it recognizes that it is unable to compete directly with the United States.²⁹ Although the United States enjoys an advantage in conventional military power, Russia is not without significant military resources. Waltz suggests that in the presence of nuclear weapons, any challenge to a leading state, and any attempt to reverse a state’s decline, has to rely on economic development.³⁰ Russia must therefore reinforce its security by actively seeking strategic economic and military alliances with states dissatisfied by a unipolar world while simultaneously building its economic influence.

According to neorealism, the state quest for security forces them to be wary of international cooperation and international organizations. For this reason, making alliances is very difficult. For neorealists, a state will cooperate only if its security is not put at risk. The main problem with cooperation or alliances is that states can never be certain about their own security, thus security-seeking states, according to neorealists,

²⁹ In this paper, the terms NATO and USA will be used interchangeably.

³⁰ Waltz Kenneth, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics”, *International Security*, Vol. 18, No.2, (Fall 1993), p 52

will ultimately be concerned about the relative gains made by other states through military and or economic cooperation. States will ally with each other if they face a common threat or, if by cooperating, the state will gain significant concessions from the other party and realize a relative gain. These are two reasons, according to neorealists, why rational states would seek alliances.

1.3 *Constructivism*

An alternative approach to understanding international relations, constructivism offers the promise of reintroducing a focus on particular and unique social, cultural and political practices of states to I.R. theory. Analysis of the interplay and development of historically contingent identities, worldviews and intersubjective understandings of international relations is central to the constructivist approach to world politics.³¹ In contrast to neorealism, which assumes that states act in terms of an unvarying and universal self-interest—understood as enhancing their power and security in the context of an anarchic political setting—constructivism assumes that the "self" or identity of a state is a dependent variable determined by historical, cultural, social and political context.³² State action flows from a *particular* "state actor" identity shared by a policy elite and an understanding of international context, both of which are viewed as socially constructed and historically contingent.³³ A state's behavior is viewed as an intention to enact its identity as a state actor, conditioned by shared constitutive norms. For example, if a state identifies itself as a "Great Power," it will act to realize that identity in terms of

³¹ Hopf, op.cit, p 173

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

prevailing norms regarding Great Power behavior (regardless of its current material status).

In creating a "Great Power" identity, the state affirms existing constitutive norms regarding the behavior appropriate to major powers. It will be shown that this is exactly how Russia currently views itself on the international scene. Constructivist international relations theory focuses not only on policy elites' construction of the identity of the state as actor and the construction of national interests, but also the construction of national identities by elites and the self-construction of individual political identities.³⁴

According to this view, Russian behavior is constrained as much by its understanding of its own identity as by the views of others. Whether Russia succeeds in enacting the preferred identity of its elite depends on the opportunities and constraints afforded by the international situation and the actions of other states, as well as the congruence, or non-congruence, of elite identity with popular identities. Generally, elites are severely constrained in reproducing Great Power identities when, as is currently the case in Russia, mass identities instrumental to their ends—the military and other forms of service to state interests—are devalued. A constructivist interpretation by professor William D. Jackson notes, for example, the common failure of young Russians to report for duty when conscripted into military service, massive illegal capital flight, tax evasion, and the depressing morale of Russian troops in Chechnya, may be understood as social practices challenging and constraining efforts by the Russian political elite to enact an ambitious international identity.³⁵

³⁴ Jackson D William, "Imagining Russia in Western International Relations Theory", Miami University, available at: <http://www.units.muc.edu/havighurstcenter/publications/documents/Jackson.pdf>, p 10

³⁵ Ibid, p12

As mentioned above, if one employs discourse analysis to consider how identities are constructed, state officials are indispensable when it comes to examining state security discourse: “The representations created by state officials make clear both to those officials themselves and to others who and what ‘we’ are, who and what ‘our enemies’ are, in what ways ‘we’ are threatened by ‘them’, and how ‘we’ might best deal with those ‘threats’.”³⁶ Stephen Walt, while comparing different IR theories, also found that “[i]nstead of taking the state for granted and assuming that it simply seeks to survive such is the claim of neorealists, constructivists regard the interests and identities of states as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes... [and] pay close attention to the prevailing discourse(s) in society because discourse reflects and shapes beliefs and interests, and establishes accepted norms of behavior.”³⁷ As we shall see, the construction of a homogenous identity is a fairly complex undertaking. By breaking Russian political society into groups based on their ideological orientations, we note that a different “vision” of Russia is espoused by each of the five schools of thought, each of which also share a different vision of world order: *Westernizers*, *National Democrats*, *Statists*, *National Communists*, and *Expansionists*.³⁸ It would be futile to describe all of these different visions, but all share somewhat differing views of Russia’s identity, and although all oppose NATO expansion, each has a different opinion on how best to respond. In order to understand Russia’s identity at any particular time, it is important to consider to which schools of thought the future elite will belong. The “allegiance” of an

³⁶ Weldes Jutta, “Constructing National Interests”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2 (3) 1996, p. 283.

³⁷ Walt M. Stephen, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories”, *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998, p. 29-44.

³⁸ Tsygankov Andrei, *Whose World Order? Russia’s Perception of American Ideas after the Cold War*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2004, chapter 3

actor to a particular ideology will shape that actor's view of the role of Russia and ultimately his or her views concerning NATO. For the purpose of this research, the crucial role of the president as the most public embodiment of the Russian identity is emphasized.

Of the five main schools of thought, *Westernizers*, *National Democrats*, *Statists*, *National Communists*, and *Expansionists*, the two that require our attention are the *National Democrats* and the *Statists*.³⁹ The *National Democrats*' principal proponent was Michail Gorbachev, who advocated for an independent Russia; his main concern was not the United States but to establish a "unity in diversity regime, in which different nations and cultures might be able to maintain intense dialogue and cooperation by observing certain globally acknowledged rules".⁴⁰ Compared to the *National Democrats*, the *Statists*' position, which argues that Russia must remain a great power, is the more popular. It argues that Russia should be motivated by its own interests, pursue power accumulation and maintain a significant global geopolitical presence. It also promotes the pursuit of strategic alliances out of concern that the nation risks overextending its considerable, but nonetheless limited material resources, for security purposes. Although the *statist* view is dominant at the moment, Russian discourse is not homogenous and has evolved through a competition between various schools of thought. Officially, it progressed from one organizing metaphor to another: from Gorbachev's New Thinking to Strategic Partnership to Multipolar World. For example, Gorbachev decided that saving the economy required easing relations with the United States, and that required re-

³⁹ Westernizers believe that Russia is part of the West and should integrate itself into Western economic and political institutions. The National Communists share similar assumptions with the Statists, but takes it a step further and believes that Russia's interests are totally incompatible with those of the West. Finally, the Expansionists advocate constant territorial expansion as the only way to survive.

⁴⁰ Tsygankov, op.cit, p 51

envisioning the Soviet Union's identity as a Cold War power. From a constructivist perspective, the initiating event was the redefinition of the Soviet Union's role from adversary to potential cooperator. The same transition can be said to characterize Russia's actions following the events of 9/11. Constructivists would claim that if hard-line nationalists were to come to power in Russia and redefine its role from frequent cooperation to expansionist adversary, its interests would again emphasize armed forces and security concerns. Such a change would affect understandings of other states and redefine their roles from cooperative to defensive adversaries, and they would then re-emphasize military power.

As one can observe, the constructivist approach is much more complex and detailed than the neorealist approach. However, the diversity of both approaches and their similarities will enable us to better understand the actions of Russia facing NATO expansion.

1.4 Two schools of thought: Neorealism and Constructivism (overview)

Before applying these theories to our analysis, it would be useful to sum up the main similarities and differences between the approaches. First, both neorealism and constructivism see the state as the most important actor in the international system. Both view the international system as anarchic, and both agree that the international system will shape and hamper state interests. Looking at the main differences, neorealism concentrates on state interests based on gains, rather than interests dependent on understanding relations among other states. Another difference is that neorealists concentrate on material factors, such as military and economic power, rather than focusing on state interactions or an understanding what shapes and constructs the roles

and interests of states. For constructivists, material factors depend on the intersubjective context. Thus, constructivists are more interested in the effects of norms and identities whereas neorealists focus on state calculations and security.

In sorting through this tangled web, are two theories better than one? It will be argued that if we really want to understand a situation, we need at least two theories: The use of more theories will broaden our perspective and understanding of Russia's behavior towards NATO's expansion under the auspice of U.S hegemony, and one theory can lead us to simple reductions and conclusions, whereas two theories will allow us to avoid the trap of overgeneralization and possible simplification. Alternate interpretations of Russian behavior will enable us to better comprehend the situation. And as we shall see, although both neorealism and constructivism share some core premises, their understandings of the situation can be quite opposite. Binding these theories together may simply overlook important elements of both approaches.

Chapter II

Historical Overview

2.1 *North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)*

The relationship between NATO and Russia is complex and a brief historical overview is necessary to establish the complexities of their fragile rapport. From NATO's inception, April 4th 1949, the relationship between the organization and Russia was adversarial, with NATO's very *raison d'être* the protection of its members against the expansion of the Soviet Union. This adversarial foundational dynamic continues to characterize the relationship. After the fall of the Soviet Union, NATO created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was charged with the goal of creating a consultative forum in which Central and Eastern European countries were invited to participate. The NACC was seen as a "temporary mechanism to deal with former adversaries."⁴¹ Despite being a consultative forum, it had significant drawbacks for Russia and Russian participation was therefore limited.

The NACC's purpose and objectives were not well-defined. NACC did not grant Russia any special status, nor did it grant Russia any decision-making powers. In fact, Russia did not trust NATO's declared intentions, but felt the West was trying to reduce Russia's influence by reducing the power of security institutions in which Russia played an important role, such as the Organization for Security cooperation in Europe (OSCE)⁴².

⁴¹ Ponsel Lionel: Russia, NATO, and Cooperative Security: Bridging the Gap. New York: Routledge, 2007, p65

⁴² Ibid

2.2 *Partnership for Peace (PfP)*

The Partnership for Peace (PfP) was created to encourage bilateral cooperation between individual partner countries and NATO. The former Secretary of Defence for the United States, Les Aspin, believed that PfP “sets up the right incentives for those wishing to join [NATO]”.⁴³ Russia was not pleased and initially refused to join the PfP, believing that NATO was encouraging the future entry of the Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS members, in a clear challenge to Russian interest in the region. Russia eventually joined the PfP in June 1994, in hopes of minimizing the effects of expansion. As stated by one Russian scholar, “Russia finally joined PfP in June 1994, hoping to transform it into a substitute for NATO membership for Central and East European states, rather than a mechanism to prepare them for membership.”⁴⁴ That same year, the Partnership Coordination Cell (PCC) was created and given responsibility for coordinating joint military activities within the PfP (ex. Bosnia). Nevertheless, Russia still argued that it had no voice within the organization.

2.3 *Permanent Joint Council (PJC)*

In order to remedy to the situation and ensure greater Russian participation in European affairs, a new mechanism for consultation was created: the Founding Act, creating a separate forum, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC). This was to provide a forum of consultation regarding security issues of concern to both NATO and Russia. The goal was to increase dialogue between both countries and to develop a joint program of security and defense cooperation wherein “the two parties will consult and

⁴³ Quoted in, Ibid, p. 66

⁴⁴ Ibid, p67

strive to cooperate to the broadest possible degree.”⁴⁵ Basically, the aim of the Act was to reassure Russia that it could enter into partnership with NATO. However, this Act, again, fell short of Russian expectations as it too did not give them enough of a say in NATO’s internal affairs, having “a voice, not a veto.”⁴⁶

2.4 G8

Many analysts, journalists, professors and specialists would agree that the G8 membership had been a poor compensation for NATO expansion. While the former Russian president Boris Yeltsin was trying to calm the internal panic in his country produced by more talks of NATO expansion in 1997, former president Bill Clinton wanted Yeltsin to understand that Russia had an important role to play in the international arena, and the best way to prove that, was by incorporating Russia into the G7 club. Clinton made it no secret, and told several of his personal council in 1997 “It’s real simple. As we push Ol’ Boris to do the right but hard thing on NATO, I want him to feel the warm, beckoning glow of doors that are opening to other institutions where he’s welcome.”⁴⁷ Yeltsin was clearly misguided. Russia had to witness the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the end of the Warsaw Pact alliances who literally fled from Russia in the arms of the West, its withdrawal from East Europe and finally, the removal of Russian military bases both in Cuba and Vietnam.⁴⁸ Now, if this entire trauma was not enough, Russia was also required to accept NATO expansion. Anatol Lieven, a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation, said it best, when he argued that if the United States really wanted Russia to play a greater role in the international arena and if it really

⁴⁵ Ibid, p72

⁴⁶ Ibid, p70

⁴⁷ According to the memoir of Strobe Talbott, Clinton’s top presidential aid, quoted in: Boykewich Stephen, “How Russia Got Into the Democratic Club”, *The Moscow Times* July 14th 2006, p1

⁴⁸ Ibid

wanted to compensate Russia for NATO expansion, then the president of the United States would have made a substantial offer that would be more representative than membership in the G7.⁴⁹ Lieven does not give any examples, but one might consider giving a greater role to Russia in NATO or give Russia a significant economic compensation to help rebuild its economy.

2.5 Kosovo Crisis

Many books have been written on the relationship between NATO-Russia and U.S relations.⁵⁰ It is not necessary to elaborate on this here, but it is fair to mention that the Kosovo crisis was a breaking point in the relationship between Russia and NATO, demonstrating clearly that Russia could not trust NATO. To prevent a possible veto of NATO action by Russia in the UN, the U.S. maintained that it should be possible to threaten or use force without explicit UN authorization (Article 51 of the UN Charter). As noted by Secretary Cohen at the time regarding a UN mandate: "The United States does not feel it's imperative. It's desirable, not imperative."⁵¹ According to the Russians, NATO was clearly expanding its mandate in acting beyond the borders of member states. To Russian officials, this raised the possibility of a NATO attack on Russia's near abroad or even on its own soil. Furthermore, NATO acted without the expressed sanction of the UN Security Council, creating still greater uncertainty.

⁴⁹ Quoted in, Ibid

⁵⁰ Several notable examples include, but not limited to, Julianne Smith: The NATO-Russia Relationship Defining Moment or Déjà vu? Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2008 ; Aurel Brawn, NATO-Russia Relations in the Twenty First Century; New York: Routledge, 2009; Igor S. Ivanov: The New Russian Diplomacy; Massachusetts: Brookings Institution Press, 2002; Rocco Michael Paone, Evolving New World Order/Disorder: China-Russia-United States-NATO, University Press of America, 2001, etc.

⁵¹ Whitney Craig R, "NATO to Conduct Large Maneuvers to Warn off Serbs," *New York Times*, June 12th, 1998, p.A1.

2.6 9/11

After the events of 9/11, Moscow opened Russian airspace to US planes and offered enhanced military assistance to the Northern Alliance, NATO's ally in Afghanistan, such that the relationship between NATO and Russia seemed to have taken a turn for the better. Two days after the attacks in New York, the PJC met and issued a statement calling for closer cooperation between NATO and Russia in order to defeat terrorism. Putin's visit to Brussels in 2001 and his meetings with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson marked a new chapter in this relationship. In time, the PfP was replaced by the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), with a mandate to focus on projects wherein Russia and NATO share common goals. However, the NRC functions on the principle of consensus, with members making joint decisions, yet Russia still lacks a veto as NATO reserves the right to remove any issue from the NRC and thus exclude Russia from the consultation table. This paper will elaborate on Russia's role after 9/11 later in chapter 4.

2.7 Crisis in Georgia

Several points of conflict have contributed to the current Georgian crisis. In justifying its intervention, Russia claims that Georgia acted aggressively against Russian loyalists in South Ossetia, but it also objected earlier to both Georgia's bid to join NATO and the Pentagon's arming and training of the Georgian military. With strong backing from the George W. Bush administration, NATO promised Georgia, which Russia considers part of its traditional sphere of influence, that it would one day be admitted to the alliance. Against that backdrop, Russia's military offensive in Georgia underscored the controversy of further NATO expansion, which Russia strongly opposes. Russia's

UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin emphasized this point at a news conference called to discuss the Georgia crisis: "We have never made a secret of the fact that we think NATO enlargement is wrong and that with every new wave of enlargement, new security issues are created, and there are better ways to deal with matters of regional European, Euro-Atlantic security. More cooperative ways that would include, rather than exclude Russia."⁵² Even before the Russian military moved into Georgia earlier in 2008, Russian Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, was warning in interviews that an expansion of NATO to include nations bordering Russia would be unacceptable to Moscow: "There are NATO-Ukrainian relations, there are NATO-Georgian relations, but there are also NATO-Russia relations," Rogozin said. "It's all about the balance of interests. You have to take into consideration our point of view, and not approach a military machine close to our borders."⁵³ Although bereft of major energy resources itself, the former Soviet republic of Georgia serves as a strategic corridor through which oil and gas pipelines bring the rich reserves of the Caspian Sea to European and world markets. That corridor is particularly important for Russia and for Gazprom. Georgia also happens to be one of the world's fastest-reforming democracies, uniquely situated between Russia, Turkey and Iran. According to the current President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili, who came to power in Georgia's 2003 "Rose Revolution," Georgia's main foreign-policy priority is membership in NATO.⁵⁴

⁵² Quoted in Potts Nina Marie, "Russian Invasion of Georgia Raises Questions Over Extending NATO Membership", Brussels, August 19th 2008, available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-08/2008-08-19-voa27.cfm>

⁵³ Quoted in, Ibid

⁵⁴ Quoted in, Grgic Borut, Russia's invasion of Georgia: What to do about Moscow's attack against its neighbors, *Washington Times*, Monday August 11 2008 at: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/aug/11/instability-in-georgia-is-mounting-us-interests-th/>

From this short history, it is clear that Russia's relations with NATO are a complex matter. NATO's operations in Yugoslavia and NATO's failure to consult with Russia over its actions and the clear violation of NATO's long-standing claim to be a solely defensive organization were quite worrying for Russia. Membership in the Founding Act and the PfP provided poor compensation for NATO's expansion and made it is clear that Russian opinion counted for little. It is difficult to say in what direction the NRC will progress, but if we take into account what happened in the past, it might not look promising for Russia. This short history will now help us to evaluate Russia's actions with regards to NATO and will be returned to for further analysis throughout this paper.

Chapter III

Russia's Alliances

Before exploring Russia's search for alliances, it would be interesting to look at the material capabilities of the U.S and its fellow NATO members compared to Russia. Since according to the neorealist perspective, the possibility of a state to maximize its power will ultimately affect the balance of power in the international system. Looking at the military and economic capabilities of Russia's main opponent, will enable us to understand Russia's reaction. Furthermore, looking at both the economic and military aspects will help us understand the reasons that pushed Russia to choose its alliances in "opposing" the United States and its NATO allies. As we shall see, according to neorealists, Russia should indeed be frightened at the expansion of NATO under U.S umbrella.

3.1 Military Capabilities

Neorealists argue that the structure of the international system is determined by arrangements of military power. Coercion, or the threat of it, is the driving force behind state calculations and security is a main state concern. States determine the status of their security by evaluating their capabilities against those of other states. Unfavorable balances are cause for concern and because the system is anarchic, there is nothing to stop states with superior capabilities from exploiting less powerful states. Since the United States is the hegemon, and as established earlier, they are the dominant force guiding the decisions of NATO. It is only natural for Russia, according to this theory, to be wary for its safety.

There are several definitions of “power”. For this paper, two definitions will be taken from classical realist Hans Morgenthau and neorealist’s Kenneth Waltz. In his work *Politics Among Nations*, Hans Morgenthau argued that the relative power of a state can be measured according to its natural resources, geography, industrial capabilities, military capabilities, and population.⁵⁵ According to Waltz, several other factors are also useful in measuring a state’s power; these include a state’s geography and population, military resources, and economic and political stability.⁵⁶ What is important in the definitions of both authors is ultimately the quantitative aspect of power: that is, anything that can be measured and used in war. Applying these measures to the bipolarity of the Cold War, it can be seen that the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a relative stalemate, meaning that both sides had access to much the same quantities of resources, and both were capable of destroying each other. After the Cold War, the United States became the ultimate hegemon, or as John Ikenberry notes, the U.S became the unipolar actor as the USSR folded and the structure of the international system skewed in favour of the United States:

[After the end of the Cold War] the distribution of world power took a dramatic turn in America’s favor. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, the decline of ideological rivalry, lagging economic fortunes in Japan and continental Europe, growing disparities in military and technological expenditure, and America’s booming economy all intensified power disparities during the 1990s [...] a decade of American rising power.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Morgenthau Hans, « Elements of National Power ». Chapter in *Politics Among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3rd ed. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1962, p. 106-144.

⁵⁶ Waltz Kenneth, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics” Ibid, p. 50.

⁵⁷ Ikenberry John G., « Getting Hegemony Right », *The National Interest*, n° 63 (Spring 2001), p. 17.

In 2008, according to the Federation of American Scientists, Russia had 13,000 warheads whereas the US had 9,400.⁵⁸ The estimate for the numbers of the Russian stockpile comes with considerable ambiguity since it is based on Cold War levels, but since 1991, several thousands must have been dismantled or become dysfunctional. One might presume that Russian nuclear stockpiles are now equal to those of the US, but if we add the weapons of Russia's potential allies – India and China — Russia may still hold a numerical advantage over the US even if we add, in turn, all NATO stockpiles to the American side of the ledger.⁵⁹ However, nuclear power alone does not make a state a great power. As noted by Georges Ball, the retaliatory threat is a “cosmic bluff”.⁶⁰ But nuclear weapons arsenals are not the only leverage available, for as history, and Russian history in particular has shown, one must also account for military might. In this respect, the United States has the lead by far. The numbers on military spending are telling. In billions of dollars, the United States in 2008 spent \$711, about 48.28% of the world total; next was China with \$121.9, Russia with \$70, Iran \$7.2, and India \$22.4. Simply put, US military spending is greater than the next 46 highest spending countries in the world combined, 5.8 times that of China, 10.2 times more than Russia's, and 98.6 more than Iran's.⁶¹ This is a major concern for Russia. Even though Russia and its “allies”, may combine forces, US military might is still dominant. And according to neorealists, maximizing state security implies that military requirements are more important than economic capabilities should the two come into conflict.

⁵⁸ Status of World Nuclear Forces 2009, Federation of American Scientists, available at <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nukestatus.html>.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Waltz, op.cit, “the emerging structure of International politics”, p 53

⁶¹ The Center for Arms Control and Non Proliferation: The FY 2009 Pentagon Spending Request-Global Military Spending, available at: http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/policy/securityspending/articles/fy09_dod_request_global/

What this means for Russia, is that it must continue to seek “allies” in order to counter the US hegemon along with its NATO members, and to develop its economy in order to acquire more power. As Waltz stated, any attempt to reverse a state’s decline, has to rely on economic means.⁶² Although material factors alone do not decide the outcomes of war, there remains no doubt that the odds of success are substantially higher if one possesses them, especially in protracted wars of attrition when strategy is reduced to an attempt to grind down one’s opponent through sheer material superiority.⁶³ Furthermore, one must also look at how a state will use its military might and consider also its economic capabilities. Gilpin defines power as resources that combined the “military, economic, and technological capabilities of states”.⁶⁴ This means that power in neorealist terms is not only translated into military might, but must also consider economic capacity.

3.2 Economic capability

If a country wants to compete against a rising or current hegemon, it must be able to do so not only in military capabilities but also economically. This logic is fairly simple: if a country’s economic capabilities are in decline, there will be less investment in the purchase of arms and in the building of a great army. Such was the situation in Russia following the end of the Cold War. Russia found itself in a time of great economic reconstruction and unable to maintain past military prowess. Russia still has the resources and military weapons (nuclear) to be considered a great power and to counter the hegemonic power of the US. Although Russia is trying to counter the hegemonic

⁶² Waltz, op.cit, “the emerging structure of the international Politics”, p52

⁶³ Mearsheimer Jonh J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W.W Norton & company, 2003, p 58-59

⁶⁴ Gilpin Robert, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p 13.

tendencies of the United States through alliances, its own, independent economic situation is better, even if still precarious. In order to compete with a hegemon, Russia's economic situation must improve still further, especially in comparisons with that of the United States. The *Global Competitiveness Report* puts Russia far behind the United States. Russia's GDP (in US billions) in 2007 as 1 289.6 and GDP per capita at 9075.1 for a GDP as share percentage of world total at 3.18%.⁶⁵ Compared to that of the United States GDP (in billions) in 2007 13,843.8 and GDP per capita 45,845.5 for a total GDP as share percentage of world total of 21.36%.⁶⁶ Clearly, Russia has not yet achieved equality, particularly if we bring the economic strength of America's allies to bear, so Russia must take steps if it wants to compete, or even defend itself and be taken seriously.

Key strategic alliances also depend on the importance of economic might. In order to counteract the power of the United States, it would be strategically wise to make key economic alliances that could ultimately be very economically beneficial to Russia. A balanced coalition against the United States would also have to rely on important economic gains in order to prevent the US from achieving quasi complete economic control over the world. Waltz's theory emphasizes the importance of security issues in neorealism, but the role of economy can be termed as a security issue. Indeed, a number of balancing strategies have been used in the past in order to weaken a state's ability to create wealth and accumulate power (such as the use of boycotts, sanctions or blockades). From Russia's perspective, the United States and its NATO allies together form a very

⁶⁵ Porter E Michael & Schab Klaus, "The Global Competitiveness Report 2008-2009", *World Economic Forum*, Geneva Switzerland, 2008, p 301

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p 353

strong economic structure. As seen above, the military might of the United States is overwhelming, and combined with that of NATO countries, all this military equipment can be purchased easily and thus becomes even more frightening. Professor and specialist in political economy, Mark R. Brawley points out, economic ties can make alliances more realistic: “Alliances can harness the mutually beneficial aspects of international economic policies to make themselves more successful and more militarily powerful. If trade or international investment makes both parties better off, then such activities should be diverted from the threatening power. External balancing should redirect trade towards alliance members”.⁶⁷ As neorealists point out, alliances are intended to balance power and increase security. If Russia can gain in economic terms, it will also gain in military terms.

It is important to mention here, that for a neorealist, the main role of institutions is to serve the interests of the most powerful states. This also falls into the realm of economic institutions. There is a correlation between NATO as a security organization and other economic institutions (such as WTO, World Bank, etc.). According to neorealist thought, these economic institutions serve the interests of the United States. In the words of Waltz “the United States makes the rules and maintains the institutions that shape the international political economy.”⁶⁸ Viewed from the Russian perspective, the US appears not only to control military institutions but economic ones as well. For example, the system of aerial defense, BALTNET, created by the American company Lockheed Martin for the Baltic States. Apart from BALTNET, three other joint Estonian-

⁶⁷ Brawley Mark. “The Political Economy of Balance of Power Theory” in Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century, edited by T.V. Paul, Jim Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann, Stanford University Press, 2004, p 81

⁶⁸ Waltz Kenneth, “Globalization and Governance” Columbia University, PS Online, December 1999, p 7

Latvian-Lithuanian military projects have been funded and overseen by the United States: BALTBAT (an infantry battalion), BALTRON (a naval squadron) and BALTDEFCOL (the Baltic Defence College). If Ukraine or Georgia enters NATO, serious economic relief will be given by the United States along with substantial and valuable military contracts. Given all this is happening in Russia's backyard, Russia should, according to neorealist thinking, be thinking about boosting its economic might if it wants to stand a chance against US encroachment in the region.

Russia's alliances

According to Waltz, alliances form due to changes in the structure of the international system and are able to counterbalance rising powers that threaten that balance of power. For Waltz, an excessive accumulation of capabilities will result in greater threats to others in the international system and lead to counterbalancing alliances. As seen previously, the United States has the wealth and capabilities to influence organizations such as NATO, and in the eyes of the Russians, that constitutes a major threat. This represents one instance in which a state, according to neorealists, will cooperate. The second instance is when certain concessions are made to compensate the state when it enters into an agreement in which one state achieves a relative gain. For example, in cases of economic or military gain, states seeking security can enter into cooperative arrangements with other states. The following section will look at Russia's search for alliances to counter US hegemony and diminish US influence within NATO.

As we shall discover, potential Russian partners Iran, China, and India have their own reasons to be skeptical of NATO expansion and reservations about US intentions.

But these partnerships not only share some of Russia's concerns, they also bring Russia significant profit and political influence on the international scene.

3.3 *Iran as an ally*

Promoting multipolarity through external alliances is a viable way for Russia to reaffirm its status as a great power and play an active role in the international system. Currently, Moscow sees Iran as a valuable partner in responding to regional security challenges, and as a partner in wider political and strategic ventures. By supporting this "rogue" state—so termed by the United States—Russia acquires influence and the accoutrements of a great power – a considerable boon given that Russia wants to be known and acknowledged as a major player on the international scene, just as Iran wishes to assert greater influence regionally and be accorded greater respect. In pursuit of these ends, Russia has positioned itself as the go-between for the US and Iran—always a fraught relationship, but lately one of increased importance—thus increasing its influence, stature, and usefulness to Washington and other NATO countries, and to Iran and other "rogue" states.

The main problem with Russia's relationship to Iran is that NATO has been seeking to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons while Russia states that it opposes an Iranian bomb and yet aids in the construction of a nuclear reactor at Bushehr and opposes the imposition of UN Security Council sanctions on Iran. Indeed, Russia refused to listen to American advice and in September 2005, the Russian Foreign

Ministry stated it was opposed to reporting Iran to the UN Security Council.⁶⁹ With this type of rhetoric, Russia is clearly siding with Iran and not the US. Without sanctions, there are no incentives left for Iran to change its policy and thus, Russia, knowing that the US needs its cooperation to exert pressure on Iran, is again setting up itself as an important player on the international scene even though the gambit could further strain security relations with NATO. NATO's member states are engaged in a process of developing policies for arms control and disarmament. With Russia's US\$700 million contract with Iran in 2005 for surface-to-air missiles for the defense of Iran's nuclear installations, Russia is sending a clear signal to NATO and the United States that Russia can choose its own alliances.⁷⁰

Such attempts at rapprochement do not rule out international conflict. Both Russia and Iran have opposed NATO's eastward expansion and denounced its military intervention in the world's hot-spots without a clear UN mandate, seeing a more assertive NATO as a source of international instability, not an international policing force. Defense analyst Pavel Felgengauer, who describes the Russo-Iranian relationship as a strategic one, notes: "NATO's expansion is making Russia look around hurriedly for at least some kind of strategic allies. In this situation, the anti-Western and anti-America regime in Iran would be a natural and very important partner."⁷¹ In an interview, Russia's ambassador to Tehran, Konstantin Shuvalov, declared a "common opposition to unipolarity as the foundation of Russo-Iranian relations [...] We support a democratic multipolar order

⁶⁹Braun Aurel, Ed, NATO-Russia Relations in the Twenty-First Century, edited by, Routledge, New York, 2008 p141

⁷⁰Felgengauer Pavel, "Russian society is arriving at a consensus on the question of national interests," translated in *CDPSP*, vol. 47, no. 21 (June 21, 1995), p. 3.

⁷¹ Quoted in Freedman O Robert, "Russian-Iranian Relations in the 1990's", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 4. No. 2, June 2000, p70

which will guarantee the interests of all nations.”⁷² The relationship between Iran and NATO has not been amicable, especially given the United States’ economic sanctions on Iran and American criticism of Iran for supporting Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.⁷³

Among other considerations, the alliance with Iran offers Russia political and economic dividends, but here security matters are of primary importance. Hence Iran’s refusal to comment on the activities and Russian policies in Chechnya and its support of the former Yugoslavia is unsurprising, as is Russia’s status as Iran’s main source of weapons systems despite protests from the United States. The sale to Iran of arms and nuclear reactors helps Russia's cash-strapped military-industrial complex while equipping Iran with much desired modern technology unavailable elsewhere. Overall trade between Iran and Russia has grown significantly over the years, rising to US\$2.02 billion in 2005, compared to only \$661 million in 2000.⁷⁴ Russian exports to Iran, mostly in conventional weapons, military equipment and cars, reached \$1.9 billion in 2005.⁷⁵ Furthermore, situated in a region that holds enormous energy resources and offers the possibility of controlling export routes to outside markets, Russia and Iran combined would enjoy control over enormous energy reserves and production sites, making them a formidable economic power. In terms of population, the organization could, potentially, represent over 200 million people.

Economically, Iran and Russia control the energy resources of Russia, Iran and the Caucasus, plus the manufacturing might of the Chinese and burgeoning service

⁷² Ambrosio Thomas, *Challenging America’s Global Preeminence: Russia’s Quest for Multipolarity*, North Dakota State University USA, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005 , p 91

⁷³ Braun, op.cit, p135

⁷⁴ Badkhen Anna, “Russia’s ties to Iran a roadblock to U.S. Trade geopolitical interests trump sanctions effort”, *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sunday September 10th, 2006, p1

⁷⁵ Ibid

industries of India that makes it a great economic power.⁷⁶ The International Transport Corridor (ITC), which was established with the collaboration of India, Russia, and Iran, extends Russia's geopolitical influence by further reinforcing economic relations between Russia and those two rising powers.⁷⁷ With the Russian space/military industrial complex behind them, this alliance could become a formidable world power.

Geographically, the Russians consider closer relations with Iran to be a major strategic move because an unfriendly America could aid the Iranians, regardless of their current relationship, in stirring up trouble. Since Iran is the key to the Persian Gulf and could act as a buffer against an American advance from Iraq and Afghanistan towards Russia's southern borders, an alliance with Iran is key to maintaining Russian security.

Russia and Iran are also working together to check the influence of the United States and its allies (for example Turkey) in Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as to restrain the Taliban's brand of religious extremism in Afghanistan. As noted by Ali Ahmad Jalali, chief of the Farsi Service of the Voice of America in Washington, Iran's partnerships with Russia and Armenia are seen by both Iran and Russia as direct responses to US efforts to cultivate influence in the region through its ties with Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan.⁷⁸ This configuration of forces also plays a crucial role in pipeline politics, which brings the "north-south axis against the east-west corridor".⁷⁹ The Russian-Iranian association also provides bilateral security insurance through concerted responses to common challenges ranging from U.S. penetration of the

⁷⁶ Maunk Allister, "Economic Cooperation Between Russia and India", Axis Information and Analysis, 2005, available at <http://www.axisglobe.com/article.asp?article=111>. Trade between India and Russia has reached nearly 5 billion dollars in 2005

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Jalali A. Ali, "The Strategic Partnership of Russia and Iran", *Parameters*, USA Army War College Quarterly, (Winter 2001-2002), p101

⁷⁹ Ibid

region to the proliferation of unfriendly religious extremism and instability deriving from the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Russia clearly seeks to exploit the strategic advantages offered by Iran's oil reserves and geographical location to its advantage.

3.4 Forging ties with China

A second important Russian alliance to consider is China. Forging a working strategic partnership with such a large, emerging power, with its own concerns about U.S. power and influence would provide obvious advantages to both parties. The rationale for such an alliance is clear: both Russia and China are disturbed by the new, unipolar structure of the international system and by America's hegemonic tendencies, and in order to counter America's global power and protect their own interests, both states have committed themselves to the promotion of a multipolar international system. In the international arena, Russia has tried to strengthen its position by joining forces with China through the Shanghai Five – possibly the most significant indication of the new “Russo-Chinese anti-American alliance”. This organization, created in 1996 as an attempt at “deepening military trust at the border regions” and promoting cooperation on terrorism and security, includes Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁸⁰ In 2001, the group admitted Uzbekistan as a new member, renamed the organization, and signed the Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In the words of then Chinese President Jiang Zemin, this Organization would foster “world multipolarization”.⁸¹ The organization's charter stated that its goal was to “maintain a global strategic balance and stability.”⁸² In the same year, Russia and China signed the Treaty of

⁸⁰ Ambrosio, op.cit, p 87

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation with the aim of “deepening relations of strategic partnership” based on their “similar appraisals of the international situation.”⁸³

This organization intended to curb U.S influence in the region, and in Section VI of the Dushanbe statement, issued jointly by all of the members, they vow to “oppose intervention in other countries' internal affairs on the pretexts of 'humanitarianism' and 'protecting human rights,' and support the efforts of one another in safeguarding the five countries' national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and social stability.”⁸⁴ Chinese President Jiang Zemin even added: “[W]e should strengthen mutual support in safeguarding the national unity and sovereignty of our nations and resist all kinds of threat to the security of the region.”⁸⁵ There are also more subtle, implicit references aimed at U.S. policy in the statement, which note the group's opposition to the “use of force or threat of force in international relations without the UN Security Council's prior approval and... any countries or groups of countries' attempt to monopolize global and regional affairs out of selfish interests.”⁸⁶ The Dushanbe statement also states its opposition to U.S. missile defenses by stating its strong support for the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) and its opposition to “bloc-based” deployment of theater missile defense systems in the Asia-Pacific region, notably in Taiwan.⁸⁷ Needless to say that China made use of the statement to send a message to the U.S. regarding Taiwan.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 83

⁸⁴ Dushanbe Statement of the Heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Tajikistan. In China's Foreign Ministry, available at : http://www.shaps.hawaii.edu/fp/russia/dushanbe_20000705.html

⁸⁵ Bates Gill, “Shanghai Five: An Attempt to Counter U.S Influence in Asia?” Brookings: May 4th 2001. Available at : http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2001/0504china_gill.aspx

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid

In 2002, the official charter of SCO was signed by all members. In 2004, Mongolia was admitted as an observer and, in 2005, Iran, India and Pakistan also received observer status. With these additions, the SCO is evolving from a regional economic and security organization into something else. And if these observer states were to in fact join the SCO, it would have the potential to become one of the most influential organizations in the world.⁸⁸

Chinese and Russians often speak of military concerns -- such as America's plan to pull out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty), which has been frequently cited and no doubt provided motivation for implementing closer relations.⁸⁹ The fact that the United States unilaterally decided to abrogate the agreement, and the inability of both Russia and China to prevent it, provided a clear indication that the US considered its actions to be unconstrained by international rivals, leaving it from to act as it wished. Although the Russo-Chinese agreement was not based solely on military concerns, the document nevertheless includes a subtle version of a military alliance. Several provisions (including Articles VII, VIII, and IX) deal with cooperative military responses to security and territorial threats.⁹⁰ Article IX stipulates that if "confronted with the threat of aggression, the contracting parties shall immediately hold contacts and consultations in order to eliminate such threats";⁹¹ This does not make the arrangement a military alliance *per se*, such that an attack on one is an attack on all, but it can be construed in such a manner if both parties are in agreement, if the right situation presents itself.

⁸⁸ Bakhtiar Abbas, "Cold War II", *Scoop Independent News*, Friday June 30th 2006, p.4 available at: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0606/S00348.htm>

⁸⁹ Saiget J Robert, "Russia, China Present Common Front Against US Missile Defence", *Agence France Presse*, July 16th 2001.

⁹⁰ Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation of July 24th 2008, available at <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/2649/t15771.htm>

⁹¹ Ibid

Clearing the decks of past tensions and laying a foundation for future cooperation, in August 2005, Russia and China settled disputes over their borders and carried out joint military exercises. One of the objectives of these joint exercises was aimed at countering the United States' "monopoly in world affairs."⁹² In 2007, the SCO counterterrorism exercises that involved 6500 troops from all the members of the organization. Russia and China are the ones that sent the most troops, with Russia sending 2000 troops. These exercises sent a clear message to the U.S, that the SCO was in "control" of Central Asia, and that the presence of Americans was not welcome. This point by the SCO members could not be clearer: they refused Washington's observer status. Washington was not allowed near the SCO military exercises. China and Russia are making an important statement, by sending a message to Washington that both countries are ready to affirm their interests near their borders and more specifically in Central Asia. Russia even went further, when it announced it's restoration of "long-range patrolling by nuclear-capable strategic bombers" which were widely used during the Cold War.⁹³

The SCO sees U.S presence in Afghanistan as a serious nuisance and wants American withdrawal as well as NATO allies. And Uzbekistan simply closed down the U.S air base Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan, one of the SCO members, is demanding more money from the U.S for the use of their military air base. The interesting factor here is that it only increased its rent to the U.S and not to Russia, who is enjoying the use of the air base for free.⁹⁴

⁹² De Haas, Marcel. "Russia-China Security Cooperation." (EN) Online publication, Power and Interest News Report (PINR), 27 November 2006.

⁹³ Chan John, "Central Asian military exercises highlight rising great-power tensions" Published by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), August 25 2007,p.1,Available at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2007/aug2007/sco-a25.shtml>

⁹⁴ Ibid, p2

Thus, it can easily be argued that these exercises were meant to show the Americans that both Russia and China were forces to be reckoned with in the Central Asia and that any interference in the area could have potential consequences. Russia's fear of encirclement is mirrored in China, especially in light of events in the aftermath of 9/11 and given the presence of US forces in Central Asia.

Russo-Chinese military cooperation recently reached record levels with Russia becoming China's primary supplier of modern weapons and military technology. In 1997, Russian arms sales to China totaled US\$1 billion, an amount that continued to rise throughout the remainder of the decade.⁹⁵ The success of the defense industry only underscores the missing elements of an economic partnership. The April 1996 summit statement, for example, announced an overall goal of growing trade between the two sides to \$20 billion by the end of the century and identified projects of interest in energy, large-scale construction, and nuclear power as priorities for matching the momentum and scale of defense efforts,⁹⁶ and Putin's July 2000 visit to China resulted in agreements on feasibility studies on gas and oil pipelines from Siberia to China. This is driven, in part, by China's transformation, during the last decade, from an energy exporter to importer. Russia's determination to capitalize on world oil and gas prices inflated – in part – by China's consumption, has translated into a much more vigorous approach to diversifying markets and pipeline routes. Russia's National Energy Strategy envisages that by 2020 the share of its total oil exports to Asia will rise to 30% (and gas exports by up to 15%) from the current 3%. It further anticipates that China will account, by far, for the largest

⁹⁵ Ambrosio, op.cit p 84

⁹⁶ Garnett Sherman, "Challenges of the Sino Russian Strategic Partnership", *Washington Quarterly* 24.4, 2001, p46

proportion of this increase.⁹⁷ Thus, Russia's strategic alliance with China will not only lead bring it significant economic gains, but will also counter US influence.

China's negative attitude towards NATO expansion has been evident since the beginning of NATO enlargement, and parallels those of the Russians: America is strengthening its grasp over Europe and entrenching its hegemonic status by accepting new members into the alliance and providing them with security guarantees as well as selling them military equipment. China is much concerned about the current hegemonic power of the United States and prefers a multipolar system. At the same time, China perceives a possibility of NATO expansion into its sphere of influence, particularly given Japan's military cooperation with the United States and with the growing role of the US in the global economy. Thus China pays close attention to its geostrategic and economic situation in order to dilute American unilateralism. The United States has been seeking, or maintaining, military bases close to the Chinese border in Mindanao, Okinawa, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. China, to counter U.S moves on the political front, had to make sure to consolidate its economic ties with ASEAN member states. A further complication, according to the government in Beijing, of NATO enlargement would be inevitable complications regarding China's access to the European market due to trade tensions between the Chinese and the United States. Finally, another plausible reason against NATO expansion under the US umbrella is that China would not be able to acquire modern weapons from the Czech Republic or France. If China-US relations deteriorated, China would have to rely exclusively on Russia for the supply of advanced arms. Regardless of which ally a state purchases weapons from, an ally today can become

⁹⁷ CLSA, "China and Russia: Common interests, contrasting perceptions" *Asian Geopolitics*, Special Report, May 2006, http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/6619_russiachinamay06.pdf, p15

your foe tomorrow. Thus, relying only on one source to buy your military equipment can become a risk. The last straw, for China, was the invasion of Kosovo, during which China perceived the US as using NATO for its own ends without the accord of the UN and, in violating the sovereignty of Yugoslavia, showed what the United States could do with NATO under its control. Add to this the U.S-led NATO bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade in 1999, and reasons for China's resentment towards NATO abound.

3.5 Cementing ties with India

Few remember that India and Russia share a historical link that dates back to the 19th Century, when the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva were integrated into the Romanov Empire.⁹⁸ Although good relations were maintained between these two countries, it was not until the signing of the "Indo-Soviet Treaty, Friendship and Cooperation" in 1971 that ties were cemented. This treaty contained significant security clauses and arose, at least in part, to contain the growing powers of China and Pakistan. For example, Article 9 of the Indo-Soviet Treaty stipulated that there should be military cooperation in the event of a military threat to either party.⁹⁹ Initially, the common denominator was the containment of China and Pakistan and countering the rise of American influence in Asia. Relations between India and China have always been difficult, and India still remembers the 1962 war with Pakistan over the disputed territory of Kashmir. Furthermore, America's interests in Pakistan, which they famously described

⁹⁸ Singh I. Anita, "India's Relation with Russia and Central Asia", *International Affairs* Vol. 71, No. 1, January 1995, p. 77.

⁹⁹ Subhash Kapila, *India Russia Strategic Cooperation: Time to Move Away*, South Asia Analysis Group Papers, n 144, 2000, p 5

as “America’s most allied ally in Asia”, is cause for concern from an Indian perspective.¹⁰⁰

In what Gorbachev called his “new China policy,” Gorbachev called for “an end to a China encirclement policy.”¹⁰¹ That policy survived the break up of the USSR, and in 2000, Russia’s foreign policy document reflected the shift: “The concurrence of the fundamental approaches of Russia and the People’s Republic of China to the key issues of world problems is one of the mainstays of regional and global stability. Russia seeks to develop mutually advantageous cooperation with China in all areas.”¹⁰² However, Russia’s strategic shift in its foreign policy towards China places India in an awkward position. Under Gorbachev, the Soviets changed their stance towards China. On its alliance with India, Russia declared that it “intends to strengthen its traditional friendship with India, including in the international affairs and to aid overcome problems persisting in South Asia and strengthen stability in the region.”¹⁰³ One might note the nuance in both statements and how Russia came to characterize its relationship with India as a ‘traditional friendship’.

Another consideration is Afghanistan. India and Russia are both interested in trying to contain, as much as possible, the spread of Islamic revivalism and to control the flow of arms in and out of the country as any turbulence in Afghanistan could have undesirable effects on India’s Kashmir and Russia’s Chechen rebels. Given its particular

¹⁰⁰ Tillin Louise, “India and Russia’s common past”, BBC News World Edition, December 4th 2002, p. 1-2. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2542431.stm

¹⁰¹ Faust R John & Judith F Kornberg, “China in World Politics”, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers 1995 p. 4-5.

¹⁰² Subhash, op.cit, p7

¹⁰³ Ibid, p8

strategic interests, India's vision for a possible solution to the Afghan problem differs from that of the United States. The Indian position on the Taliban, shared by Russia, was that no member of the ruling party should be allowed to join in the formation of a new government, whereas, initially, the United States considered a Pakistani proposition that "moderate" Taliban members be integrated because the Pashtuns – from whom most of the Taliban are drawn – are the largest single ethnic group in Afghanistan. Only after the Northern Alliance took the Western coalition by surprise and moved into Kabul on November 13th, did President Bush finally agreed with Russia and India that no members of the Taliban should be allowed to join the new government.¹⁰⁴ However, India feels at times that its opinions are not important to the eyes of the United States.

Russian defense minister Ivanov told reporters in February 2000 that the Kremlin would "unconditionally" support India if it faced a conflict with Pakistan.¹⁰⁵ This statement represents a huge commitment from Russia and clearly shows the world where Russia stands, and that Russia is prepared to act if the situation demands it.

Furthermore, India and Russia have a lot to gain from one another through trade, especially in military equipment. Before the fall of the Soviet empire, 70% of India's military imports came from the USSR.¹⁰⁶ In 1992 Russia granted India credit worth US\$830 million for the purchase of special military equipment.¹⁰⁷ Trade continued after the collapse of the USSR, and in 2005 India purchased \$5.4 billion in weapons:¹⁰⁸ a trade

¹⁰⁴ Black J.L, Vladimir Putin and the New World Order: Looking East Looking West? New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004, p318

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Singh, op.cit, p73

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p 74

¹⁰⁸ Shanker Thom, "Russia first in selling arms to third world", *New York Times*, republished in *The St Petersburg Times*, Issue # 1217 (83) October 31, 2006.

sufficient to keeping approximately 800 Russian defense production facilities in operation.¹⁰⁹

To demonstrate support of India, Russia also made it explicit that it would support that country's bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. In 2001, a representative of the foreign affairs department told reporters that Russia considers India "the strongest and most deserving candidate for becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council."¹¹⁰

Another important factor is India's need for energy, and with Russia's energy surplus, both India and Russia have grounds for cooperation, particularly given the growing importance of oil in the future. The Indian investment in the Sakhalin-1 project is bringing approximately US\$1 billion to India, making it the country's largest foreign investment anywhere in the world. India is also seeking more investments in Russia in the upstream oil and gas sector to ensure reliable long-term energy security.¹¹¹ While looking to benefit from India's growing market for Russian exports of oil and gas, and ultimately to get part of a share in the downstream oil and gas business in India, Russia is also helping India build the Kudankulam nuclear power plant and has recently supplied fuel for Tarapur, despite U.S opposition. On top of this, Russia is looking for a large

¹⁰⁹ Subhash, op.cit, p 7

¹¹⁰ Black, op.cit, p317

¹¹¹ Sengupta Somini, "Russia-India Partnership enters new era", *International Herald Tribune*, January 24 2007.

share of the anticipated increase in nuclear energy projects in India that could bring a substantial amount of money.¹¹²

With regards to NATO, India is a non-aligned country. It shares, however, the concerns of Russia, China, and Iran over NATO's presence in Afghanistan, and in having little say over NATO's plans to stabilize the current conflict in that area. Also worrying, since NATO sent a relief mission to Pakistan following a devastating earthquake in 2005, Pakistan and NATO have enjoyed warmer relations. And, as the US often reiterates, NATO regards Pakistan as an important ally in its fight against terrorism. Considering the relationship and the long history between Pakistan and India, it is understandable that India has some concerns regarding NATO. First, because NATO is an organization led by the United States and secondly, because it consorts with its neighbor Pakistan and does not agree with NATO's expansion towards Russia's borders.¹¹³

¹¹² The Hindu online Edition, "Russia Defends Decision to Supply Uranium to Tarapur Plant", *National Newspaper*, Friday March 17th 2006; <http://www.hindu.com/2006/03/17/stories/2006031719281600.htm>

¹¹³ Gupta Arvin, "Should India Engage NATO?" *Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis*, July 8th, 2008, available on the IDSA website.

Chapter IV

Russia's behavior: The neorealist and constructivist views

From a neorealist perspective, one can argue that Russia's post-Cold War foreign policy *vis a vis* the US is inherently concerned with the structure of the international system and once again balancing the power of the US. Changing the international system from a bipolar to a unipolar structure has affected how states provide for their security. An overwhelming power, such as the United States, causes other states, including Russia, to attempt to redress the imbalance by various means. When analyzing Russia's reaction towards the U.S led NATO alliance, it can be seen that Russia has attempted to enhance its own relative position in an anarchic system by improving its national, economic and military condition by allying itself with strategic partners capable of helping to counter the power of the United States. Its alliances with Iran, China, and India are the primary means by which Russia is seeking to re-institute a multipolar system and to benefit from its military and economic maneuvers and investments.

Russia's interruption of gas supplies to the Ukraine and Georgia in 2006 and its shells raining down on Georgia during the conflict over Ossetia could be viewed as attempts to prevent and control Ukraine's and Georgia's capacity to integrate NATO. Russia's choices of allies; Iran, China, and India, and its behavior throughout the international system are thus well explained by neorealists. To understand Russia's behavior towards the current hegemon, the United States, and to understand how the US is using NATO to further its interests are essential elements in predicting what will

happen next. Neorealists predict that “balances disrupted will one day be restored”¹¹⁴ and Waltz was correct when he asserted that no theory can predict “when” but it can predict how. As mentioned previously, unipolarity is the least durable of international configurations as weaker states will soon worry about American encroachment. We can see this behavior not only in Russia, India, Iran, or China, but we can also look towards Europe and recognize similar elements in how France and Germany, for example, viewed the American invasion of Iraq. It should be noted that both of these states even disagreed on NATO expansion towards Russia. Russia might not become the next hegemon, but to protect its interests it will do what it must survive, and that will include balancing US power. Does this mean that Russia would be ready to go to war to counter the US and ensure that NATO no longer poses a threat? Although this sounds unlikely, if the current situation regarding NATO expansion is not addressed in ways that satisfy all parties involved, we could see history repeat itself. According to neorealist theory, we are witnessing a change in the structure of the international system and the probability of conflict is great.

4.1 Critiques of the neorealist explanation

Although neorealism offers an informative analysis of Russia’s reaction to NATO expansion, it fails to offer satisfactory explanations of a number of fundamental problems. First, because the alliances with Iran and China are driven solely by considerations of the balance of power, neorealism offers little assistance in making sense of the timing of the relationship. Why would Russia choose to enter into a relationship

¹¹⁴ Waltz, op. cit “Structural Realism after the Cold War”, p27

with Iran and China now, and not in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, as one might expect if power balances were truly the prime factor in the international system? Perhaps they didn't expect the U.S. to forgo the benefits of a peace dividend in order to enjoy a clear supremacy of power? One might argue that Russia did, in fact, begin to move at the close of the Cold War. Although relations between China and Russia have been troubled at times, in 1991, the Chinese and the Russians signed a protocol in which both sides committed themselves to developing "good neighborly" relations and peaceful co-existence.¹¹⁵ From that point, relations between the pair warmed. The same can be said of Russia's relations with Iran, to whom weapons sales began in the early 1990s, immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union.¹¹⁶ Thus, it can be argued that immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia began to take measures to assure its security and interests.

Second, these bilateral relationships are marked by intermittent efforts by China and Russia to reach out to the United States, even as they work to resolve their mutual differences. If both China and Russia, in spite of their intentions, seek to balance themselves against the stronger state for structural reasons, as expected by neorealists, how might we explain attempts by Russia to bandwagon, from time to time, with the United States? How can neorealists explain Russia's behavior after the collapse of the USSR or after the events of 9/11? As Schweller, a realist, points out, such bandwagoning is inconsistent with the expectations of structural realism, which predicts balancing, not

¹¹⁵ Pillsbury Michael, China Debates the Future Security Environment, National Defense University Press, Washington DC, 2000, chapter 4

¹¹⁶ Jalali, op.cit, p 99

bandwagoning.¹¹⁷ An explanation, however, can be attempted. From the standpoint of neorealism, the conciliatory and accommodationist nature of Gorbachev's policy may also be understood as being caused by growing Soviet economic and political weakness at home, and which made imperatives of ending the Cold War, limiting the costly arms race and opening the closed Soviet economy. Thus, for example, Wholforth—drawing on Gilpin's "power transition" theory—has argued that Gorbachev's highly concessionary and accommodationist diplomacy, with regards to arms control, democratic change in Eastern Europe and German reunification, represented a form of retrenchment characteristic of major powers experiencing economic crisis as a result of imperial overburden. Soviet diplomacy in the period 1985-1991 was consistent with realist theory, claim Wholforth and other defenders of Realism.¹¹⁸ Schweller attempts an explanation: "The aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted. Simply put, balancing is driven by the desire to avoid losses; bandwagoning by the opportunity for gain."¹¹⁹ This shows that Russia's actions are not incompatible with its main objective: maintaining its influence and interests in the international arena. The same can be said of Russia's behavior after 9/11. It may be that Russia viewed the post-9/11 predicament of the United States as a strategic situation in which the Russians could play a part to gain access to information and funds: Russia's prior experience with terrorism, notably in Chechnya, may be cited as the main reason behind this support, but this is derivative of a short-term interest in combating terrorism in Eurasia. Nonetheless,

¹¹⁷ Schweller, Randell L. "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In", *International Security*, Vol 19, No.1 (Summer 1994) p. 75

¹¹⁸ Wohlforth William C. "Realism and the End of the Cold War", *International Security*, Vol. 19, No.3, 1995, p91-129

¹¹⁹ Schweller, op.cit, p74

for Russia, its standing increased in the international system after 9/11. By siding temporarily with the US, Russia could win concessions, including debt relief, exercise greater influence over the evolving mission of NATO, and demand that limits be imposed on its expansion. In that way, 9/11 can be seen to have provided Russia with an opportunity to augment its power and security. This view was well expressed by Foreign Minister Ivanov, who stated, “there have been no concessions [...] we have been guided by our national interests.”¹²⁰ Ultimately, Putin viewed cooperation as the best means to promote Russian security, prestige and interests. Besides prestige, Putin was also concerned about Islamic terrorists, which pose a security concern for Russia. This is not just related to the current situation in Chechnya, but to the geographical proximity to Afghanistan, Pakistan and other former Soviet states in Central Asia. Putin himself said, in 2001: “I am pursuing this policy [working with the United States after 9/11] solely because I believe this is fully consistent with Russia’s national interests, not in order to win someone’s favor.”¹²¹ In 2003, Putin went to Kyrgyzstan to open a new military base, the first Russian military installation in a foreign country since the fall of the USSR, and, interestingly, just a few blocks from where American bases are located.¹²² Putin’s intentions were clear: to remind the United States and NATO that their relationship is only pragmatic.

Establishing a multipolar balance is not the only strategy that is logically compatible with neorealist assumptions of anarchy and self-help. For example, Randall Schweller points out that states may adopt policies of peaceful accommodation, which

¹²⁰ Ambrosio, *op.cit.*, p141

¹²¹ Quoted in Smith Martin A, *Russia and NATO since 1991 From Cold War through cold peace to partnership?* Routledge, New York, p 115

¹²² *Ibid.*, p120

are perfectly “consistent with and widely discussed in the structural realist literature.”¹²³ States weigh options and make decisions based primarily on an assessment of the external environment and the strategic situation. Waltz did not exclude the possibility that states might bandwagon from time to time. Although he states that it is a rare phenomenon, Waltz concludes that states will use various strategies to ensure their survival and do whatever it takes to survive.¹²⁴

The post-9/11 international climate is a perfect example of the so called “zero sum game” wherein each party is only concerned with its own relative power. Thus, the actions of the United States and Russia will only be regarded as being enacted to seek potential gains and as concentrating on how each potential gain by their “adversary” represents a relative loss for themselves. The pragmatic relationship between Russia and the United States may be guided by strategic considerations on both sides, particularly in Russia’s case given that it could not afford to. Russia could use the 9/11 incident to its advantage and gain greater recognition in the international arena. According to Dov Lynch, professor and lecturer on Russian politics, President Putin’s main policy towards the West was described as “not to become a member of the Euro-Atlantic community or to merge Russia with it, but simply to align Russia with the most powerful group of states in international affairs.”¹²⁵ If Lynch is correct, this is a case of pragmatism, in which Putin is bandwagoning with the great powers to gain influence. Putin must adapt his foreign policy according to time and alter it to best serve Russia’s ambition to maintain and regain power in the international system. As stated by Sergei Ivanov, defense

¹²³Schweller, Randell L “Domestic Structures and Preventive War: Are Democracies More Pacific?” *World Politics*, Vol.44, January 1992, p 267

¹²⁴Waltz, “Structural Realism after the Cold War”, op.cit p 38

¹²⁵Smith, op.cit, p113

minister of the Russian Federation from 2001-2007, “for contemporary Russia it is important, perhaps even more than previously, to remain in the centre of world politics.”¹²⁶ Russia wants to avoid being isolated and wants to ensure a role for itself in the international security of Asia, and most especially, Europe.

An increased American presence in Central Asia after 9/11 did not undermine the influence of Russia in the region at least, not in all regions. Indeed, the Alliance of North, formed and controlled by Tadjiks, holds the key ministries and constitutes the dominant part of the Afghan government, which raises the international profile of Tajikistan, one of Russia’s main allies in the area. This increase in the geopolitical importance of Tajikistan represents a reversal for Uzbekistan, which asserts greater independence from Moscow and does not hide its will to increase its sphere of influence in Central Asia. However, it is also important to note that, in spite of the fact that the American military presence in its country consolidated Karimov in its will of independence vis-a-vis Russia, Uzbekistan announced all the same in 2002 its withdrawal of the GUUAM.¹²⁷ So Russia still remains an important actor even after the events of 9/11. But Russia could still have more influence, and that influence will not come with NATO expansion

If we accept the neorealist reasoning that Russia is only “bandwagoning” with the US to achieve its own goal and interests, then we can also understand Russia’s efforts with respect to NATO and the Partnership for Peace program (PfP), the 1997 Founding Act, and the Permanent Joint Council (PJP). The ultimate goals for such rapprochement

¹²⁶ Dov Lynch, “Russia Faces Europe”, *Chaillot papers no.60*, Institute for Security Studies, European Union May 2003, p 12.

¹²⁷ This organization was founded by its member states (initially composed of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) on October 10th 1997 to help reinforce the independence and sovereignty of past Soviet republic states. Uzbekistan joined in 1999.

is to ultimately realize a greater voice for Russia in the international community, to have a say in security operations, and ideally, to hold a veto within NATO. As analyst Vladislav Surkov notes, Russia describes itself as “a most influential European nation.”¹²⁸ Thus, seen through the neorealist lens, Russia’s behavior is perfectly understandable and logical.

Finally, neorealists are hesitant to estimate the extent to which nations concern themselves with their long-term or short-term geopolitical position relative to other countries. Do nations favor the promotion of short-term gains at the expense of their long-term interests, or will they accept short-term sacrifices in pursuit of their long-term interests? In this case, to explain Russia's actions, Waltz would to argue that simply to balance power in the short-run, Russia should be willing to arm its short-term allies Iran, China, and India (since, to neorealists, all alliances are temporary) and risk the long-term consequences. This is especially true given neorealists track record of arguing the opposite position: that short-term gains should not be pursued at the expense of long-term goals. For example, noted structural realist John Mearsheimer recently fretted that the United States is eroding its long-term relationship with China by "cozying up" to that country while ignoring China's gradual rise relative to itself and other major powers. Mearsheimer argues that the United States should sacrifice dividends—such as economic benefits and deterrence of war in the short-term—that continuing "engagement" with China makes possible in order to shore up its moral position over the long-term. If it does

¹²⁸ Quoted in: Okara Andrei, “Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project?” *Russia in Global Affairs*, Foreign Policy Research Foundation, Vol. 5, No.3, July-September 2007, p15

not make sense to Mearsheimer that the United States should sacrifice its long-term position for short-term gains, it should make even less sense to him that Russia seek much more ephemeral short-term gains from arms trading at the expense of not merely "engaging" but *arming* a state that many fear could become a regional, if not global threat.¹²⁹

Mearsheimer makes a convincing case, especially if we look at how Russia has aided China in developing blue water naval capabilities. Russia is putting itself in a very precarious situation as its strategic interests in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea could potentially be jeopardized. In fact, conflict between Russia and China is also possible in Central Asia, given the clear differences in the two countries' economic and political interests in that particular region. Aside from control of the region's energy supplies, water has become a potential source of conflict, especially given China's shortages. On the other hand, for India, this can be interpreted as China's intrusive naval presence in South Asian waters.¹³⁰ And since relations between India and China are rather shaky, Russia should be careful. How, therefore, can India trust its relationship with Russia when its supposed ally is helping its enemy?

India's nuclear armaments are also cause for concern. As stated by Vladimir Baranovsky, "India's ascendance to the status of a declared nuclear weapon power has produced mixed feelings in Russia[...] However, the very fact of India going 'nuclear may be seen by Russia as devaluing its own nuclear arsenal which is almost the sole remaining symbol of its great power status and an important bargaining chip in the

¹²⁹ Toft Peter, "Jonh j. Mearsheimer :An Offensive Realist Between Geopolitics and Power", institute for Statskundskab, 2003, p27

¹³⁰ Subhash, op.cit, p10

international arena."¹³¹ Thus the crucial question remains: why provide assistance to Iran in the form of technology transfers, or help India and China, which are geographically close to Russia, when these states constitute serious threats to Russia's National Security?

Waltz might retort that with Russia's shaky economy, sales to China, India, and Iran might very well aid its military by improving its weapons technology. From this perspective, arms sales would indeed add to its long-term security, especially if Russia invests in producing and improving its weapon's technology. The extent to which short-term economic motivations have prevailed over security concerns is evident in this conclusion, drawn by a respected study of the issue: "Chinese purchases have proved so important to the cash-starved defense industry, especially in the Russian Far East, that officials representing these sectors have managed to override concerns within the military regarding the possibility of a long-term threat from a resurgent China."¹³² The same can be said of India and Iran. Furthermore, helping potential nuclear powers or simply aiding fellow nuclear powers does not necessarily endanger Russia. The real question then would be what does Iran, China, or India has to gain from "nuking" Russia? Russia's vast territory can be appealing, especially for China's growing population. Russia's abundance of natural resources can also be an incentive. However, the cost of invading Russia is still very high. For India and China, Russia is their source of natural resources (most notably, oil and gas, but also timber, iron, and gold, to only name a few) and this is obtained within the framework of economic trade rather than invasion. In addition, any

¹³¹ Baranovsky Vladimir, "Russia and Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for National and International Security" in Gennady Chufrin, Ed, 'Russia and Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda', SIPRI, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999 p 26.

¹³² Donaldson Robert H & John A. Donaldson, "The Arms Trade in Russian Chinese Relations: Identity, Domestic Politics, and Geopolitical Positioning", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 47, Issue 4, December 2003., p 714

hostile action from their part would run the risk of destroying future oil lines, which are valuable assets. This would also risk a potential war, not even to mention the health hazards that such a blast might pose to Russia's neighbors and beyond. Thus, one can argue that Russia's security is not in peril by trading such sensitive materials. Although a neorealist interpretation of short-term gains make sense, this could potentially become a very dangerous game for Russia if its calculations are incorrect. Nonetheless, as neorealists would point out, a state will do what it must to survive. Overall, it is clear that neorealism offers both an interesting analysis of Russia's actions with regards to NATO and other valuable insights.

4.2 Russia's behavior: the constructivist perspective

How can constructivism offer an alternative understanding of Russian behavior in balancing American power? More specifically, how can it explain Russia's alliances? Stephen Walt suggests that we consider a "balance of threat" analysis. The balance of threat concept demonstrates how close the starting points of neorealist and constructivist theories are. Indeed, as Petr Kratochvil notes, the questions raised by Walt are essentially identical to those posed by constructivist scholars. Kratochvil points out that the similarity is so salient that several authors have confused with the "constructivist features" of the work of Walt.¹³³ The difference is that constructivists focus on the role that identity plays in shaping the particular character of situation, described through a balance of threat analysis. There is a danger that the enemy might destabilize the equilibrium of one's own identity. Thus, as Kratochvil explains, balancing a threat is only

¹³³ Kratochvil Petr, "The Balance of Threat Reconsidered: Construction of Threat in Contemporary Russia". Institute of International Relations, Prague, Paper at the Fifth Pan-European Conference Netherlands, (Sept 2004), p 4

a natural reaction of the self, whose primary end is self-preservation.¹³⁴ To understand where this threat comes from, one would need to look at past experiences with similar threats. We needn't go very far to understand how Russia came to perceive NATO or the US as threatening to its self image. The perceived importance is clearly dependent on the position of the specific identity roles that the US and Russia played during the Cold War. Russia is still maintaining that dynamic, therefore, any step which casts doubts on Russia's self-image as a great power will be interpreted as an attack on Russia's national character. Thus, it must be expected that the expansion of NATO, despite Russian objections, would be viewed as a denial of Russia's status in the international arena by the U.S. If the U.S. were not denying that Russia retained considerable power, the US would not even dare or consider such expansion.

Neorealist concepts of balancing and bandwagoning, associated with the balance of power theories, can now be understood in constructivist terms. This means that one will not consider the ratio of military power, or other material capabilities, as the starting point of analysis, as advocated by the neorealists, but focus instead on the subjective and intersubjective perceptions of the self and the other.¹³⁵ Furthermore, constructivists will be inclined not to deal with the actors as utility maximizers, but rather to presume that they will act according to the "logic of appropriateness". Thus, as Kratchvil reiterates, the self does not defend its role identity *vis a vis* the other because of the calculated profitability of such behavior, such as economic or military gains, but because it considers the role it enacts to be a part of the self.¹³⁶ This brings a new interpretation to Russia's conduct *vis a vis* NATO, in contrast to neorealism. In this case, balancing would

¹³⁴ Ibid, p4-5

¹³⁵ Ibid, p12

¹³⁶ Ibid

be equivalent to fighting in socio-psychological terms because it translates into the refusal to accept the role relationship offered by the *other*.¹³⁷ Russia will thus balance the U.S.'s destabilizing attack on the self by trying to assert its own role identity. To prevent a change in a favorable role identity, the self may even adopt a more aggressive position and may even physically attack the other to persuade it to acknowledge the role identity preferred by the self.¹³⁸ Russia's alliances might well be interpreted in this light. Iran, China, and India would, according to constructivism, behave in the same manner as Russia, allying to defend its identity.

Furthermore, constructivist theory is able to explain Russia's changing foreign policy since the Cold War. Unlike neorealists, who keep trying to find loophole to explain the changing behavior of its significant *other*, such as bandwagoning, constructivists concentrate on elite's behavior and how it shapes the opinion of the population and how it affects Russia's foreign policy. The five schools of thoughts, mentioned in chapter I, provide a perfect example. An identity can change depending on the political environment and depending on who is in power. Neorealists can always argue that among these five school of thoughts, there is still a predominant view; a fear of the United States and NATO. The *Statists*, *National Communists*, and *Expansionists* all believe that Russia remains a great power and should be careful with its dealings with the West, NATO, and make sure that Russia maintains a balance of power. To a certain extent, one might argue that although the *National Democrats* concentrate more on the importance of cultural factors and believes in improving existing institutions such as NATO, the *National Democrats* are still not advocating for integration with NATO. On

¹³⁷ Ibid, p 12-13

¹³⁸ Ibid, p 13

the contrary, they remain still skeptical about US intentions and believe that Russia should “exercise caution and creativity in the process of adjustment, by learning from the world and by bringing in its own cultural experience.”¹³⁹ However, as mentioned previously, neorealists would need to find an explanation for the last school of thought: *Westernizers*. The *Westernizers* school of thought is shared among politicians such as Yegor Gaidar, Andrei Kozyrev, Mikhail Kasyanov, Irina Khakamada, Anatoly Chubais, to name a few. They believe that the West is basically Russia’s only hope of salvation, and that it needs to incorporate itself in Western institutions, including NATO, to overcome its social and political backwardness. Until neorealists can come up with an answer, the constructivist interpretation seems to be the best analysis in explaining elite’s attitudes.

4.3 *The role of internal variables*

Typically neorealists do not include internal variables in their analysis, but it would be unfair to completely dismiss Putin’s role and how the Russian population views him. That is where the utility of constructivism comes in handy. How can we dismiss the role of Putin from our equation? Would another leader make the same decisions as Putin? If the population would not support its leader, even if the system is not a democratic regime and regardless of electoral fraud, can the president act in the same matter? In this short section, we will compare the current structure of the international system with that which was in place during Yeltsin’s presidency. Although both presidents faced different economic situations, the structure of the international system was not that different, in fact, it was still at the hands of the United States. It is argued by many scholars that Yeltsin had a rather different approach than Putin. However, we will argue that Yeltsin’s decisions bore similar results to what Putin has done. We will demonstrate that even

¹³⁹ Tsygankov, op.cit p 54

though Putin and Yeltsin are two different presidents, both of their actions can be interpreted in both neorealist and constructivist terms, and that would thus prove that the use of internal variables in this particular case study is not necessary irrelevant as the neorealists would argue. Both leaders viewed the predicament of the international system as the same, and thus both leaders tried their best to counteract the hegemony of the United States and ultimately its control on NATO, but maybe for two different reasons.

The structure of the international system under Yeltsin is similar to that of today. NATO, under Yeltsin was expanding, as it was under Putin, and the United States is still the hegemonic power that holds the reigns of NATO. This was seen under Yeltsin's objections to NATO airstrikes in Yugoslavia, a sovereign state, by ignoring the role of the United Nations. And it is also seen today when America acts on its own premises in Iraq. During these years, Boris Yeltsin and, like Putin who followed in his footsteps, was against NATO expansion and still wanted a say in the organization. Yeltsin hoped that eventually Russia might become ready to join "the political part of NATO," and "then at least we shall not be kept apart from the issues which all European countries will be discussing if they all suddenly become members of NATO."¹⁴⁰ President Yeltsin spoke only for eventual inclusion on the political side and structures of the alliance, not the military structures. Neorealists might apply the same logic that was used during the tragedy of 9/11 in analyzing Putin's reaction. Yeltsin is bandwagoning with the great powers to gain greater influence. Yeltsin needed to adapt his foreign policy according to time and alter it to best serve Russia's ambition to maintain and eventually regain power in the international system.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Straus L. Ira, "Introduction: The Evolution of the Discussion on NATO-Russia Relations", Russia and NATO, The George Washington University, February 1997, p4. Available at <http://www.fas.org/man/nato/ceern/introduction.htm>

Although Yeltsin's action can be construed in neorealist terms, one can argue that the constructivists are correct; in asserting that a leader's action might also be guided by the fear of losing its own *self* or *identity*. One can argue that Yeltsin was trying to get the best bargain possible from NATO by including Russia in the organization. One can also argue that although Yeltsin was opposed to NATO as a military organization, the president was slowly trying to redefine a "new" Russian identity. Russia was mourning the loss of its past glory and prestige in the international arena, and was now struggling both domestically and internationally to define itself again.

Yeltsin also gave great importance to its relationship with China and both countries found common cause in their opposition of US hegemony. Both countries had a good partnership (constructive partnership 1994 and the strategic partnership in 1996) was continued by Putin. The same can be said of both Iran and India. In fact, it was under Yeltsin's presidency where a triangular strategic relationship involving Russia, China and India was enunciated. From a strategic stand point, Russia was not strong enough to challenge the power of the United States. Especially after Yeltsin's failure to get any real say in NATO and after the way the United States behaved towards Russia, China and India were the only countries that are large enough players to be potential partners in a strategic balancing act against the rising hegemon. This "troika" could thus potentially outweigh US hegemony. By "also going East" and building counterbalancing alliances with China, India, Iraq, Iran and Belarus, Yeltsin's decisions could be viewed in neorealist terms: limit the balance of power and thereby outweigh American influence and increase Russia's influence in other spheres; such as Russia's post-Soviet territory,

and Russia's influence in Eurasia and thought to gain significant investments from the United States.¹⁴¹

The constructivists would argue that Yeltsin's search for "alliances" was guided by Yeltsin's rejection from NATO and the fear of exclusion in international affairs. The fear of losing its own *identity* and purpose in the world pushed Yeltsin in another direction.

4.4 *The importance of discourse*

The president must be able to share his views with its population, and more importantly, the population must acknowledge this identity. To this end, Russian leaders spend a fair amount of time reassuring Russians about the greatness and importance of their country. For instance, the government's official foreign policy strategy, announced June 28, 2000, refers to the Russian Federation as "a great power ... one of the most influential centers of the modern world ... [with a] responsibility for maintaining security in the world both on a global and on a regional level."¹⁴² Such preening is hard to imagine from, say, Germany or Japan, both countries that learned the hard way of the dangers of relying on military might; of course, at roughly the same time, at their hands, Russia learned the danger of not possessing military might.¹⁴³

Putin's popularity in Russia, in part a result of presenting a tough image, is such that supportive groups have called for a referendum to be held to allow him to run for the presidency again.¹⁴⁴ As Putin himself once expressed, "Russia will either be a great

¹⁴¹ David Charles Philippe, Jacques Levesque, Ed, The Future of NATO: Enlargement, Russia, and European Security, Centre For Security and Foreign Policy Study, London:2000,p 174

¹⁴² Legvold Robert, "Russia's Unformed Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No.5, September/October 2001, p 1

¹⁴³ With reference to the aftermath of WWII

¹⁴⁴ The insider's guide to Vladimir Putin (October 26, 2006), online: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/europe/10/25/insider.putin/index.html>

power or she will not exist at all.”¹⁴⁵ Putin’s inaugural speech in 2000 triggered another round of debate over Russian identity. In his speech in the Kremlin, President Vladimir Putin said he was certain that Russia faced a “shining future” as “a great and flourishing power,” and said, “We can always be proud of our country, with its great history, its contribution to world culture, and its achievements in science and education.”¹⁴⁶ Putin’s speech focused on Russia’s international standing, with specific mention of education, science, and culture, and general references to Russia’s history. Putin discussed the Post-Soviet transition of the 1990s as a difficult test, from which Russia had emerged as a new, modern country. “Here, in the Kremlin, is the nexus of our national memory. Here, in the Kremlin, the history of our land has been decided over the centuries. And we have no right to be “Ivans denying our roots.” [...] We must know our history, know it as it is. We must learn its lessons and always remember those who built the State of Russia, who upheld its dignity and who made it great, strong and powerful. We will carry on this memory, and we will preserve this continuity. And we will pass on to our successors everything the best of our history, everything the best.”¹⁴⁷ Clearly, Putin offers Russians a vision of the motherland as a great power and a source of pride.

Putin’s vision of Russia can easily be construed in constructivist terms; thus by focusing on the importance of identity, the role of socialization in society, and the role of elites and how they each define the state. State officials are indispensable when it comes to examining state security discourse: “The representations created by state officials

¹⁴⁵ “A Gladiator’s Victory”, *Segodnya*, March 27th 2001, p1,4, reproduced in *What the Papers Say*, March 27th 2001

¹⁴⁶ Rutland Peter, “Russian National Identity: Still a Work in Progress”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 2, Issue 117, June 16th 2005, p1

¹⁴⁷ Press release of the Press Service of the President of the Russian Federation, Kremlin, Moscow, (May 7th, 2000) online at <http://www.russianembassy.org/RUSSIA/Speech-president.htm>

make clear both to those officials themselves and to others who and what 'we' are, who and what 'our enemies' are, in what ways 'we' are threatened by 'them', and how 'we' might best deal with those 'threats'."¹⁴⁸ Stephen Walt, while comparing different IR theories, also found that "[i]nstead of taking the state for granted and assuming that it simply seeks to survive such is the claim of neorealists, constructivists regard the interests and identities of states as a highly malleable product of specific historical processes... [and] pay close attention to the prevailing discourse(s) in society because discourse reflects and shapes beliefs and interests, and establishes accepted norms of behavior."¹⁴⁹

Although the constructivists are making a good claim, Putin's speeches on the great status of Russia can also be seen as an index of power. As Wohlforth reiterates, a state's status can be used as a metric for power. Thus, how a state views itself compared to others in the international system is consistent with neorealist theory.¹⁵⁰ In the words of Wohlforth neorealists "would portray status-seeking as endogenous to insecurity."¹⁵¹ From this perspective, we can understand Russia's behavior. NATO under the "supervision" of the US is creeping in Russia's backyard. Russia is threatened and thus will look for reassurance of its rank in the system. The United States is less worried about its status and security because it is the current hegemon. It is thus only natural that Russia feels more threatened faced with all these security challenges.

¹⁴⁸ Weldes Jutta, op.cit, p. 283.

¹⁴⁹ Walt M. Stephen, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories", *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1998, pp. 40

¹⁵⁰ Wohlforth, op.cit, p 234

¹⁵¹ Ibid

4.5 *Role of population*

For Russian leaders to implement the vision informing such an identity, the population must support it. Although Russia cannot be considered a democratic state, it would be wrong to dismiss the correlation between the political capital of the leadership and their popularity with the population, even if elections are fixed or otherwise determined in advance. Democratic states share an important identity relationship with the voters. Voters often identify with the values and ideas espoused by particular candidates, and although there may not be an exact correlation, the winners of electoral poll are often those with whom the majority of the population most closely identifies. In the Russian case, President Putin was the candidate best able to communicate a new identity to the populace and to capture their support. Whether or not Putin's electoral victories were fraudulent, his popularity among Russian voters is undeniable. Polls conducted in Russia in 2000 show that 78% of Russians insisted that Russia must be a great power.¹⁵² This desire manifests itself in a variety of ways. Asked in 1999 to list the ten greatest men of all times, respondents named nine Russians— the only foreigner was Napoleon, presumably because he was defeated on Russian soil. The most commonly listed five people were Peter the Great, Lenin, Pushkin, Stalin, and the astronaut Iurii Gagarin. Apart from Pushkin, these historical figures have in common their success in making Russia a power to be reckoned with on land and in space.¹⁵³ When asked why they admired Stalin, people answered, "He raised the country."¹⁵⁴ Clearly, the Russian population is deeply invested in believing their country is a great power.

¹⁵²Pipes Richard, "Flight From Freedom: What Russians Think and Want", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004, p. 2.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.3

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Much of the nostalgia for the Soviet Union derives from the belief that its might made Russia a great power on the world stage—a status it has since lost. When asked, in 1999, how they would like their country to be perceived by other nations, 48% of Russians said "mighty, unbeatable, indestructible, a great world power." Only 22% wanted Russia to be seen as "affluent and thriving", 6% as "educated, civilized, and cultured", 3% as "peace-loving and friendly", and a mere 1% as "law-abiding and democratic."¹⁵⁵ Although the Russian population shares the views of its president regarding the country's status, do they also acknowledge the threat perceived by its president regarding NATO? A 1997 Russian poll asked reasonably well-informed respondents how they felt about NATO's expansion: 38% responded that the nature of NATO was aggressive. In 2001, the same question was asked and 50% replied it was of an aggressive nature compared to 58% in 2004.¹⁵⁶ It seems that Russian attitudes towards NATO have not improved over the years,

Russian popular opinion remained fairly constant under Putin. In 2003, Russians still ascribed great importance to its identity, with 46% saying that they would like their country to be considered as a great powerful country and 86% responding that how Russia was perceived by the rest of the world was important.¹⁵⁷ Looking at the 2004 presidential elections, Leon Aron argues that Putin won because he was able to "embody and symbolize to millions of Russians a still very precarious balance between freedom and order, and between the old and the new."¹⁵⁸ Putin was building on the idea of a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ Braun, op.cit, p33

¹⁵⁷ Russia's image in the world: Public Opinion Foundation Database, November 13th 2003, online : http://td.english.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dominant2003/519_94/1253_113/4188_119/ed034512

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in: Godzimirski M. Jakub, "Putin and Post-Soviet Identity: Building Blocks and Buzz Words", *Problems of Post Communism*, September/October 2008, Vol.55, No 5, p 23

strong state that plays an important role in the international system. In 2006, 41% of Russians considered NATO to be an organization that mainly supports and promotes U.S interests.¹⁵⁹ Thus, instead of considering a neorealist approach that ignores the importance of domestic variables in explaining how a state should behave, one might look at the constructivist approach and argue that Putin's popularity with voters is due to his ability to articulate what the population wants and to articulate and implement policies that appeal to the public.

One can conclude from these surveys that Russians feel their country should still play the role of a great power, even if its economic and military capabilities are not on a par with those of the United States. We can note a correlation between the relationship of Russia's population and the influence by its leader and how its leader perceives the country's identity.

Now that we have drawn out some of the ways that Russia views itself, one also needs to examine more closely how NATO, since its birth in 1949, became the "significant other" and how it is perceived as a threat to Russian identity. According to constructivists, states have no inherent international roles. Instead, they acquire understandings about their roles and their positions through "collective meanings".¹⁶⁰ These are constructed among states in relation to one another. By extension, a state's role resides in a particular context. In other words, how states understand themselves depends on the way they fit into a broader set of interactions with other states.¹⁶¹ If states interact

¹⁵⁹ Russians About NATO:60 Years Serving The Interests Of The U.S In Europe: Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Vciom Press Release #1161, online: <http://wciom.com/news/press-releases/press-release/single/11670.html>

¹⁶⁰ Wendt Alexander, "Anarchy is what states make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, p397

¹⁶¹ Hopf, op.cit, p175

in consistent patterns, their relationships form the basis of the system's norms and expectations. These norms and expectations in turn affect the way states define their roles. State roles are thus not autonomous.

If the constructivist approach is correct and identities are flexible, how can we explain Russia's view of itself as a great power? Neorealists argue that Russia's ambitions will be similar to those during the Cold War, save for its current military and economic predicament, but those ambitions may again firm up. If Russia retains the desire to be a great power, how can constructivists argue that Russia's identity has changed? Russia is currently engaging with Iran and China, and challenging the United States for the attention of India, so it seems that Russia has not changed. Constructivists will answer that appearances can be deceiving and misleading. Russia still aspires to be a great power, but the definition of a great power has change significantly since the Cold War. During the Cold War, Russia was the United States' the only competitor for global hegemony, and its ultimate purpose was to win the Cold War battle for supremacy. Although Russia still displays animosity towards the U.S, Russia is now trying to achieve the status quo and be part of a multilateral system – not a system dominated by a single country... especially the U.S. One might question Russia's current search for "alliances", but that search reflects its recent change in role and identity. Russia still aims to be a great force in the international system, but in terms that differ from its Cold War ambitions. Russia is not trying to become an alternative to the West, but to be an influential part of it. This does not mean that Russia wants to take part in all Western institutions, but it does want to have a significant say in important decisions.

From a constructivist perspective, Russia wants NATO – which it sees as a toll and extension of the United States – to cease its expansion and infringement on Russia's sphere of influence and identity. Russia's identity is still contested and a great part of its identity is still intertwined with the “old empire” mentality. Thus, NATO expansion menaces its still fragile identity. David Campbell describes it best, writing that security issues have become a way to mark “the ethical boundaries of identity rather than the territorial borders of the state.”¹⁶² So, NATO's advancement is not just a question of encroaching on its sphere of influence, but rather of protecting a part of its identity.

4.6 *Russian National Security Concept and the Foreign Policy Concept*

To understand a state one needs to examine its connections with other states and the common agreements that result to form an international community. Realists assume that the anarchic character of the international system is an objective reality that profoundly shapes the behavior of states. In order to better understand Russia's relationship with the US and NATO it is useful to look at major Russian foreign policy documents, such as the *National Security Concept* or the *Foreign Policy Concept*, which reveals the official and most influential discourses.¹⁶³ These texts are important because they shed light on principle state opinions on important questions related to the state's main objectives and reflect the ideas and policies of top executives and governmental officials. By looking at these texts, we can identify who is Russia's foe and the importance Russia derives from it.

It is clear from the documents, notably Russia's *National Security Concept* of 1997 and 2000, that NATO is represented negatively: “The NATO expansion to the east

¹⁶² Campbell David, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edition, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p156

¹⁶³ Kassianova, op.cit, p821-839

and its becoming a dominant military and political force in Europe”¹⁶⁴ This view is also shared in Russia’s *Foreign Policy Concept* of 2000, wherein Russia complains that the unipolar trend of the United States contains an “insufficient efficiency of multilateral mechanisms for maintaining peace”, and complains as well of the growing inability of Russia to check this trend.¹⁶⁵

More importantly, both documents shed light on how Russia views itself. The state discourse incorporates the importance of Russia’s great historical heritage “many centuries of history” and “rich cultural traditions.”¹⁶⁶ These discourses reinforce the views of Russia’s role as a historically great power. Further references to this “status” are made every time Russia speaks of its important role in the United Nations or its membership in the G8. One can only conclude that the evolution of Russia’s current state identity discourse has been shaped by its recent interactions with the United States.

The official foreign policy concept approved by President Yeltsin in April 1993 revealed the abandonment of the "liberal Westernizing" impulse. From the list of "vitally important interests" listed in the document, only the third pertained to the world outside the borders of the former USSR. In that section of the document, there is mention of the countries of Western Europe where it exclaimed that "integration without Russia could do serious damage to the Russian Federation's vital interests"¹⁶⁷. Interestingly this alludes to NATO without actually mentioning it. The document also refers to its relations with the United States. While Russia did not try to alienate its relationship with the US, but the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p 832.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p 837

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p836

¹⁶⁷ Donaldson Robert H, “Boris Yeltsin’s Foreign Policy Legacy”, *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law*, paper delivered at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, vol. 7, no. 2 (Spring 2000), p. 285-326.

document did mention common interests and a certain will to develop cordial relationship, but also stressed that U.S.-Russian interests did not always concur, which criticized about the "discriminatory restrictions in the commercial, economic, scientific and technological spheres."¹⁶⁸ The combination of these remarks and that of "NATO" are clearly stipulated in between the lines of the document. Boris Yeltsin was clearly juggling Russian interests with a careful balancing strategy with the United States and NATO.

The 1997 National Security Concept, cautioned against "attempts to create a structure of international relations based on unilateral solutions of the key problems of world politics".¹⁶⁹ The document did not mention the United States, but it is clear from this formulation, that it targeted the US.

What we observe in these three documents is the gradual change in Russian identity in its foreign policy, and in its place in the international system. After the Cold War, Russia tried to reach out to the West and incorporate itself on levels political, cultural, and within the security community. The 1993 Foreign Policy Concept is an attempt by Russia to include itself in the "Western community". Although Yeltsin's words might seem somewhat harsh, they denote the desire of Russia to be integrated and counted among the Western/European communities. The change in tone can be viewed in *National Security Concept* of 1997 and 2000, where both documents express a different type of role and identity of Russia. It is clear that Western communities did not welcome Russia, and that Russia would continue to be viewed as separate. In response, Russian reverted again to its traditional self-conception as a great power. It is important to

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Light Margot, "In Search of an Identity: Russian Foreign Policy and the End of Ideology", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Frankcass & Company Ltd 2003, p 49

reiterate that the great power concept, for constructivists, is all about the psychological profile of the state. No importance is placed on material and economical resources. Thus, Russia's self-perception as a great power need not be considered in materialist terms. Russia did not have the proper resources to compete with NATO and the United States after the Cold War, but that has not stopped Russia from considering itself to be such, nor to demand that be so recognized.

Regardless of Russia's change in tone in its foreign policy from 1993 to 2000, one can still perceive the slow transition of its identity. Although Russia still wants to be considered a great power, it also wants to be part of the Western community, something that was not even considered after the Cold War. Putin's *Foreign Policy Concept* of 2000 reflects a change of attitude since Russia was "unable to reconcile itself to Washington's global leadership, Moscow promoted the vision of multipolarity"¹⁷⁰ which is stated in the document. Thus Russia's search for alliances, as mentioned in Chapter Three, can be viewed not only in neorealist terms, but also in constructivist terms. Russia still wants its place in the world and wants to play an important role. Since it cannot sustain its prior greatness as a superpower during the Cold War, Russia believes it can still be a great power (not that of a superpower) but in a multipolar world.

A case in point would be Russia's behavior after the events of 9/11. This represented a great opportunity for Russia to demonstrate to the international community and to the United States that it could be accepted as an important Western ally in the fight against terrorism. More importantly, as Dmitri Trenin argues, Russia did not see this as

¹⁷⁰ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion, and Mythmaking*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, p12.

joining the American war on terror, but rather: “America was joining, belatedly, with Russia in the fight against a common enemy.”¹⁷¹ That common enemy was terrorism. The event of 911, at least from the early outset, encouraged Russia to feel that it was still a great power and yet able to work in tandem with the West. This is an example of Russia’s changing identities.

How can one interpret Yeltsin’s behavior from a neorealist perspective? Again, we don’t need to look at the man that rules the country, but to look at its environment. As mentioned previously, the structure of the international system under Yeltsin was practically identical to that of the structure under Putin with one significant difference: the state of the Russian economy. As mentioned previously, Waltz suggests that in the presence of nuclear weapons, any challenge to a leading state, and any attempt to reverse a state’s decline, has to rely on economic means.¹⁷² After the fall of the U.S.S.R, Russia was needed capital investment in order to reconstruct its falling economy. The “shock therapy” which began in 1992, led to severe poverty for millions of Russians. Not only did production decline, but promised American assistance was practically non-existent according to Russian authorities. This fact was also accepted by the population, has noted in the newspaper *Pravda* “we have been fed cock-and-bull stories about the inevitable ‘rain of gold’ from the West to back up Yeltsin’s reforms.”¹⁷³ Russian polls conducted in 1993 and 1995, reveal the Russian population’s perception that the United States was

¹⁷¹Trenin Dmitri: “Russia’s foreign and security policy under Putin”, Carnegie Moscow Center:Carnegie Indowment For International Peace, 2005, p6. Available: <http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/media/72804.htm>

¹⁷²Waltz Kenneth, op.cit, “The Emerging Structure of International Politics, p 52

¹⁷³Quoted in, Donaldson Robert H, “Boris Yeltsin’s Foreign Policy Legacy”, *Tulsa Journal of Comparative and International Law*, paper delivered at the 2000 Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, vol. 7, no. 2 (Spring 2000), p.285-326.

purposely weakening Russia.¹⁷⁴ Thus, if we account for the economic situation of Russia in our analysis, it is clear that Yeltsin must have acted according to the country's best interests. In a hegemonic world guided by the United States, Russia needed to look at its options. Its economy was in disarray and the country's influence via the US (and NATO) was declining, so there were few options available to the president, but to try and stimulate the economy eventually build its military might, and thereby improve its influence in the international arena. According to these documents, we cannot say that Yeltsin gave his "country" to the US, but rather tried to balance its strategic interests as best as he could. It would have been politically, economically, and militarily suicidal to declare the US as an enemy. Russia would then lose its diminishing credibility and influence, and would become isolated losing economic investments, especially from the United States, even if its contribution was only minimal. Confronted with this dilemma, Yeltsin had no choice but to collaborate with the United States.

4.7 Critiques of the constructivist explanation

Of course, like neorealism, the constructivist approach is not immune to criticism. In fact, the first critique would come from a neorealist who would complain that the existing deployments of arms may make it too dangerous for a state to take the first step in initiating cooperation. This of course, all depends on the motives of states. If the motives are defensive, as at the end of the Cold War, these may be viewed as peaceful intentions. But if the motive of the other state is perceived to be greed, it may elicit the opposite reaction. Instead of cooperating, one might instead become more aggressive,

¹⁷⁴Hough Jeffrey F., Democratization and Revolution in the USSR, 1985-1991 (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1997), p. 519

especially if the state's motives are unclear. If motives are unclear, then cooperation might be a risky move. NATO's expansion into Russia's sphere of influence can be viewed in this light. Thus, this conclusion does not support the constructivist view, which holds that states can change intersubjective understandings by changing their behavior.

Material factors, such as weapons, may indeed have inherent significance. In the face of mistrust, a neorealist would argue, existing weapons constrain cooperative gestures either because they support a stable balance that may be dangerous to disturb or because they represent the capability of a newly confident adversary to convert from passive defense into active offence. By focusing on understanding instead of force, constructivists may be too optimistic about the possibilities of changing behavior. Such change, a neorealist would caution, depends also on motives and material constraints.

The second criticism is the problem of the definition of the terms. What is meant by 'intersubjective understanding' and how can it be measured? It requires both empirical observation (what states do) and interpretation (what states seems to construct after observing each other's actions). The problem is that the two are not interchangeable. Empirical and subjective analyses produce different kinds of results. They cannot be merged. What about the notion of identity and the other? The difficulty of defining the words themselves is a challenge and to understand the interaction between the self and the other can, at times, be confusing, especially since there seems to be as many identities as there are others. This is explained well by Hogg and White, where they note that the

self is multiple, and that the self is perceived as “differentiated into multiple identities.”¹⁷⁵

For example, different schools of thought within Russia (example: *statist* vs *westernizing*) have different visions of the world that lead to differently articulated identities. But this is further complicated by the fact that you also have a Russian identity that is ascribed to by the state, and an ethnic identity which is claimed by a population that does not necessarily reside in Russia proper. Not all Russian-speaking minorities in the post-Soviet republics consider themselves Russians (for example a Russian might prefer his Ukrainian identity). The multiplicity of identity makes it a whole lot harder to dissect. Furthermore, even in Russia’s main discourses and policy concepts, the United States are not inextricably intertwined with NATO. At times, the US may be viewed as the *West* (which would exclude NATO) and at others the *West* could simply refer to the EU.¹⁷⁶ Thus, different conceptions of identity and other have a strong impact on our understanding of the behavior of the self.

Another criticism challenges the constructivist notion that state identities and interests are flexible and situational, and that selfishness can be transcended through convergent understandings. Jonathan Mercer, in his article *Anarchy and Identity*, gives an interesting criticism of the logic of constructivism. Self-interest, according to his criticism, is not an arbitrary neorealist assumption but rather is firmly fixed in human behavior in groups. This is still more the case for people in groups, for while individuals may set aside self-interest in the service of some other ends, the dynamics of group identity and that bonds between them are such that non-self-interested behavior is less

¹⁷⁵ Hogg Michael & al. “A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory”, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 1995, p 255

¹⁷⁶ Kassianova, op. cit, p 821-839.

likely, not more, as the consent of all is required to act against the interests of the group.¹⁷⁷

What's more, as people become members of a group, they increasingly identify with it, they develop loyalties to one another, and come to perceive common interests and distinguish their group from others. These views, drawn from social psychology and supported by behavioral economics, squarely challenge the constructivist's notion that interests can be transformed, paving the way from conflict to cooperation. Group solidarity is a powerful force. It is the reason "why strong in-groups are the most likely to have strong out groups; why ethnocentrism is ubiquitous; and why groups egoism, self-help and relative gains are ever present in international politics."¹⁷⁸ For Mercer, anarchy is not what states make of it, but is rather a consequence of inter-group relations in anarchy. One might reply that what is true for groups may not be so for states as they are substantially larger and structurally more diverse, but that case remains to be made.

Another flaw of the constructivist theory is that it cannot explain Russia's cooperation with the U.S on 9/11, or can it? Neorealists argued that Russia's "bandwagoning" or cooperation with the United States after a terrorist attack on its soil was undertaken simply to benefit Russia's security and interests. Whereas the neorealist theory makes a convincing case, constructivist theory cannot explain Russia's behavior in this stance. According to the constructivist perspective, it is all about protecting one's identity. How can a terrorist attack on the U.S be interpreted, as Walt's puts it, a "balance of threat"? This attack was not directed towards Russia, nor was it from the US, nor from NATO members. Therefore, how can we understand Russia's actions? We cannot argue

¹⁷⁷ Mercer Jonathan, "Anarchy and Identity", *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring 1995), p 251

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

that Russia shares the fundamental values of the United States (Western values)/ NATO or what the EU would term “a community of shared values” that would push Russia to act.¹⁷⁹ If Russia’s identity is that of a great power, the only possible analysis is to interpret this situation as a neorealist would, unless we accept the constructivist fact that identities are flexible. If Russia’s claimed identity is one of a great power, then the only explanation that can be offered from a constructivist standpoint, is that Russia’s identity has changed after the events of 9/11. This would indeed concord with another brand of constructivism, not espoused by Wendt since “Wendt’s anthropomorphized understanding of the state continues to treat states, in typical realist fashion, as unitary actors with a single identity and a single set of interests.”¹⁸⁰ As previously mentioned, the critical constructivists do not perceive the identity of a State like a fact of the history, but rather as “un élément situé dans le flux du temps, toujours changeant, [bref comme] quelque chose d’impliqué dans un processus.”¹⁸¹ In this sense, critical constructivism has a different conception of identity in contrast to the structuralism of Wendt, which holds that identities can be reproduced in time, and are thus flexible and able to change and adapt to a new environment. With this conception, a new threat, terrorism, and not NATO/US, would reshape Russia’s identity.

Another problem with the constructivist interpretation arises from its explanation of “rapprochement” with NATO and the United States. As mentioned previously, Russia’s effort towards NATO to join the Partnership for Peace program (PfP), the 1997 Founding Act, and the Permanent Joint Council (PJP) was considered by neorealists as a

¹⁷⁹ Smith, op.cit, p 112

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in, Weldes Jutta, Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p.9.

¹⁸¹ Quoted in, Macleod Alex, Isabelle Masson & David Morin, « Identité nationale, sécurité et la théorie des relations internationales », *Étude Internationales*, vol.35, no.1 (mars 2004), p.18

strategic goal to gain more influence in the organization. Constructivists would argue however, that Russia is trying to rebuild its identity and that it is trying to slowly integrate itself with the West. But it is the West that is unwilling to give Russia a second chance. For example, Russian's argued that the PfP's "main force was made up primarily of the anti-Russia sentiments" and to "ensure a US military presence in Poland and Hungary."¹⁸² These sentiments still continue to this day. Constructivists would argue that the United States is not ready to accept the "new identity" espoused by Russia.

Although constructivists argue that identities can be flexible and changeable, it is nevertheless a long stretch to actually believe such intentions coming from Russia. For admission to NATO, under Article 10 stipulates that "any other European state, in a position to further the principles of the treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area, may be invited to accede by unanimous agreement."¹⁸³ Russia is not enumerated among the European nations, although this is not necessarily dependent on geographic location, especially if we look at Turkey's case. But more importantly, the principles on which North Atlantic Cooperation is founded on is noted in the preamble of the treaty which states that only states that uphold the principles of "democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law" can have membership. Clearly, Russia does not respect any of those principles, nor is it even trying.

As we can see, both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. Although the neorealist approach seems to have the upper hand, one cannot disregard what constructivism brings to this analysis.

¹⁸² Fawn Rick, *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, London; Frankcass, 2003, p 62.

¹⁸³ Kanet Roger E, *The New Security Environment: The Impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe*, Ed, Ashgate, 2005, p79. The North Atlantic Treaty official text of April 4th 1949 is also available online on the NATO website available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

Conclusion

5.1 *Alternative Solutions*

What are the alternative solutions? How can we establish trust and improve the relationship between Russia and NATO? As explored earlier in this paper, war is unlikely, but the situation could degenerate back into a Cold War. If Russia is not granted NATO membership, what else can be done to alleviate Russia's fear of encirclement? Many authors have pondered this question, and it seems that all solutions come back to the same conclusions. Russia must be granted the veto. But granting Russia veto power is a serious problem for the West and other NATO members. For starters, core members of NATO, especially the West and former Soviet states, still believe that Russia might build a wedge within NATO and that it would be too costly to help Russia's long borders.

An interesting point has been made by Ira Straus. For him, the "veto problem" has been a serious impediment to the development of a full relationship between NATO and Russia. The problem lies not only in the fragile trust between both parties, but rather lies at NATO's core. The alliance fears that giving Russia the veto would weaken NATO consensus. As Straus clearly points out, NATO needs significant internal reforms. This has been constantly and systematically ignored even with the entry of new NATO members.¹⁸⁴ Since the *raison d'être* of NATO has changed, appropriate reforms should also be adjusted: "The feeling of a need for an external enemy to maintain internal cohesion is an indicator of an immature polity and an unstable condition, such as led Germany to make an enemy of the world; it is not a normal condition of a mature

¹⁸⁴ Straus Ira, "NATO: The Only West Russia Has?" *Demokratizatsiya*, Heldref Publications Spring 2003, p 5

democratic society. The presence of this fear in NATO is a warning sign, indicating the persistence of elements of immaturity in the NATO “society” that the west will have to overcome.”¹⁸⁵ NATO needs to change its decision making process to maybe non-consensus procedures or install any type of mechanism where all parties concerned can approve of.

Besides ratifying or changing NATO’s decision-making process, Andrei Piontkovski, director of the Center for Strategic Research in Moscow, suggests that Russia needs to forget about NATO and concentrate instead on building stronger alliances with the US and Britain especially regarding security issues. These two countries were Russian allies during both World Wars and share similar political and economic interests and are fully capable of defending Russia against their common threat: terrorism, the Islamists threat and the plausible danger that China might cause in the future.¹⁸⁶ The flaw in this argument is that although it might be fruitful for all parties concerned to improve their relationship, certain problems will still need to be addressed through NATO. Russia would still be encircled by NATO members, and Britain and the US would still have to cooperate within NATO parameters to address security concerns anyway because of the proximity of Russia to its fellow NATO members. Britain and the US will find it difficult to act on the behalf of Russia while excluding the security concerns and opinions of other members of the alliance.

Another possibility is for Russia to seek even closer relations with the EU. However, this option is not really in the best interest of both parties. Besides the fragile economic situation of Russia, the EU will not help Russia with its security concerns. The

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p 24

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p26

EU still does not have its own peacekeeping or “military force” and would be ill-equipped to address Russia’s concerns. That would still require NATO’s assistance. Furthermore, each European country has dealt differently with Russia instead of the EU speaking with one voice to Russia.¹⁸⁷

A further interesting possibility for Russia was raised by Sergei Karaganov, Chairman of the Council on Foreign and Defense policy, who believes that a stronger G8 could compensate for NATO. The G8 could take on new responsibilities, which could address global issues such as terrorism.¹⁸⁸ This could provide an interesting option for all parties concerned. Russia is a full member of the G8 and would thus have equal weight on all decisions and could also prove its effectiveness and build confidence among the other members. This could also lead to a potential entry in NATO. The big question, however, remains whether G8 members would accept such a role.

One more viable option might be to simply cease NATO expansion. This solution would benefit both NATO/U.S and Russia. The ramifications for including Ukraine and/or Georgia in NATO will only aggravate current tensions, as extending membership will not only outrage Russia and create potentially disastrous repercussions from their part, but may also become a serious liability for NATO members. NATO will be committed to protecting would-be members in the future. Although one can always argue that the United States might significantly benefit from the inevitable lucrative arms contracts in the short term, the U.S and NATO’s manpower is presently locked down in

¹⁸⁷ Grant Charles, “What to do about Russia?” *Centre for European Reform Comment and Analysis*, October 22nd 2006, available at http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/grant_guardian22oct06.html

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Straus, op.cit, p29. See also Ira Straus, “A Strategy for Russia’s Next Steps in the G-8: Russia Should Make Itself a Leader in Building up the G-8, as a Way of Enhancing Its Role in the World,” *Online Magazine: Observer.com*, June 27th, 2002.

both Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, embracing Ukraine's political instability and Georgia's internal military conflicts will only exhaust NATO's resources.

Finally, another plausible solution was introduced in 2008 by Russian President Dmitri Medvedev who presented the idea of a new "European security architecture", to create a common, undivided security space in order to free participants of the legacy of the Cold War. Before applying these theories to our analysis, it would be useful to sum up the main similarities and differences between the approaches. First, both neorealism and constructivism see the state as the most important actor in the international system. Both view the international system as anarchic, and both agree that the international system will shape and hamper state interests. Looking at the main differences, neorealism concentrates on state interests based on gains, rather than interests dependent on understanding relations among other states. Another difference is that neorealists concentrate on material factors, such as military and economic power, rather than focusing on state interactions or an understanding what shapes and constructs the roles and interests of states. For constructivists, material factors depend on the intersubjective context. Thus, constructivists are more interested in the effects of norms and identities whereas neorealists focus on state calculations and security.

War. The goal of this new treaty is to make Europe more secure by creating a legally binding document. The main purpose of this treaty would be the construction of new mechanisms to deal with concerns and disputes (such as weapons control and related security issues). This mechanism would require that all international actions, whether effected by individual states or collective bodies, have some regard for the security

interests of all other states.¹⁸⁹ In his draft, the Russian president alludes often to the importance of the UN Charter and to how the proposed treaty might be informed by its principles. Medvedev believes it is important to consider the idea for he warned against “marginalizing and isolating countries, creating zones with differentiated levels of security, and abandoning the creation of general regional collective security systems.”¹⁹⁰ Alluding to NATO, the president argues that NATO is unable to solve 21st Century problems (such as the crisis in Georgia) and that it is time to focus on new ideas and solutions. Yet the draft of the treaty is vague and confusing, and some actors argue that its main purpose is to decrease the role of the United States in the international arena. Commenting on the proposal, Hillary Clinton said “we believe that these common goals are best pursued in the context of existing institutions, such as the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council, rather than by negotiating new treaties, as Russia has suggested—a very long and cumbersome process.”¹⁹¹ Despite her dismissal, and whether or not the proposed solution gains traction in the years to come, the idea has sufficient potential to develop and reshape the European security space. Whether it does or not, only time will tell.

This is only a very short list of plausible resolutions to the disagreements between Russia and the United States vis-à-vis NATO. There are several alternatives: working through these complex questions will offer to the readers various tracks for future exploration and research that is unfortunately impossible to do here.

As stated above, it is important to consider the future consequences of a hypothetical NATO expansion. If a solution that would satisfy both parties is not found,

¹⁸⁹ See the full draft of the European Security Treaty November 29 2009 available at : <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2009/11/223072.shtml>

¹⁹⁰ Legvold, Kramer & al, “A New European Order?” The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington: March 2010, p. 22

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 30

then the plausibility of a new Cold War cannot be dismissed. Although the chances of such a regression are minimal, they cannot be discounted. An adversarial relationship between NATO members and Russia and its possibly its allies (Iran, China, and India) would affect not only Europe, but the Middle East and Asia. Thus, this potentially poisonous effect of NATO expansion would reshape global security schemes.

Now that we have examined two different theoretical approaches, how can we, and should we, choose which approach is better suited to analyze Russia's behavior towards NATO? Should we even attempt to combine the two approaches? Neorealism is straight-forward: states are unitary rational actors that seek gains in a condition of international anarchy. Security is a states primal concern. The constructivist's advantage is that such analysis does not depend on arbitrary assumptions of state interest, nor does it ascribe categorical importance to material factors. The importance of such factors as military force emerges as a result of state's relationships and understandings. It does not cause nor explain those relationships instead relationships reflect states' identities and interests.

According to neorealists, Russia is only trying to safeguard its sphere of influence and curtail the growing power of the United States. As the United States is the greatest contributor to European security and the most powerful force in the organization, NATO cannot be used to counter or check its power; Russia must therefore reinforce its security by actively seeking strategic economic and military alliances with states dissatisfied with a unipolar world while simultaneously building its own influence. On the other hand, constructivism views Russia in a different way, seeing it not as a competitive force against the United States, but as a state simply trying to secure and enlarge its place in the

international system. An alliance or cooperative arrangement with India and China should not be viewed in terms of aspirations to regain past glories, but simply as a means of ensuring that its voice is heard and taken seriously.

Although both approaches share common tenets (such as the condition of international anarchy, and the capability of states to generate security threats, among other things), it is not necessary to try and combine both approaches, as does Jennifer Sterling-Folker.¹⁹² The goal of this paper was to apply two different approaches and demonstrate how our case study cannot be adequately analyzed through one lens. There is no such thing as a perfect theory or approach: all have their limitations, ambiguities and complexes. A useful perspective is to regard both neorealism and constructivism as offering distinctive insights, and the field of international relations is sufficiently complex that no single theory or approach is able to encompass it entirely.

¹⁹² Sterling-Folker Jennifer, "Realism and the Constructivist Challenge: Rejecting, Reconstructing, or Rereading", *International Studies Review*, 4, 1, Spring 2002, p 73-97

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